Select Board
Minutes
Tuesday, October 8, 2019 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room, Harvard, MA

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Alice von Loesecke in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Select Board members Kara Minar, Rich Maiore, Lucy Wallace and Stu Sklar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

Council on Aging appointment
Co-Chair Beth Williams came to introduce Lynne Musto-Pesa for appointment to the board however due to a family emergency Musto-Peas was unable to attend. Williams described Musto-Pesa as an excellent candidate who has the full support of the board. On a Wallace/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Lynne Musto-Pesa to the Council on Aging Board.

Hildreth House Phase II project
Select Board Chair von Loesecke invited members of the Hildreth House Phase II subcommittee and the Permanent Building Committee (PBC) members to provide a current status on the project prior to completion of schematic designs.

Subcommittee Chair Guy Olivia explained the phase II project is necessary to provide the appropriate space for the CoA to execute their mission and programs. This requires an all-purpose room that can accommodate up to 90 attendees with sub dividers to allow for multiple events to occur at the same time. The subcommittee investigated the Hildreth House site and determined the east side closer to 111 as the ideal location. The PBC provided excellent feedback especially when deciding on a commercial versus warming kitchen.

PBC Chair Cindy Russo said they did attend a number of the subcommittee meetings to offer guidance and ways to reduce the cost. The PBC favors a way of connecting the two buildings and expressed their concern about parking. PBC member Steve Moeser acknowledged the project is different than the original design. He asked if the project scope is driven by need or budget. PBC member Rick Maiore told the architect not to limit the new design due to necessity of bringing the Hildreth House up to fire code. With the increase in construction cost, Maiore thought it may make sense to revisit bringing Hildreth up to code and adding an addition instead of a free standing building.

Select Board member Lucy Wallace recommends connecting of the buildings. She agreed it may be worthwhile to consider bringing the Hildreth House up to code now that the cost of the project has increased and with safety in mind. Von Loesecke did not understand how this approach meets program needs. She is supportive of an all-purpose room addition but is uncertain of the cost estimate for a separate building, not connected and Hildreth House still not meeting the fire code. She was disappointed bringing the Hildreth House up to code was eliminated as an option for phase II.

CoA Director Debbie Thompson admitted an addition is more ideal however bringing the Hildreth House up to code is expensive and increased need for services warrants a room to accommodate over the 45 initially thought. They want to be mindful of what taxpayers are willing to pay especially considering the cost of the new school. In addition, Thompson does not want to continue to rely on the churches for space. This space can also be used for other community groups such as the girl/boy scouts or as an emergency shelter. Co-Chair Beth Williams said the architects informed them not only would Hildreth need to meet fire code but seismic code as well.

Subcommittee member Connie Larrabee who has been involved with phase II from the very beginning reminded everyone this project was supposed to be done two years ago. She explained the current proposal allows the town to continue to utilize the Hildreth House and gain the additional space needed.

Select board member Kara Minar said it would be a mistake for the buildings to not be connected. She also questioned the parking issue. Sklar favors bringing the Hildreth House up to code.

Williams pointed out parking is an issue in the town center therefore why should the CoA to have to address this issue when it also affects the Town Hall and Fire Station. Olivia acknowledged this project is a tough sell as is and if you add in fixing the Hildreth House and parking he is doubtful there would be any chance of the project passing. Wallace understands this process has been ongoing and the real need for additional space. She thanked the committee members for their hard work and the PBC for their guidance.

Housing @ Hildreth House

Committee Chair Rick Maiore announced the committee has completed their work as charged. He gave an overview of their efforts toward drafting a warrant article to sell a portion of the land and their further investigation with proposal requests from developers. They discovered the site is desirable however the abundance of ledge is problematic. The committee last met over the summer and determined housing in this location was not feasible but they wanted to wait until the Fire Station study was completed. Maiore commented on the many committees who have tried to tackle this issue over the years. The committee will draft a final report encapsulating their findings by years end.

Deer Management subcommittee or the Conservation Commission presentation

Conservation Commission member Wendy Sission explained the commission created this subcommittee in an effort to investigate the available options for monitoring and managing the population of deer in Harvard with the goal of protecting the ecological integrity of its forests. The goal is to phase in a program starting in the fall of 2019. Sisson then turned things over to Subcommittee Chair Bob Douglas.

Douglas explained due to the increasing numbers in the deer population over last ten years and as suggested in the Master Plan they were tasked with developing a plan designed to protect Harvard's forests and human health. They provided a one page fact sheet which outlined when public forums were held, why the program is needed, safe and effective. Douglas indicated their final report was presented to the Conservation Commission who voted in favor of the plan with implementation starting in a year from now. They are aware of the citizens petition to not allow hunting on conservation land. Sission wanted to make it clear the commission does not support open hunting on conservation land only on specifically designated parcels. They are seeking guidance from the Select Board on this very complicated issue. Douglas introduced his fellow committee members Tom Cotton, Paul Willard, Jason Cole and Ben Urquhart. He presented an overview of what they have learned. Sisson indicated the subcommittee would run the program with annual reports to the commission for evaluation each year. The Select Board members were impressed with the information provided and thanked the subcommittee for all their hard work.

Public Communication

Rudy Minar, 204 Still River Road, came to confirm the Select Board members received the letter sent by the Harvard Conservation Trust apprising them of violations of the Scenic Road Bylaw that have occurred when roads were resurfaced over the summer. He indicated their letter includes extensive data that confirms roads were widened and portions of stone walls were displaced. He specifically named Sherry Road and Murray Lane. Town Administrator Tim Bragan confirmed he is investigating their concerns.

Minutes

On a Wallace/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve 9/17 minutes, as presented.

Town Administrator Report

Bragan reported on the following items:

- License Agreement and Deed Restriction previously approved by the Select Board for the laying of pipes under Pattee Road and restricting the barn (garage) to non-living space only. The Board just needs to sign the documents.
- A complaint was received from HCT regarding the DPW and possible violation of the Scenic Road Bylaw and is in the process of conducting his investigation which will be followed by an appropriate action and a written response.
- He shared upcoming events to be held at the Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church.
- The Harvard Water Department has been working with Skillings Well and Pump out of Sterling to try and abate the bacteria in well #5. They ran the well to waste (not going to the tank or distribution system) for 48 hours and tested it and the test came back negative. They then had to let it sit for 48 hours and then test it and it came back positive. The DPW Director and the Foreman continue to try and abate the bacteria with the help of Skillings. In order to be ready for a possible order from DEP to chlorinate the water system permanently (they have not issued such and order at this time) the DPW Director has placed an article on the STM warrant to pay for the design, permitting, bidding, and construction services of a company to bring us to the point where we can then get estimates, additional funding and a contractor to potentially have to build the chlorination system. Harvard would need additional individuals with the proper licensing for a treatment system as we only have one currently and you need at least two.
- Assessor's Office received 15 applications for the Means Tested Senior Exemption Program. All qualified under the $778,000 value for the house and 1 Acre and all qualified under the income levels as well. Four individuals did not qualify under the asset test with one did not supply information on assets. With the limits set by the Select Board the maximum amount the program could be in this fiscal year is $101,000. The 11 that have qualified will total ~$36,000+ in exemptions. Sklar was unhappy with the asset amount decided on by the Assessor. He requested discussion about this on the next agenda.
- Assistant Town Administrator, Marie Sobalvarro, has submitted applications to CPC for re-gilding and framing the two memorial plaques outside of this meeting room. In addition, she contracted with J.A.M. to do the landscaping and hardscaping around Town Hall with all of the work to be completed by May 15, 2020.
- Old Library roof inspection has been completed and we will learn more about the issues involved in repairing it. On another Old Library issue the additional sum that was discussed and approved was up to $2,000 coming from the Rantoul Trust and the estimated cost is approximately $4,263.66 ($2,000 for Jasonics and $2,263.66 for the hardware). This cost could increase by approximately another $1,000 if the door needs to be cored. The Select Board agreed the access entry system is necessary regardless of cost. On a Wallace/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to authorize amount to be used from the Rantoul Trust for card swipe system up to $5300.00.
- Assistant Town Administrator has received the new Medicare numbers and Tufts (the most subscribed program) remained the same and Fallon went down as well as developed a new program that provides more controlled service and even lower cost for those residing in Worcester County.
- The roll out the Community Aggregation Program here in Harvard has begun. Educational sessions have been held and the official mailing has gone out. **October 26, 2019** is the opt-out deadline for notifying Dynegy (our supplier). Again the official document has the Town's seal (a drawing of Old Library) on it and you **will not** have someone come to your door or call you. There are other companies out there now that are trying to get people to sign up for other energy programs and this is causing confusion.

- CPIC started their process for the FY2021 Capital Projects and attached is a summary of what they are looking at with respect to 2021 through 2025 capital items and large capital items which go through the next 10 years.
- True West Brewing will be on the next agenda for a 1-day liquor license for the bond fire at Fruitland's Museum grounds on November 2nd with a rain date of November 3rd. Also at your next meeting there will be a pole hearing for a new pole for a new house on Sherry Road.
- Within the last week we started soliciting (through the Town Website) public input on the idea of splitting Town Meeting into two sessions, spring and fall. So far we have received 18 comments with 15 in favor of the idea and 3 against it or cautious about the idea (see attached comments from those against). The Town Clerk provided us with the attached information from her fellow Town Clerks as well as herself. Finally, we also received the attached from the Planning Board.
- The board set the Town Caucus for Monday, March 23, 2020. On a Sklar/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to set March 23, 2020 for the Town Caucus.
- MassDevelopment Board of Directors meeting being held in Devens on Thursday starting at 9AM and the community meeting will start at 11AM. If you are going please RSVP to Karen Davis at 978-784-2933 or at kdavis@massdevelopment.com.
- The Moderator is currently looking for two people to serve as Associate Members on the Finance Committee.

Appointments

Cultural Council

Executive Assistant Julie Doucet explained McClellan should have been reappointed to a second term back in June but was mistakenly left off the reappointment list. On a Wallace/Minar motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Dave McLellan.

Board of Registrars

Town Clerk Marlene Kenney sent a request to have Jackie Normand appointed.
On a Wallace/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Jackie Normand.

National Grid license

Bragan explained Verizon requires an easement from the town in order to provide electrical services to the center fire station. The easement requires action at the fall Special Town Meeting. On a Wallace/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to grant license to National Grid to provide access to the fire station.

Open Space Committee charge

Sklar thanked Bragan and Land Use Administrator Liz Allard for their assistance with this draft. He noted this charge integrates work of various committees and includes parcel identification in priority order. The discussed committee composition and the idea of including the Community & Economic Development Director as a non-voting member. Rich Maiore volunteered to work with Sklar on finalizing the charge for approval at the next meeting. Conservation Commission member Wendy Sission suggested more than one member be conservation designated. Former Harvard Conservation Trust member Peter Dorward who initially spearheaded this effort offered his concern about including recreation land with open space. He had envisioned the focus of this committee to be on open space and if a recreation opportunity were to arise it would be shared with interested parties. Von Loesecke understood Dorward's concern however she explained the intent is to create a committee that will provide an equal voice for all town needs. Resident John Daly suggested a member of the Historical Commission be included to assist with the protection of resources and CPC funding.

Police Contract update
Sobalvarro provided a summary of the language, detail rates, Quinn bill and wage changes. She indicated contract funding will be an article at the Special Town Meeting. On a Sklar/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to approve police contract.

Special Town Meeting warrant
Bragan provided the final warrant and reviewed each article answering questions board members had. On a Wallace/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to sign warrant for Special Town Meeting to be held on October 28, 2019.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

Documents referenced:
Musto-Pesa volunteer form – dated 7.16.2019
Deer Management presentation – dated 10.8.2019 & fact sheet dated 10.7.2019
Normand volunteer form – dated 9.11.2019
National Grid grant of license – dated 10.8.2019
Open Space Committee charge – dated 10.3.2019
STM warrant – dated 10.8.2019