

# TOWN OF ADAMS

## SELECT BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, October 14, 2015 – 7:00 PM  
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM, 1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

On the above date the **Board of Selectmen** and held a meeting at the **Adams Town Hall** at 7:00 p.m.

**Chairman Richard Blanchard** presided the meeting. Present were **Vice Chairman Jeffrey Snoonian**, **Members Joseph Nowak, Arthur Harrington, John Duval**, and **Town Administrator, Tony Mazzucco**. Also in attendance was **Community Development Director Donna Cesan**.

*The Select Board Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.*

### OFFICIAL BUSINESS

#### *Memorial School*

**Town Administrator Mazzucco** updated the Select Board on the status of the Memorial School building. BART School was cleared to have basketball practice in the building but no games, and the Harvest Market was cleared with the same conditions as last year.

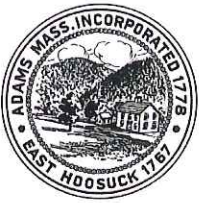
**Community Development Director Donna Cesan** addressed the Select Board regarding the strategy for the school and asked for clarification from the Board regarding their direction with the building. She explained why Adams did not get grant funding for the HVAC System. The next CDBG Grant is due February 2016.

Board Members discussed whether to change direction or stay the course of this project. Decommissioning the building would make insurance costs go way up and make grant applications more difficult. The building would likely begin to deteriorate. *Arrowstreet* gave a ballpark estimate in the past of \$800,000 to tear down the building. The total approximate cost for the building for the year, with small repairs and heating costs is \$35,000. Decommissioning the building will save a small amount of money up front and cost a lot more in the future.

It was suggested that the Town consider the local option meals tax for this project but the funds were earmarked for economic development and cannot be appropriated before they are received. There is incentive to get the building back on the tax rolls, by either reuse or selling it to another company. Another formerly decommissioned property and became a congregation place for hoarders and drugs before beautiful apartments were built there. If the Memorial School is also decommissioned it could have smashed windows, trespassers, and fall into disrepair. Selling it for \$1 probably won't be successful and it would likely return back to the Town. Tearing down the building would cost a significant amount, and asbestos and lead paint will be costly to remove.

*Director Cesan* was commended for getting the grant funds she has been able to get for Adams. Discussion took place regarding setting a time frame to move forward before reassessing the project. Board Members will decide at an upcoming meeting when to reassess the project and Director Cesan will investigate available sources of funding and report back to the Board.

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### ***Commonwealth's 40R Program***

**Director Cesan** advised she is working with Berkshire Regional Staff on state-created incentives that concentrate on development. They evaluated existing buildings in the town center that meet the criteria of the 40R Program, and Memorial School could meet requirements for housing development. This would be a companion program with 40S to fund the schools. Board Members showed interest in knowing any drawbacks of the 40R program as well. She advised a "housing needs" assessment will be done and it would be good for the Town to have a strategy.

This could include Live/Work housing, promoted by the arts group in town, but a change to zoning may be in order. Currently, the zoning in Town has no conditions for multi-family housing. This program could be utilized to piggyback onto other Town programs. There are specific criteria to be met because it is a state program and there needs to be an overlay bylaw. Other communities like Pittsfield have used it successfully.

The population decline in the county could cause an overstock of housing in Adams especially if developing new apartments. Other apartment houses in the community soon will not be filled and there will need to be a strategy in place for moving forward. There are issues with deferred maintenance and housing codes. A large part of the housing stock is sub-standard and a detriment to attracting people to the area. New housing created will create competition, and may make the Town more attractive to a broader audience.

### ***Various Community Development Initiatives***

#### **Berkshire Scenic Railway**

**Director Cesan** advised that at the "soft opening" there were 752 train tickets sold. North Adams will have a formal station soon. There was a great collaboration with the nonprofit Berkshire Scenic Railway, the delegation and Mass DOT working together. There is a plan to have theme trains including a Halloween Train Ride and a Tinsel Liner, with a Polar Express planned for next year. Those in the Corporate Park were very helpful and supportive, particularly Burke Construction, CTC, and Adams Plumbing. Adams needs to convey how great this is to the State so they understand how important the next 7/10 mile is and realize the economic impact to the two communities.

Special thanks were given to both *Burke Construction* for allowing the Town to do the project and also to Director Cesan's husband for volunteering to direct traffic for three days.

This will be discussed at the next MPO meeting. The materials have been purchased to finish the last 7/10 mile but there was not enough money to hire the labor until July 1<sup>st</sup>. This railway will be available for use by industries like Holland Company and other small businesses.

Board Members suggested sending letters to Senator Downing, the Delegation, and the Secretary of Transportation Rail Division. Letters also should be sent to the Industrial Park and Burke Construction.



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### **Bike Trail**

The Bike Trail from Hoosac Street to Lime Street is out to bid and expected to come in December 1<sup>st</sup>. Director Cesan is working with North Adams on the area from Lime Street to Hodges Cross Road. Money for the Rail Trail Extension in part is also for co-use of both Rail and Trail, but they are two separate projects. The Town has to go through the *Right of Way* process and has not done an environmental review for the Rail portion yet.

### **Hoosac Valley Coal and Grain**

The *Hoosac Valley Coal and Grain* property will be sent out to bid for tearing down existing buildings. The Town will work with *Brownfields* for assessment and potential cleanup work. The application for this will be due at the end of November or December.

### **Roundabout**

The *Roundabout* is resuming work as scheduled but it is weather dependent. If there is good weather until December the work may catch up. The plan is to get the hardscape done this calendar year and landscaping in the spring.

### **Green Communities Application**

The deadline for the *Green Communities* application is next week and the Town is waiting on information from National Grid for energy audits. An energy audit on Town Hall was done last year but the Town has not yet seen the report. The Town is putting information into the application to see if the HVAC and solar compactor can be funded.

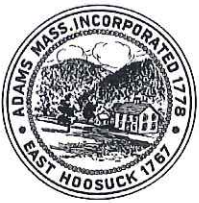
A request was made by a Board Member about getting information about a sprinkler issue and what the difference is between having a gathering place and a museum.

### **Economic Development Commission**

**Town Administrator Mazzucco** announced that the *Economic Development Commission* had their kickoff meeting last week and he and Director Cesan will be working on the staffing for the sub-committees. Board Members were invited to give input. Once the sub-committees are staffed projects will be put in the pipelines.

Many of the Commission Members usually don't volunteer with the community, and economic development is really creating jobs and devising a strategy to bring in industry. The *Economic Development Strategy* adopted in 2013 mostly focused on tourist-based development. Recent surveys indicate people are leaving because there are no jobs, so expanding a corporate park is vital.

The smokestack was discussed for whether its distance was safe enough from the tracks. A discussion took place over when it is appropriate for the Town to take a building if taxes are not being paid. The Town can deny permits for unpaid taxes, except for emergency items. Equipment can also be seized, but it is a lengthy process and may involve land court and other complications. The Tax Collector is being very aggressive with collecting taxes.



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### **Arts Advisory Board**

**Town Administrator Mazzucco** met with the Arts Advisory Board and they are going forward with projects including physical elements of public art in the community.

### **Mt. Greylock in Adams**

The top of *Mt. Greylock* has no indication to visitors that they are actually in Adams. A talk with *DCR* or *Bascom Lodge* will be initiated to discuss either signs on the roadway or t-shirts to get the knowledge out. Getting more of the Town's history into the public will also help.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

#### ***Community Compact***

The *Community Compact* signing with the Lt. Governor will be at 2:30 p.m. Thursday at the Clarksburg Town Hall.

#### ***Berkshire Regional Dinner***

The *Berkshire Regional Dinner* will be held on Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

#### ***Greylock Glen***

October 22<sup>nd</sup> *Secretary Beaton* will be coming at 10:30 a.m. to greet the Town officials and view the Greylock Glen.

#### ***Berkshire Health Alliance***

At the next meeting there will be a discussion on the software for the Board of Health and the Superintendent and School Committee Chair will speak about focus groups.

#### ***Strategic Planning Session***

There will be a *Strategic Planning Meeting* at 10:00 a.m. at Hoosac Valley High School.

#### ***Chair Auction***

Sunday will be the *Chair Auction* at the *Bounti-Fare* to benefit the Youth Center.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

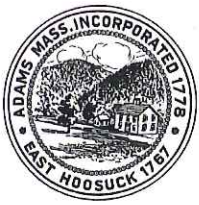
***Motion made to adjourn by Member Duval***

***Second by Member Harrington***

***Unanimous Vote***

***Motion passed***

***Select Board Workshop Meeting Adjourned at 8:28 p.m.***



## TOWN OF ADAMS SELECT BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary.

Joseph Nowak  
Joseph Nowak, Member

Arthur Harrington  
Arthur Harrington, Member

John Duval, Member

Jeffrey Snoonian, Vice Chairman

Richard Blanchard  
Richard Blanchard, Chairman