

Erving Board of Selectmen

Monday, September 25, 2017

**Senior & Community Center,
1 Care Drive, Erving, MA**

Selectmen Present: Jacob Smith, William Bembury, Scott Bastarache
Finance Committee: Benjamin Fellows, Eugene Klepadlo, Daniel Hammock (7:39PM)
Planning Board: Deb Smith, Michael Shaffer
Historical Commission: David Brule
Conservation Commission: David Brule, Peter Sanders

Also Present: Bryan Smith, Glenn McCrory, Jessica Atwood, Tracy Adamski, Jeanie Schermesser, Rebecca Hubbard, Bryant Stewart, Melissa Shiner, Mary Jane Bacon
Press: Christine Miranda, Athol Daily News; Katie Nolan, Montague Reporter

At 6:30 PM **Chairman Smith** called the meeting to order.

Review Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2017

The Board reviewed meeting minutes from Monday, September 18, 2017. **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 18, 2017 as written. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. Unanimously approved.

Erving Center Safety Concerns

Chairman Smith provided an update on Erving Center Safety concerns. The Highway Department has installed additional signs on North Street to identify crosswalks. The Police Department has increased traffic enforcement during the mornings around school bus pickup times. A meeting has been scheduled with Principal Trill and representatives from the bus company to discuss the bus stop and options to improve safety. Representatives from the Town met with FRCOG transportation planners regarding the Route 2 Safety Taskforce and plans for improvements in Erving Center and Farley. Initial conversations have begun with the Town Administrator in Northfield about the possibility of a truck exclusion for Church and North Streets in Erving and Gulf Road in Northfield. Rebecca Hubbard expressed appreciation for the work that has been done.

Lee Street

The Board reviewed a cost estimate for improvements to the unimproved section of Lee Street as discussed at the last meeting. Glenn McCrory, Highway Foreman, discussed the details of the estimate and explained that the work should be able to be completed within one (1) week. The estimate gives a project total with a hard pack gravel surface of \$11,225.00. There is a recommendation to pave the surface for an additional \$11,800, for a grand total of \$23,025.00. Glenn explained that funding for the project would come from the Highway Road improvement fund which has an approximate balance of \$44,000. The Board approved the project work with a paved surface. The Board asked Bryan Smith, Administrative Coordinator, to prepare a warrant article that would formally expand the public road layout of Wheelock Street to incorporate the layout of Lee Street.

FFY15 CDBG Extension Request

The Board reviewed an extension request for the FFY15 CDBG project from Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority. The request is for an extension of the program through December 31, 2017. **Chairman Smith** made a motion to sign the extension request through December 31, 2017. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. Unanimously approved.

Miscellaneous

Small Scale Initiative Grant

Chairman Smith notified those in attendance that the Town received an award letter for the Small Scale Initiatives Grant from the Department of Environmental Protection in the amount of \$500.00. The program allows the Town to provide recycling resources to residents.

School Committee Resignation

Chairman Smith notified those in attendance that the Board has been notified that Renee Tela has resigned from the School Committee as of September 22, 2017. **Chairman Smith** thanked Renee for her seven (7) years of service on the School Committee. The Board agreed.

Maple Avenue Sewer Collection Application

Chairman Smith informed those in attendance that the Town has received sewer connection and road opening permits for 27 Maple Avenue. Glenn McCrory, Highway Foreman, explained the project to the Board. The Highway and Wastewater Departments will coordinate with the property owner and the contractors in accordance with the sewer regulations.

FY2019 Budget Goals

The Board discussed goals to communicate to departments, boards, and commissions as they prepare the FY2019 operating budget requests. The Board discussed an expectation of level service budget requests that realize efficiencies and savings when possible. The Board expects documentation and explanation for requests that include significant budget increases or decreases. **Selectman Bastarache** provided attendees with an overview of the new capital planning process. The Board asked Bryan Smith, Administrative Coordinator, to schedule a meeting with Joe Markarian, FRCOG, to setup the financial forecasting tool so that the Capital Planning Committee can begin their work.

Millers Falls Paper (IP) Mill Redevelopment Discussion

At 7:02 PM **Chairman Smith** called the joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Historical Commission to order. Tracy Adamski, Senior Planner from Tighe & Bond, and Jessica Atwood, FRCOG, joined the meeting.

Chairman Smith opened the discussion with an overview of the steps that have been taken on the project to date. He discussed that the goal of the joint meeting is to review the available information with the participating boards and commissions in an effort to develop a consensus on a plan to present to the citizenry.

Tracy provided an overview of the light industrial redevelopment study that Tighe & Bond completed in February 2017. The feasibility study proposes the creation of a new minor access road with a cul-de-sac and the subdivision of the property into three (3) separate lots. In proposal 1, Buildings 2 and 8 would be retained and selective demolition would remove the rest of the complex allowing for the construction of a new light industrial building. In proposal 2, all existing structures would be removed to all for the subdivision and the construction of three (3) new buildings. The eastern portion of the property is envisioned for conservation and recreation trails. Tracy noted that the National Heritage rare species mapping had recently been updated and as a result the rare species considerations may have changed from when the report was completed earlier in the year. Tracy further noted that the site would be classified as a historic mill complex and that classification may provide the Conservation Commission with greater regulatory flexibility in the redevelopment of the site. The feasibility study reviewed total square feet of the complex and provides a conceptual level assessment of probable

Jeanie Schermesser asked if historic tax credits could be available to help offset the costs of the project if sections of the mill are preserved. Tracy explained that historic tax credits are an option to pursue, but that currently the site is not listed on the historic register. Jessica explained that the developer for the Erving Board of Selectmen

site would be the party to pursue historic tax credits. Tracy explained that the State uses their available funding to promote private investment in development projects. **Chairman Smith** explained that there had been previous attempts to auction the property without developer interest and that the feedback from companies who have expressed interest in the site suggest that the Town would have to make the initial investment in mitigating hazardous materials and demolition to make the site more appealing.

Deb Smith, Planning Board, asked for clarification about the estimate of probable costs for hazardous materials cleanup and site preparation. It was agreed that the wastewater system would have to be retrofitted and a pump station would have to be installed. Tracy clarified that those costs are included in the estimate for probable costs. Deb asked if the demolition estimates in option 1 included the costs to structurally secure Building 2. Tracy agreed that those costs are included.

Selectman Bastarache stated that he believes the Town needs to determine what they are willing to spend on the preparation for the site and that it should be based on the most marketable option for the property to realize a return on investment. **Selectman Bastarache** further stated goal of having these conversations with the larger community. Glenn McCrory asked the Board to consider the cost of rehabilitating Building 2 and if the Town should expend money for that purpose.

Jeanie asked what the Town has done to develop the site. **Chairman Smith** stated that the Town has worked with FRCOG for several years to conduct the environmental studies on the property. After taking ownership of the property in 2014 through tax title the Town has contracted with Tighe & Bond to inventory hazardous materials and to conduct a market study and to assess the feasibility of reusing the site for residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. After 3 years of these reviews and meetings the focus has been on a light industrial reuse of the property and a consideration of saving Buildings 2 and 8 or clearing the site for new development. The Town has applied for funds to clean up the site and has been engaging our Mass Development and state and federal legislators in the project to identify resources. Bryan Smith, Administrative Coordinator, explained that the Town has talked with businesses who have shown interest in the property, but that there is concern about engaging potential developers until the Town can be clear about a unified vision for the future reuse of the site.

Deb asked if the Town could go forward with option 1 and retain Building 2 for now with the option to remove the building in the future if proves to be impossible to attract a developer for that building. There was general agreement that it was an option, but that there would be additional costs of mobilizing twice to the site as well as the sunk costs of building stabilization work that is done.

Selectman Bembury discussed a 3rd option to mothball the entire building to prevent further deterioration. Tracy explained that the cost to mothball the complex was estimated to be \$2 Million and would require an annual operating investment to maintain the facility. Eugene Klepadlo, Finance Committee, raised the concern about an annual maintenance appropriation for the complex.

Selectman Bastarache discussed his belief in the historic and unique value of Buildings 2 and 8. **Selectman Bastarache** stated the need for a vision for the site, regardless of the buildings. He proposed the idea of affordable housing. There was discussion regarding the opportunities and challenges of mixed use development and concern about residential uses with industrial uses.

Jeanie asked if Building 2 could be considered as a site for senior housing and advocated for the public to have an opportunity to tour the buildings in order to visualize the potential. **Chairman Smith** and **Selectman Bastarache** explained that the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board held a joint meeting in March 2017 with Mass Development to tour the facility and discuss the presentation from Tighe & Bond. Members of the press participated, but few members of the public attended. **Selectman Bembury** explained that the complex is not safe for continued public inspection. Tracy discussed structural concerns and Deb discussed hazardous conditions within the complex. **Chairman Smith** explained that the Senior Housing Committee has been working on their planning efforts for senior housing to be located near the Erving Board of Selectmen

Senior & Community Center and that a public presentation is being scheduled. Rebecca Hubbard, Senior Housing Committee, acknowledged that senior housing is not appropriate for the IP Mill site, but that housing may be a viable option. Bryant Stewart, Rebecca, and Jeanie asked if the Town could provide citizens with photos or video of the interior of Buildings 2 and 8 so that they can understand what it looks like.

Michael Shaffer, Planning Board, advocated for preserving part of the historic buildings on the site. Michael suggested finding a way to connect recreational trails off of this site along the Millers River to connect with the new Erving Riverfront Park. David Brule, Conservation and Historical Commissions, expressed his preference for historic preservation of buildings, but stated the need to be realistic. He noted a moral obligation to address the safety concerns at the site and that not all old buildings need to be saved. David stated he would meet with the Historic Commission and would like to schedule an opportunity to tour the building. Bryan will coordinate. Peter Sanders, Conservation Commission and Water Superintendent, explained that the Town has maintained the water draw permit for the site in case it was ever needed again for an industrial reuse. Jeanie suggested that the Town consider high-end condominiums for the site that would pay taxes. Jeanie asked if Building 8 could be used as restroom facilities for future recreational uses on the eastern part of the property. Eugene suggested that the pump house could be used for fire suppression.

Deb asked if the Town was to make the investment in site preparation if it would help potential developers to be interested in the site. Jessica explained that the question really is about identifying the transition point between public investments to private investment. Jessica stated that it is unlikely to identify a developer that will conduct selective demolition, hazardous materials cleanup and infrastructure improvements. This public investment can make a developer more interested in making their own investments in construction and hiring. Jessica made it clear that her work with developers has encouraged that Town identify a clear vision for a site with community support.

Deb asked what protections would exist to ensure that a private developer would complete the project after the Town has made initial investments. Bryan discussed a request for proposals (RFP) process where the Town would define acceptable uses, qualifications, and experience with similar projects that a responsible and responsive bidder would have to meet. If there was a successful bid the Town could put the purchase under contract, but not transfer ownership until permitting and financing has been completed. Chairman Smith also discussed the possibility of deed restrictions to ensure that the Town has the first right of refusal if the property is no longer used for its intended purpose.

Daniel Hammock, Finance Committee, encouraged the Historical Commission to tour the facility and for the Town to apply for the Brownfields Cleanup Loan program with Mass Development. Jessica explained that Erving is in the New Market Tax Credit area and a private developer could be encouraged to the site with that opportunity. Deb asked if the Town should plan to redevelop the entire site. The Board agreed that the Town will need to clean up the hazardous materials, be involved with selective demolition depending on the option pursued, and with infrastructure but that a private developer should be sought to continue the redevelopment of the site. Chairman Smith noted that Erving has an attractive tax rate that may also help encourage a developer to the site.

Next steps identified:

- Bryan will coordinate with Highway and the Historical Commission to visit the site
- A follow-up joint meeting will be scheduled between the Board and the Historical Commission
- Bryan will begin to prepare the Mass Development Brownfields Cleanup Loan Program application for \$200,000.00.

At 8:42 PM the joint meeting with the Planning Board, Historical Commission, and Conservation Commission ended. The Board of Selectmen continued the joint meeting with the Finance Committee.

FY2019 Budget Goals (continued)

The Board and the Committee again agreed that departments should submit level service requests with explanations for significant changes. Bryan Smith, Administrative Coordinator, asked about establishing a 1 to 2 page coversheet that departments would submit with the budget request so that all departments are submitting similar information. The Board and the Committee agreed and asked that Boards prepare their budgets with the idea that they should be able to be understood within 10 minutes.

The Finance Committee reminded the Board that they are in need of one (1) member.

Daniel Hammock suggested that the Town's finance staff could meet quarterly with a representative of the Finance Committee. Bryan explained that the Town and School finance staff are scheduled to meet this Thursday for an initial meeting and he will assess whether or not a regular schedule for similar meetings can be created.

Adjournment

At 9:02 PM **Chairman Smith** made a motion to adjourn. **Selectman Bastarache** seconded. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bryan Smith
Administrative Coordinator