



Joint Special Meeting Finance and Community Resources Committee of the Town Council

January 5, 2021 2:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Finance Committee Members participating remotely: Chair Andrew Steinberg, Vice Chair Cathy Schoen, Pat De Angelis, Lynn Griesemer, Dorothy Pam . Non-Voting Membersy: Robert Hegner, Bernard Kubiak

Finance Committee Members absent: None

Community Resources Committee Members participating remotely: Chair Mandi Jo Hanneke, Vice Chair Shalani-Bahl-Milne, Evan Ross, Steve Schreiber, Sarah Swartz

Community Resources Committee Members absent: None

Others participating remotely: Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek, Finance Director Sean Mangano, Building Commissioner Rob Morra, Comptroller Sonia Aldrich, Affordable Housing Trust Chair John Hornik, Community Preservation Act Committee Chair Sarah Marshall, and Minute Taker Lindsey McConnell

Housing Consultant Rita Farrell

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, this Special meeting of the Finance and Community Resources Committees of the Town Council was conducted via remote participation

Agenda Item 1 Call to Order

Finance Committee Chair Steinberg called the meeting to order at 2:01pm, confirmed all Finance committee members can hear and be heard, and announced audio and video recording.

Community Resources Committee (CRC) Chair Hanneke called the CRC meeting to order at 2:04pm and confirmed all CRC members can heard and be heard.

Steinberg stated a request for approval for the expenditure from the Community Preservation Act Committee (CPA) for housing has been referred to both committees and requires them to at before next council meeting.

Agenda Item 2 Belchertown Road Land Acquisition for Affordable Housing

i. Presentation

Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek presented on the potential housing project on Belchertown Road. CRC member Bahl Milne joined at 2:10pm

Affordable Housing Trust Chair John Hornik continued the presentation speaking to the challenges of finding affordable housing in Amherst and the financial aspects of the project.

Building Commissioner Rob Morra continued the presentation speaking to details of the property.

CPA Chair Marshall reiterated CPA's support for the project. Marshall asked if the CPA is the source of all funds, would all expenses need to be eligible for CPA funding. Marshall asked if a payout to tenants of the current house on the property would be an eligible expense.

Town staff stated these questions would need to be run by the Town's legal team.

ii. Councilor Questions

The Finance Committee, CRC and Town staff discussed details and questions related to the project including:

- What can be done with the property if purchased with CPA money and the effort to build affordable housing is unsuccessful
- The number of affordable units anticipated
- The percent of Area Median Income (AMI) required when using CPA funds
- If Town staff anticipate any concerns by the abutters or nearby property owners
- The pros and cons of bundling this property with the E Street School site in a request for proposals
- If Town staff anticipate zoning issues or challenges related to surveying
- Who will own the property at different times
- Opportunity to create housing that leads to ownership

Finance Committee member Schoen joined at 2:50pm

Steinberg added housing consultant Rita Farrell to the meeting and introduced her as having a lifetime of experience with affordable housing. Farrell spoke to requirements associated with CPA funds including that the property must be owned by the municipality, and could not be used for housing over 100% of AMI. Farrell also stated the E Street School site has no CPA funds in it currently so it doesn't have the same requirements.

The Finance Committee, CRC and Town staff continued to discuss details and questions related to the project including:

- Details about abutting conservation land and the Town's intention to develop it into community gardens, trail and possibly small farm pilot areas
- Barriers related to creating workforce housing
- Availability of other properties that could be used for affordable housing
- How the Town advertises to developers to do affordable housing
- The possibility of a trail to Fort River
- Pedestrian and cyclist safety concerns on Belchertown road

Steinberg asked about the annual amount that will be required from CPA for the continued note. Marshall stated the CPA looked carefully at their debt service obligation and stated they have some debt expiring

soon. The CRC agreed they received the information needed to deliberate further at their next meeting on January 12, 2021. Hanneke adjourned the CRC portion of the Joint Special meeting at 3:39 pm.

CRC members Hanneke, Bahl-Milne, Ross, Schreiber and Swartz left the meeting.

iii. Discussion

Steinberg shared packet item CO FY21 - 08A CPA Borrowing Authorization Belchertown Road Land Acquisition.

Comptroller Sonia Aldrich stated the order has gone through the Town attorneys and this is what need to book this budget for authorization. Kubiak welcomed Ferrell's involvement in this project. Hornik seconded that.

Marshall asked about language in paragraph C of the Order referring to a qualified purchaser in terms of the Ferrell's previous statement that CPA funds require the Town to retain ownership.

Town staff agreed to take this question to the Town attorney and stated it should not impact the motion.

Schoen asked if land surveys have been completed and if there are any contingencies in place.

Ziomek stated the Town has done their due diligence, the property has been appraised, and the Council meeting on January 25, 2021 is the ultimate contingency. Morra added the Town has done their own research and has had an environmentalist walk the site.

Griesemer asked if an inspection has been done and if the current buildings on the property are able to be rented as is. Morra stated an inspection has not been done, the rental units are currently managed by a professional company and are certified through Town standards.

iv. Take position on Finance Committee recommendation

MOTION: Griesemer moved, De Angelis seconded, to recommend the approval by the Council for the Appropriation and Borrowing Authorization and Land Acquisition Order subject to final review by legal council.

Hegner spoke in favor of the motion and stated concern the infrastructure where Route 9 and E Street meet is not safe and will require further investment. Schoen stated that can be noted in the Committee report and developing housing often comes with infrastructure.

Steinberg stated Route 9 is a state highway and is not the Town's to maintain.

Kubiak also spoke in favor of the motion and stated concern about bundling this property with the E Street school project.

VOTE: 5 to 0 by roll call, unanimously to recommend the approval by the Council for the Appropriation and Borrowing Authorization and Land Acquisition Order subject to final review by legal council.

Steinberg thanked Town staff, Marshall and Ferrell for their attendance and help.

Ziomek stated Town staff will take the Committee's questions to the Town attorneys.

Ziomek, Morra, Hornik, Marshall, and Ferrell left the meeting at 4:05 pm.

Agenda Item 4 Future Agenda Items

Steinberg stated the Council recommended the Committee look at the Inventory Policy for the current year and consider including additional information on the zoning of properties. Steinberg stated a detailed email from Councilor Brewer will be sent.

Agenda Item 3 Stormwater Management Bylaw and Illicit Discharge Bylaw

Steinberg stated this item will not be taken up in this meeting but it has been referred to the Committee. Steinberg encouraged the Committee to look at the presentations made when they are posted on Amherst Media, stated the rewritten bylaws will be sent in advance and Town Staff will be able to attend when it is discussed.

Agenda Item 4 Future Agenda Items

The committee discussed a request for input on a memo regarding scheduling a to-do-list as part of a larger effort to set up future agendas list for the entire Council. The committee agreed a discussion of the memo will be added to a future agenda.

Agenda Item 5 Meeting Schedule. The committee discussed continuing to meet at 2pm the Tuesdays after Council meetings.

Agenda Item 6 Public Comment - None

Agenda Item 7 Topics not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before the meeting

Griesemer announced the annual opportunity to elect officers and for Councilors to request if they would like to be on another committee is coming up.

Steinberg adjourned the meeting at 4:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey McConnell

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

Belchertown Road Acquisition Presentation 12-21-20 TC

CO FY21 - 08A CPA Borrowing Authorization Belchertown Road Land Acquisition

CPAC Special Report FY21 - Final

Finance Committee Agenda 01-05-2021

Memo on Stormwater Management and IDDE Bylaws with attachments_final 12-14-20

Stormwater Management and IDDE Bylaws 12_21_20 Town Council presentation