

Amherst Finance Committee Minutes
Thursday, March 30
Meeting Room, Town Hall

ATTENDANCE: Joseph Jayne, Janice Ratner, Anurag Sharma, Marylou Theilman (Chair)
ABSENT: Steve Braun (Vice-Chair), Bernie Kubiak, Tim Neale

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Vince O'Connor; Chris Brestrup, Director of Planning; Barry Roberts, Tom Reilly, Stephen Schreiber, Planning Board; Doug Slaughter, Claire McGinnis, Amherst Media.

Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM

Zoning Petition Article 36

Petitioner: Vince O'Connor

Purpose of the article: to limit the amount of traffic and activity impacts in the surrounding single family neighborhood, in light of an application that was approved for extensive development on a parcel on Cows Road. According to the petitioner, a traffic study suggested that the development would entail a maximum impact of 2,400 +/- 300 trips per day

Financial implications for the town: speculative as to what the financial impact would be. Permits granted, one each on north and south side. The petitioner said he drove down to Cows Road, much angle parking there and that may go away.

Response Planning Board (Stephen Schreiber): Big concept, what is being proposed is not consistent with the Master Plan, not dense enough and not mixed use. The Planning Board voted 9-0 to recommend against the article.

Response Planning Department (Chris Brestrup): Proposal to rezone 6 properties altogether. Planning department found that these properties were in past used for commercial and industrial purposes; the proposal limiting them to residential is not consistent with the historical precedence. Photographs from last century that some of the properties were used for logging and farming purposes. Existing state and local regulations are sufficient to protect resources in the area. The town has approximately 80 acres of commercially zoned land, and this article affects 18.5 ac res which would be removed from commercial uses. Financial impact on the town is limited as not much land is available for commercial purposes.

Article 31

Chris Brestrup: Back in the 1960s, the indicated property on University Drive was deeded to the town of Amherst, with the stipulation that access be limited to 6 points as red dots on the map. See handout.

The parcel is 5.798 acres

Part of property is accessible through the shopping center. Southern most point provides access to the property but needs to cross a wetland. The article requests that zoning for this parcel be changed from Office Park (OP) to Limited Business (DL); property has wetland issues, which makes access difficult.

The article is to authorize the select board to allow an additional access point.

Petitioners acknowledge that they will need consultation with conservation commission, DPW, and fire department.

Current tax on this property is \$3,200; the town waived the right to purchase; if the property is sold for land development then the town gets roll back taxes for 5 years at the difference in value, coming to about \$40,000 to be paid by the seller. Plus the town taxes will then be on the developed property, likely much higher depending on the nature of development that goes here. It is difficult to ascertain revenues and costs to the town as a specific development on this property has not yet been proposed.

Joint Capital Planning Committee (JCPC) Report

[Handout]

Presenter, Doug Slaughter:

Article 13: Capital Program, Equipment. Part of the request will come from Ambulance Fund. Software and computers plus equipment and vehicles etc. Please see the handout for items.

Article 14: Capital Program, Buildings and Facilities. This includes such things as interior maintenance of the town hall, bangs center, schools, Munson library building. Please see the handout for items.

Article 15: Capital Program, Bond Authorization for Wildwood (boiler, \$500,000) and Fort River (feasibility study, \$115,000) repairs.

Article 16: Capital Program, Bond Authorization Water Fund for water metering equipment.

Theilman requested breakdown of capital program dollars to different departments, town, and schools, so as to better grasp how the capital dollars are being allocated.

Votes on Articles

Not Recommend Zoning Petition Article 36: Vote 4-0-3

Recommend University Drive Article 31: Vote 4-0-3

Recommend Capital Program Article 13: Vote 4-0-3

Recommend Capital Program Article 14: Vote 4-0-3

Recommend Capital Program Article 15: Vote 4-0-3

Recommend Capital Program Article 16: Vote 4-0-3

Article 1: Reports of Boards and Committees, Recommend, Vote 4-0-3

Article 2: Transfer of Funds – Unpaid Bill. Defer to Town Meeting, Vote 4-0-3

Article 3: Acceptance of optional tax exemptions, Recommend, Vote 4-0-3

Article 4: FY2017 Budget amendments, Recommend, Vote 4-0-3

Article 8: Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Assessment Method, Recommend, Vote 4-0-3

Article 11: Revolving Fund Reauthorization (\$400,000), Recommend, Vote 4-0-3

Article 17: Personal property maximum tax exemption, Recommend, Vote 4-0-3

Article 20: PEG Cable access contract 10-year term, Recommend, Vote 4-0-3

Article 21: Free cash, Recommend, Defer to Town Meeting

Article 22: Stabilization Fund, Defer until Town Meeting, Vote 4-0-3

Article 24: Amherst Affordable Housing Trust Bylaw Amendment, No Recommendation, Vote 4-0-3

Article 31: Limited release of restriction, Recommend, Vote 4-0-3

Next Week

Article 12B: CPA Cole property acquisition bond authorization

Article 28: Percent of Art Bylaw

Article 29: Sanctuary City

Adjourned 9:51 pm

Handouts

1. Memo from Claire McGinnis to Paul Bockelman, March 29, 2017
2. Planning Department's document entitled 'Evaluation of North Amherst COM petition article (O'Connor et. al).'
3. Map of the plot on university drive, Article 31

Acting Clerk,
Anurag Sharma