

Master Plan Implementation Committee

Minutes of February 17, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Ed Forsberg, Chairman, at 6:35 pm in the Main Meeting Room, Town Hall.

Committee Members Present: Ed Forsberg, Al Goetz, Dominick Ianno, Bruce Norwell, Dick Nottebart, John Desmond, Michael Gallahue (left at 7:25 pm), Roger Turner (left at 7:25 pm).

Visitors Present: Denise Maleiko, Trustee of 894 East Street Condominiums; Mary Kent, Finance Committee.

Staff Present: Don Johnson, Stephanie Mercandetti, Maura Therrien

Approval of Minutes: Moved by Ed, seconded by Al, to approve the minutes of 1/11/11 and 1/27/11. Voted 6-0-0 (Roger and Michael G. had left the meeting by the time of the vote).

Ongoing/Old Business, and Implementation Activities:

Discussion on long-term Town building needs and future uses of town buildings including Police, Fire, Library, Senior Center, and School buildings, the status of Town-owned land in relation to these needs, and the potential land purchases to satisfy these needs:

Bruce presented an "MPIC statement of support" which comprehensively covers the committee's position. Al stated that a piece of property of this size and location does not come along but once every hundred years. Bruce will incorporate this into his statement concerning the MPIC's position on this issue, which the MPIC will send to the Board of Selectmen in the form of a letter.

Ed suggested we meet with each department head for about two hours. Then we will know what their building, and land needs will be. After this committee hears every department head, questions each, and considers their input, we will have a better picture of the town's needs. We might look at the size of each building, how many floors, parking spaces, ideas on sites, etc. The MPIC will take on fact-finding; leg work that the consultant would do. Dick Power will take the lead and report the study to the Town Meeting.

Michael G. listed possible uses of the Walpole Woodworkers property. There is a house of historical value on the property which may be moved to another town owned land. Two metal buildings may be dismantled or sold and reassembled elsewhere. The property has two saleable residential lots. They are police and fire (either together or standing alone), senior center, school, athletic fields, senior housing, DPW. Purchasing the land would give the town better control of housing under Chapter 40B and Chapter 40R placement and character, and the land is an investment. For a 40R development, the Town would receive reimbursement from the state based on the number of units built, and school costs of the development would be reimbursed to the Town under Chapter 40S. As stated in the TOWN MEETING article the purchase would require a debt exclusion override. Meetings with the townspeople, to explain all the advantages, are necessary. Available property in the downtown area does not come along often.

Jim Johnson, Assistant Town Administrator, will do some legwork and set up the meetings with the department heads.

At a special MPIC meeting on 2/24 we will develop an outline of information that we need from each department head, in the form of a questionnaire. A study will follow.

John reminds us of the \$185,000 from the School Assistance School Bureau funding. Provided the study includes school buildings, we might use this found money. John believes we need to campaign for the public support. Whether TOWN MEETING supports us or not, this issue should be on the ballot in June.

Mary stated that the focus needs to be on the town's needs for land. It is beneficial to preserve space and protect the town. Keep it straightforward and unemotional. Do not start placing facilities quite yet.

Stephanie believes that long term planning is best.

Don has produced a map of the town owned property. He will provide a listing of these.

Dick N. will find former related studies.

Downtown revitalization activities / Downtown municipal trail and park project, Re: activities planned for winter/spring 2011, status of property survey by the Norfolk County Engineering Office, and coordination of activities with Northeastern University Engineering Students.

A letter from Board of Selectmen to Greg Sands of the Northeastern University Student Engineering Team will be sent including liability questions. Maggie Walker, Town Engineer, has informed the MPIC that the Norfolk County Engineer's office has completed all the fieldwork on the property survey. They are doing the office work now to compile the field data for the property survey. When the survey is complete Maggie will let us know and we will turn the survey over to Greg to complete the engineering design work.

Status of potential funding sources of various economic development and planning activities:

There were no new activities this past month. The Town is still waiting to hear from DHCD relative to our grant application under the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) program for a parking analysis.

The Town is considering applying for a technical assistance grant under the EPA Sustainable Communities Building Blocks program for smart growth technical assistance.

On February 22, Stephanie and Don will be meeting with representatives of DOER to kick-off the 100 hours of technical assistance that the Town has been awarded under the Green Communities Program to be designated as a green community, which opens up numerous grant opportunities for energy conservation and other “green” activities/initiatives by the Town such as renewable energy.

Stephanie noted that there will be a public forum on March 1 on the Route 1A economic development and marketing plan that is under way through the \$50,000 grant that the Town has obtained under the CDBG program.

Historical Commission - Potential application under FY 2011 MHC Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, and other ongoing WHC/MPIC-related activities:

The WHC had determined that they would not be pursuing a grant under the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund this year.

Housing Partnership – Updates on Library Reuse Study and Housing Production Plan, and other WHP/MPIC – related activities:

The WHP met on January 18 with the Building Inspector and representatives of Habitat for Humanity relative to affordable housing creation opportunities with Habitat’s programs. Dan Daly, Chairman of the WHP, made a presentation to the Board of Selectmen on January 25 on the above referenced updates. The WHP had also met on February 15, with Jack Roche, who presented a housing conversion project he had done in Norwood for a group home for seven mentally disabled adults, which is counted as seven dwelling units in one building for Norwood’s affordable housing inventory. Mr. Roche thought a similar project may be feasible in Walpole, and the WHP had expressed its interest in this. The WHP is attempting to schedule a meeting over the next couple of weeks with representatives of Rojas Design and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) relative to an update on progress on the Library Reuse Study.

Open Space and Recreation Plan update - brief update on recent meetings:

The Open Space Committee met on February 10 and discussed primarily updates to the Open Space properties inventory.

Appointment of Finance Committee member to the MPIC:

The Finance Committee had selected their member Mary Kent to be their representative member on the MPIC, but the Board of Selectmen had not yet confirmed Mary’s appointment to the MPIC.

Location of proposed flagpole on Stone Field:

No action taken.

New Business:

Meeting Dates for 2011 MPIC meetings:

A special meeting was set for Thursday, February 24 at 6:30 pm, for the purpose of discussing and developing the process for a comprehensive study and plan for the Town's facilities needs and land availability relative to these needs. The regular monthly MPIC meeting for March will be on Thursday 3/10/2011 at 6:30 pm as previously scheduled.

Correspondence:

None

Any Other Business Before the Committee:

None

Adjournment:

At 8:20 pm, Ed motioned, seconded by Al., to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor of the motion (6-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,