**TOWN PROPERTIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes for October 29, 2020, 6:00 PM

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

Jon Wilhelmsen (Chair)

GUESTS PRESENT: Town Administrator Liz Dennehy, 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 opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. by reading the Governor’s orders of 3/12 & 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.
2. MINUTES: NB moved that the minutes for October 14th be approved as written. JT seconded. Roll Call Vote: NB aye, RM aye, CT aye, JT aye, JW aye.
3. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS RE: PREVIOUS MEETING – JW asked if members had questions regarding the last meeting. CT voiced concern that we fully address housing in the center before we reject it. JT agreed. JW said that we need to have sewer and water questions answered. LD relayed info from her conversation with the Berlin Town Administrator (BA).

Berlin discussion summary: Berlin shares many of Plympton’s service (or lack thereof) problems but has been able to build 40B housing. BA suggested that starting on the edge of town with a shared private/public project may be the best option. This will allow access to shared sewer/water services from a neighboring town. Another option would be to bring in the infrastructure for those services from a neighboring town, i.e. running sewer lines from Halifax along Rte. 58. (Note: Though this may be possible, there would be many seen and unseen consequences. This would not be a first-choice option.) It would seem that Plympton does not have the capacity to take on a housing commission at this time. BA gave LD more tips for contacts, grants, etc. to help with this ongoing housing issue.

Further Discussion: JT said that the Town has contacted the woman who owns the land abutting Woodlands. She isn’t interested in selling her land yet, but we have at least initiated the idea. She also owns the land on which a small historic cemetery is located. She seemed pleased that the Town is taking an interest in that cemetery and that we may arrange to tidy it.

1. Town Barn Roof Update – Report by LD. The architect was on site yesterday. There may be problems relating to the insulation; it must meet the new energy code which means an addional 4”-6” of insulation. The current supports won’t hold this additional weight. It may be that extra purlins could be installed, or some other steps taken to remedy the situation. The amount appropriated at Town Meeting for this project is $100,000, some of that has already been committed to design and engineering work. LD fears that the additional insulation and supports will make the project estimates exceed the appropriation. There is a possibility of absorbing some of this overage through Buildings and Grounds, but there is also the possibility of needing to go back to Town Meeting for more funds.

Discussion: RM suggested that the scope of this job does not trigger the step up to the new energy code. **RM will check on this with the code people at his company**. **LD will get the estimates and drawings to RM for this purpose.** Though we need to get this job done before winter causes further roof damage and possible further damage to equipment, it is too expensive to have a Special Town Meeting. We need to see exactly where we are in terms of the project specs before we locate funding. JW wants to make sure that we solve the cause of the initial ice dam problem which led to the failure of the roof and damage to equipment.

The discussion turned to the need to solicit FinCom to support an Article to establish funding for professional services to allow for better specs and estimates BEFORE seeking appropriation at Town Meeting. This is something that is needed for every project in order to be best prepared to locate funding within Town monies, through TM appropriation or possibly though grants. We can’t continue to make appropriation decisions based on under-researched or incomplete information. Professional help saves time and money and is therefore essential.

1. Town House Access Project – We had also asked the architect to design a non-mechanical solution to the problem of access to the second floor of the Town House. They have come up with two proposals. LD spoke with her contacts at the State, who are in favor of a non-mechanical solution. We need to make sure that these options do not trigger the need to update all entrances.

Discussion: It is clear that this would be more cost effective in the long run. A lift would need maintenance and eventual replacement. It is accepted that people are not comfortable using lifts, either because of the device itself or because it makes them feel self-conscious.

MOTION: CT moved that we proceed with a structural, rather than mechanical, exterior access to the Town House second floor. RM seconded. Roll Call Vote: NB aye, RM aye, CT aye, JT aye, JW aye.

Further Discussion: With this decision made, **LD will pursue other bids, including architects and landscaping.** We will have the winter to accomplish the design and be ready to move forward with the return of clement weather.The committee confirmed that the structure must meet code, be fully usable, easily accessible and look good.

**LD will contact Rep. LaNatra and Sen. Brady** to make them aware of the change from mechanical to structural and the reasons behind the change. This should not affect the grant since it still meets the intended purpose of access.

1. INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES: Town House Pipes – The committee had previously discussed the need to have the sewage and storm water systems researched and mapped. The Board of Health has sent the BOS a letter requiring that the sewer issue be dealt with ASAP. The short-term solution is to have periodic snaking of the pipes. This is not sustainable, but before we decide on a solution plan we need to know where the pipes and the problems are located. It is also important to know this information before we start making changes to the outside portions of the system to accommodate proposed changes to the Town Campus. The best way to accomplish this is to hire a company to use an electronic system to scope out the system. **LD will work on getting quotes from companies that do this scoping work**. The scope of the job will be in three portions: inside the Town House, inside the Library and Fire Department, and under the parking lots/road. We also need to learn about the storm water system. **LD will send the committee a copy of the letter from the BOH. She will respond to the BOH on behalf of the BOS and this committee.**
2. FIRE STATION – JW spoke with Chief Silva. He suggested that the Chief attend our next meeting to speak to the Fire Department needs and discuss with the committee the various proposed options. This will help us determine short and medium-term remedies and achieve long-term goals.
3. OTHER TOWN PROPERTY WORK
4. LD is working with Scott Bancroft (Habeeb and Associates) to assess the roofs of all Town-owned buildings.
5. Library Lighting Issues – the main reading room lights need replacement since the bulbs can no longer be acquired. Before this is done, we should get a lighting plan for the entire library building. There may be funds in the library budget to work on this.
6. Town Green Flagpole – The flagpole needs painting, re-rigging, and possibly lighting. LD spoke with Rockland Flag Company and Brenner Signs and Awnings Company. They will send a quote. **LD will get the refurbishing of the current pole priced, as well as getting information on a maintenance-free replacement.** With both costs in hand, we can determine which path is more cost effective.
7. **Joint meeting with the BOS and FinCom on 11/16/20** will include the work of this committee. Members are welcome to attend. Topics: As previously mentioned, we need funding for professional services. We also believe there would be a great benefit to having a FinCom Liaison attend the Town Building Committee meetings. All projects need input from FinCom and having a liaison means that they will have pre-knowledge of upcoming needs. It was also mentioned that if this committee is to do the work within its purview – particularly overseeing the buildings and systems – then there may be a need to have more funds in Buildings and Grounds. Cost effective maintenance and replacement cannot always wait for Town Meeting.
8. NEXT MEETING: Tentatively **Tuesday** 11/10 or **Thursday** 11/12, 6:00 with BETA Group.
9. ADJOURNMENT: 7:23 PM (NB moved; JT seconded)