**TOWN PROPERTIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes for October 14, 2020, 6:00 PM

The meeting was opened at 6:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Butler, Ross MacPherson, Colleen Thompson, John Traynor,

Jon Wilhelmsen (Chair)

GUESTS PRESENT: Tom Loughlin and Scott Ridder of BETA Group, Mark Russo

NOTES: This meeting was conducted on a Zoom meeting platform with members participating from their homes. Members and guest will be referred to by their initials in the minutes.

ACTION ITEMS: **In bold print**

DISCUSSION:

1. Opening – JW read the Governor’s orders of 3/12/20 and 3/15/20 which allow this Zoom meeting as a temporary change to Open Meeting Law during the COVID-19 shut-down. The meeting will be recorded to provide public access to the discussion.
2. MINUTES: NB moved that the minutes for September 23rd be approved as written. JT seconded. Roll Call Vote: NB aye, RM abstain, CT aye, JT aye, JW aye.
3. BETA Group Presentation – SR reviewed the revised campus options. All options retain the fire station (FS) building, either in its current use or as a community center (CC), add the basketball court (BbC), connect the library parking to the main parking area, add green space and redesign the access road(s), including use of the Church driveway/parking lot.
4. Option 1.1

* Centrally located, bifurcated entrance/exit on Palmer Road
* Revised parking – 65 spaces in main lot, plus 10 along the side of the FS
* Two additions to FS – larger bay on library side, “other” space on opposite side
* Retains the Little League Field (LLF), but optional paving uses the Softball Field (SF)
* Adds drop off area for library patrons

1. Option 1.2 – Same as 1.1 with the following

* Adds rear or drive-through entry to FS
* Removes both ball fields
* FS road connects to Police Station (PS) road to create a Public Safety Only egress

Discussion: JW reminded us that the back of the FS is 5’± higher than the front. Adding the rear entrance would require the removal of a great deal of material. It is possible that that removed material could be used as fill in other areas of the campus.

1. Option 1.3– Same as 1.1 with the following

* Builds new FS
* Rehabs current FS into a CC
* Adds outdoor patio and 32 parking spaces at CC
* Retains LLF but uses SF
* Uses Church egress

Discussion: It was pointed out that the current Church parking lot, as well as town-owned land in the area, will need to be redesigned to allow best use by the Church and town. JW pointed out that the Snack Shack can be moved to SF area. The BbC will have full fencing to keep the ball from becoming a nuisance. Widening the public safety driveway and regrading the entrance onto Palmer Road will alleviate much of the current traffic problem. We need to add pedestrian walkways from the main parking lot to the public safety buildings for business and special events (like pancake breakfasts).

1. Option 2.1

* Builds new FS
* Creates individual town-house type housing
* Uses the current library entrance across from Main Street
* Uses Church egress

Discussion: Again, the committee noted that we do not like using this location for the entrance.

1. Option 2.2 – Similar to 2.1 with the following changes

* Centrally located, bifurcated entrance/exit on Palmer Road
* Connects to library with a circular road

Discussion: RM asked if we have asked the Fire Chief if they *need* a drive-through building. Even on the new land there is unlikely to be room for this due to the slope of the land. JW said that the Fire Chief has very well-grounded expectations for meeting the needs of the Town.

1. Additional Discussion:
2. What does a new Little League Field Cost? If we needed to do everything necessary to create the field, enclose it, build dugouts, etc. the cost would likely be $300,000. If we use the already leveled space at Harry Jason, the cost would be less (guess: $200,000+). Are the permanent building restrictions still in place at Harry Jason? They have either expired or are expiring soon. They had a 25-year duration. What about vandalism? The police were consulted, and they don’t expect this to be a concern.
3. TL – Can the Committee prioritize what is wanted and what is not wanted? Try to get it down to three strong concepts.

*We know:*

* We want the main access to be on Palmer Rd., rather than across from Main St.
* We want a protected entrance for public safety use. Likely with a traffic light. (There was discussion about the various systems for control of a traffic light by public safety. This is possibly something we should get in place ASAP.)
* We want to use the Church driveway. This would include reconfiguring the parking areas, public walkways, and landscaping.
* This needs to be done in stages. The current FS will remain in use as a FS for quite a while, but not permanently.

*We don’t know:*

* If we move the ball fields, should the basketball court move with them?
* What does the Fire Department need? Talk with Chief again.
* When and how we are going to begin implementing the plan. If we do the Fire and Police together, we will likely be eligible for Massachusetts Works grants for Public Safety. This could include restructuring the retaining wall, reconfiguring the driveway entrance, adding a traffic light with public safety controls. Figure out what we are going to do and then apply for the grants.
* Water and sewer need more investigation**.** The current plans do not show the connections under the Town Administrator’s office. **TL will arrange for BETA staff to map out the systems, including well locations and sewer system pipe sizes, determine whether the sewer system can handle more waste, review the leaching field, get the pipe sizes, talk with Tom Milias, Board of Health and Jim Mulcahy.** Additional questions:
* Is there enough water supply for housing, a community center, and a new FS?
* How does this affect the septic system? Should we fix the current system, add a new system, or add some sort of treatment plant?
* Is housing a good option for the center campus? We need to hear from Liz Dennehy about her research into other municipal housing plans and developments (Berlin and Bolton?) Administrative costs for a Housing Authority could be a problem for Plympton. **BETA will look at market feasibility for housing.** TL said that dropping housing from the center campus will not threaten our current grant which pays for BETA’s services. We will need to document that we considered housing and decided that other sites in town would be better suited to meet the town’s needs

1. BETA Group exited the meeting at 7:30.
2. Town Barn Roof Update – The structural engineer said that the supports are sufficient. The specs are being finalized and the bid should go out next week.
3. Town House Lift Project – The Town is going to engage the same architect that just worked on the Highway Barn. This architect suggested that we consider not doing a lift. They will work on a design that will be structural, rather than mechanical. That may look better on this building and alleviate the issues that will develop on an exterior lift. The two main concerns are that it be fully usable by elderly and handicapped residents, and that it is within the parameters of the grant we received for this project.
4. NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 10/28/20, 6:00 PM Committee only

Tentatively Wednesday 11/11/20, 6:00 PM With BETA Group.

1. ADJOURNMENT: 7:47 PM (JT moved; NB seconded)