

Town Land Use Committee

Minutes

April 6, 2022

Present: Chairman Tim Fiske, Christine Robidoux, Lilliane LeBel, Kathy Boot, Gail Cromwell, Honey Hastings, Scott Hecker

Committee absent: Allan Pickman, George Willard

Guest: Connie Kieley

The meeting was called to order at 5 pm. Several corrections were made to the minutes of March 3, which were then approved as amended.

Chairman Fiske led a discussion of the recent town meeting and asked where do we go from here? A number of comments and suggestions followed. It was noted that town meeting attendance is always lower than the Tuesday ballot voting –150 versus 450—but that it is the usual case. How to get information to people ahead of time? Perhaps a forum ahead of time in the future would be useful, either with Zoom if that is legal, or using the new town audio/visual system with you-tube, scheduled for installation in the town hall this summer. The planned Charette should be helpful. Christine noted that we are on their list for the summer or in the fall. With the end of covid restrictions more activity will be likely in the center of town, considering town hall activities and the church as well as the inn, drawing a spotlight on the parking problem.

The passage of the warrant article on funding was encouraging because it indicated people recognized we have a problem. The main issue seemed to be with the site.

Things we could do better: get more information out earlier, include more on costs and possible effects on taxes, provide information on what things could be done on the present highway facility site if it were moved to a new location. There is a great opportunity to improve the center of town. Architectural drawings for the new proposed highway facility would be helpful.

Connie Kieley said she wished to make a statement. She wanted to make it clear that she was not an abutter to the highway garage. She had said at the last LUC meeting before Town Meeting that she could hear noises from the highway garage at her house but she also indicated the minor noise was not bothersome. Several other members who lived quite a distance away spoke to noise indicating they could hear the present truck activity, but it wasn't bothersome. Connie's point was that no matter the location, residents in many areas of town may well hear some noise. It was noted that the present site has four houses that are abutters and none of them appeared at town meeting to support the relocation. Did they not know or not care?

Regarding the site proposed at town meeting, the biggest complaint seemed to be visibility from Route 45. People want the facility out of sight.

Consensus developed that the committee should continue to work, developing a scenario for using a site further back on the Skladany land, satisfying the wish to have the facility not visible from the highway.

Motion: The committee use the funds from the Highway Department Study Expendable Capital Reserve Fund to study the feasibility of the original site #2, lot 7A-36, for the future highway facility with access from Route 45. (By Hastings, second by LeBel) Unanimous.

This would involve new surveying and hydrological studies, possibly even an architectural drawing. This site has more room than the Holt property lot, but would likely require a bridge to cross the brook, and a longer access road. Tim estimated that a small precast bridge could cost \$50,000, and the additional 200 feet of road would be in the \$150,000 range. Otherwise there are definite advantages to the site, especially the lack of visibility from the road.

Tim pointed out that studies have shown that equipment stored inside, out of the weather, tends to last 30% longer. That should be included when we start identifying costs. A new 6 bay building for the highway equipment would save money.

Tim also suggested that we not request the merger of lots 7A – 36 and 7A-36-1, previously under consideration, to minimize the possible disturbance of terrain. An Alteration of Terrain Permit is required if 100,000 square feet of area is disturbed. A road through 7A -36-1 would not count if that remained a separate lot.

Lilliane suggested it would be desirable to present two scenarios next year: the Holt site costs, and this new Site 2. Then people could decide on the tradeoff between visibility with lower costs, and no visibility with higher costs.

It would be great to have a plan for the current location, parking, a museum, a grassy area with possible picnic tables and children's playground equipment, to indicate how the area could revitalize the town center.

Other town properties: Tim has accomplished that the small lot on Route 101 can be sold to the state for possibly \$1, with the state agreeing to do all the paperwork. Also, the property on Route 45 next to the school does not need to be bought as originally thought. A bar-way exists now which gives the town a right of way to the back lot. Tim will advise the Select Board that the town should apply for a driveway entrance permit from the state and build a road to the property owned by the town, before it is forgotten.

The lot line adjustment required for Lot 75-1 and merger with Lot 75-2, on Route 45, is before the Planning Board now. The merged lots will be just under 7 acres but will not have sufficient frontage for anything other than a single house lot.

The final item was a brief presentation by Christine on the Charette application. The committee had already voted approval for Tim to sign the support letter so that was done.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35, motion by Lilliane, second Christine.

Respectfully,
Gail Cromwell