Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, September 6, 2016 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Chair, Ken Swanton in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Lucy Wallace, Ron Ricci, Stu Sklar and Alice von Loesecke were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

Minutes
On a Wallace/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 8/9, as presented.

Horse Meadow Knoll project overview
Conservation Commission members Don Ritchie, Paul Willard and Wendy Sisson along with Harvard Conservation Trust members Peter Dorward, Executive Director Dave Outman, Tom Cotton and Jim Lee were present to provide an overview of their combined effort to preserve 48 plus of open space along Sherry Road. This purchase reflects the desires of town residents in the recent open space and recreation survey to continue preserving open space and recreation lands. They summarized the project plan and noted some points of interest. Outman reviewed a map showing where the property is in relation to the Gillette Land and other abutting conservation properties. This property will allow for further expansion of the trail network while protecting more of Harvard's natural resources. As a trustee, Lucy Wallace added this project is contingent upon approval from the State's Land Grant program. This announcement is expected by the end of November. Dorward reviewed the funding and expenses associated with the transaction. He noted the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has voted to approve $100,000 toward the project. Von Loesecke asked about the town's exposure if the house lot does not sell for the price expected. Dorward acknowledged the trust will absorb any liability. On a Ricci/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to support application to CPC for $100,000.

Public communication
Jack Guswa, 8 Old Meadow Lane, appreciates the support of Selectmen to preserve open space and is hopeful they will also support the concept to create moderate priced senior housing on the Hildreth House site.

Mario Cardenas, 40 Oak Hill Road, expressed his concern over the recent drought Massachusetts is experiencing. He asked the Selectmen to proceed considering the extreme climate changes we are beginning to experience. He noted many surrounding towns have instituted water restrictions. He distributed some information he has found on this subject and again encouraged the Selectmen to discuss what can be done to protect private wells.

Broadband Committee – Article for Municipal Light Plant (MLP) for broadband
Committee members Noyan Kinayman, Chris Roy, Jim Dowson and Olivier Beauchemin were present to request the Selectmen include a warrant article at the upcoming special town meeting for the establishment of a Municipal Light Plant (MLP). They explained this will provide a valuable tool in implementing municipal broadband internet. They explained establishing the MLP will not cost any capital money except the funds for state filing and attorney fees to prepare

legal paperwork. This vote will be the first step in the process. The committee plans to complete their due diligence in time for the required second vote at the annual town meeting in the spring. On a Ricci/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to place an appropriate article in support of forming a municipal light plant for purposes of broadband. The committee is considering various ways to provide outreach to the community and will have a handout for the special town meeting.

Fall Super Town Meeting
MassDevelopment Senior Vice President Thatcher Kezer and Project Manager Ed Starzec attended the meeting to review the language proposed for the Super Town Meeting on October 24th. They have met with the Selectmen and Planning Boards in the surrounding communities in preparation for the meeting. Kezer said in following the formal process two informational public hearings will be held with one in Harvard on September 20th. They explained the article has been simplified and revised in response to community comments. This article will rezone 32.7 acres of land in the Grant Road area for innovation and technology. Kezer explained making this change will create a 40+ acre development site which will meet the needs of modern manufacturing and research.

Field sharing with MassDevelopment
Kezer has spoken with his staff about this and is encouraged something can be worked out. He will discuss in more detail with Sklar and von Loesecke.

Appointments
On a Ricci/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to make appointments as listed on the agenda:
Daria Swanton – Planning Board Rep. on Historical Commission
Cindy Russo – Board of Assessors
Tim Bragan – MART Advisory Board.

Hildreth House payment request
On a Wallace/von Loesecke motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2nd payment for $61,303.00.

Rick Maiore took a moment to introduce a change in traffic pattern around Town Hall and the Hildreth House. They discussed making the parking lot entrance behind Town Hall an entrance only. Traffic would flow up and curve around exiting in front of the Town Hall. The Police Chief and Fire Chief agree with the change. Maiore introduced the subject for consideration.

Town Hall grounds landscaping and paving
Maiore said the Town Hall and Hildreth House Construction Committee (THCC) is willing to work on landscaping and paving to complete the Town Hall project with some direction from BoS. They also discussed improving the drainage system. Wallace noted that historically town halls were located on the common and surrounded with grass, not landscaped plantings. She suggested an “apron” of grass might be the most appropriate, and easiest to maintain, solution.

Town Administrator report
Tim Bragan announced after twenty two years Town Clerk Janet Vellante will retire on December 9th. She will work with Wallace on a job description for the Personnel Board to review at their meeting next week.

Bragan reported the website project is well underway and expects it to go live by October 1st.

Bragan asked the BoS to set a deadline for the submission of warrant articles for the fall Special Town Meeting. They decided on Thursday, September 22nd. He will have the warrant ready for review at the October 4th meeting.

Bragan noted the Capital Planning & Investment Committee and Community Preservation Committee application deadlines are September 29th. He asked the members to inform him of any projects they may want to include such as old library accessibility.

Bragan reported the Finance Committee will meet on Wednesday, September 21st. He recommended the BoS begin thinking about budget items.

Bragan said he and the Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro will be meeting with the OPM and Clerk of the Works from the Town Hall project next week to finalize items.

Bragan is working with Sklar on a Park & Recreation Director job description. To provide current and additional services to the town this position will be necessary.

Bragan reported an affordable unit will be coming up for sale requiring action from the Board of Selectmen.

Bragan reported St. Benedict's is interested in putting in a crosswalk on Still River Road.

Slow property tax growth
Swanton and von Loesecke reviewed a few items they suggest be added to this goal for the coming year:

a) Help address growing employee benefits costs and retired employee non-pension benefit costs (OPEB), by reviewing comparable town's benefits by October 4, as input to the next cycle of employee contracts (Alice/Ken/Town Administrator).
b) Mitigate a near doubling of annual debt service over the next seven years as projected in the capital plan, by reviewing proposed capital spending projects for FY18 and beyond on Nov 8 with this debt service in mind (Alice/CPIC/Town Administrator).
c) Maintain a combined Finance Director position for town wide efficiency and transparency, by hiring Lorraine Leonard's replacement by November 15 (Town Administrator/Stu).
d) Discuss with the School Committee by Nov 15 continuing to use a portion of Devens funding for capital projects each year, as is being done with the Bromfield parking lot (Alice/Ken).
e) Encourage the use where appropriate of the four pages of "Expendable Trusts and Revolving/Gift" accounts uncovered last year, instead of just requesting new tax funding in this year's funding requests by December 6 (Town Administrator/Finance Committee).
f) As part of the outreach being developed by Stu and Lucy on the Board's Devens ballot question (goal 5a), by Jan 17 describe the expected impact on taxes of someday resuming jurisdiction on the portion of Devens historically in Harvard (Alice/Ken).

g) Note: Four other opportunities to slow the growth of taxes are already contained in other goals: 1a productive use of the old library, 1b successful implementation of new facilities manager, 5e explore regionalization of DPW services, and 6 commercial village development.

The board briefly discussed each item and Sklar suggested also adopting any resolutions which may assist with how the state allocates funds to cities and towns.

MRPC Hazardous Mitigation Plan
The board did not act on this item. They asked to view the plan before taking action.

Annual Town Meeting preparation
The board will continue to mail the Finance Committee booklet to each household instead of sending an informational post card.

Old library accessibility
Wallace reported further investigation is necessary on the original ANR (approval not required) plan for the building as well as maybe a title search to determine easements. She is hopeful to have a recommendation for the next meeting.

Town email addresses for all committee/board members
The board members agreed additional email addresses will not be purchased.

Surplus items
On a Ricci/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to declare the following items as surplus:

Wood table w/ metal legs
Wooden table
Wooden table
Wooden table
4 shelf metal cabinets
Metal cabinets missing shelves
4 shelf metal cabinet
Metal chair

Finance Director/School Business Manager Position
After two failed searches to find a replacement Bragan said a meeting was held today to decide how best to proceed. He met with former Finance Director Lorraine Leonard, Superintendent Linda Dwight, School Committee Chair SusanMary Redinger and BoS Chair Ken Swanton. They will advertise the Finance Director position without the school business management portion and maintain the School Business Manager the school department is utilizing now. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the town and school on the combined positon will be reviewed and revised as necessary. They expect to hire a Finance Director with the intent of that person growing into the combined positon. The ideal path was to fill the combined positon now but since they have been unable to do that this is the best course of action. The BoS members were encouraged by this proposal. The School Committee is invested in this method to preserve this positon in the long term.

Selectmen reports
Wallace reiterated the Council on Aging's concerns over phase two of the Hildreth House project and development of senior housing on that site. They may need guidance from Town Counsel on strategies for development of housing. She reported a first draft of the senior population survey has been drafted and the Planning Board will be holding a hearing on September 19th..

Ricci reported a site walk is being held on Thursday at 4:30pm in front of the Post Office with respect to the proposed roundabout. He said the Planning Board has responded to letter from the BoS and are holding a hearing September 19th on the Hildreth House overlay district.

Ricci stated the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust is having problems transferring funds. He will work with Bragan to find a resolution.

BoS Goals
Swanton reviewed the goals for the upcoming meeting.

**** On a Wallace motion, the Board voted unanimously by a roll call vote:
Swanton – Aye, Ricci – Aye, Sklar – Aye, Sklar – Aye, von Loesecke – Aye to enter into executive session at 9:52pm, as authorized by Chapter 30A, Section 21. 3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. Following the executive session, the Board will reconvene only to adjourn. ****

Documents referenced:
CPC application from Con Com & narrative – dated 8.17.2016
Other related docs from Conservation Trust (map/budget/plan) - dated 9.6.2016
Broadband draft article – dated 9.6.2016
Fall Super Town Meeting – article/maps – dated 8.31.2016
Appointments: letter from Planning Board dated 8.29.2016 & Russo vol form – dated 8.17.2016
Hildreth House 2nd payment request – dated 9.20.2016
Slow property tax growth document – dated 9.3.2016
Surplus list – dated 8.25.2016