

Town of Dunstable
**Joint Meeting of the Selectboard, Advisory Board,
Roads Commission, & Affordable Housing
Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2018
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

Convened: 5:30 pm

Present: Leah D. Basbanes, chair, Ronald J. Mikol, vice chair, James E. Tully, member; Carol Bacon, Dana Metzler, Alan Chaney, Affordable Housing; Bob Nelson, Harold Simmons, Advisory Board; Paul Dalida, Roads Commission; Phil DeNyse, Tiffany Naughton, Parks Commission

Discussion About the Mixed Use District, its Access Rd, Funding Grants, & the Affordable Housing Project

Ms. Bacon started off by explaining that most of these are questions that must be answered prior to an RFP. The most important of which is whether the access road should be private or public. If it is private the developer would have to build it. If public the town would have to build it. Mr. Nelson noted that there are some benefits either way. Mr. Dalida agreed suggesting that if a grant is procured the Commonwealth would pay for the road. He also felt that some of the water line work from Pleasant Street into it could also be covered. Mr. Dalida then spoke about the general way that the project would work and about the various ways to ease any potential traffic and congestion in that area. With 40 units intended to go in, that will increase traffic around the new intersection. Further the Post Office will be on the corner of the access road and Pleasant Street. From there he then spoke about road improvements that could be part of this from a big picture perspective. This included some possible work on Groton Street which intersects with Pleasant Street not far from where this access road would intersect with Pleasant. Mr. Dalida also noted ways to build the access road that could help with recreation access as well. There was some discussion of how Complete Streets would impact things. This included possible sidewalk and bicycle lanes in and around that area. One of the major criteria for grant funding from the Commonwealth is affordable housing.

This discussion prompted Mr. Nelson who had a few questions regarding the grant programs available. Mr. Dalida elaborated further and explained the most likely grant funding source would be the MassWorks Infrastructure program. This would be to support the economic and housing development of the town. Mr. Nelson noted some of the density requirements and inquired as to how that would affect things. Mr. Dalida elaborated further. This included explanations about how to use this project on the MUD to improve the road ways in that area. One prominent way would be the installation of a turn lane that would be incorporated for the access road and possibly one for Groton Street as well. The Board inquired about how turn lanes would impact any possible bicycle lanes. Mr. Dalida felt confident that they wouldn't. It was noted that the town owns about 30 feet on either side from the center dividing line. Mr. Dalida then spoke about how the Rt. 113 Project settled a lot of these questions at least as to sidewalk and bicycle lanes. He noted that any investment the town puts in will help with the chances of grant approval. Some money would have to be found upfront to pay for engineering, but a lot of it, but not all of it, would be reimbursable from any grants approved. The Board turned discussion back to the spur for the water line that would have to go into the MUD. Mr. Dalida explained how that could be covered as well. Ms. Bacon interjected asking for a vote on whether this would be a public road or a private one. Mr. Nelson expressed some concerns on a formal vote at this stage without any grant funding in place one way or the other. Mr. Dalida felt confident that the town would get the funding.

The Board expressed the desire to do this in a way that doesn't hold up housing from moving forward. This included whether a decision could be made at this stage or not. Ms. Naughton suggested ways that Parks could be tied into this project. Mr. Nelson interjected to ask how much would be funded by the grant if approved. Mr. Dalida suggested it would be full funding in the end. It was clarified that the funding as to water would only cover a spur into the MUD; it would not cover the existing line on Pleasant Street. This prompted renewed discussion of expanding parts of Pleasant Street from the intersection with Pond Street to Groton Street. There was concern about any impact to the water infrastructure project. Both Mr. Dalida and Mr. Nelson felt confident that the water infrastructure project would not be seriously impacted. Ms. Bacon reiterated that there must be public water to the MUD or affordable housing cannot proceed there. The Board

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returned discussion to the access road. It was suggested by Mr. Dalida to put both options into the RFP. Mr. Nelson noted that the water infrastructure project won't start until July 2019 at the earliest. This prompted discussion on how soon to start the affordable housing project.

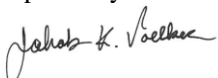
Ms. Bacon stated that the project cannot continue to be put off; the RFP should be issued so that the building can start. The building wouldn't be finished prior to the water infrastructure project. Mr. Dalida noted that putting out the affordable housing RFP could help with grant applications for MassWorks as it would show the seriousness of the town. There was some ensuing discussion as to the development of affordable housing and how the land would work. Ms. Bacon explained that the land would have to go to the project developer one way or the other. It was clarified that the RFP could have the option for the access road being private or public. There was some discussion about any eminent domain that could be required as part of the project. Mr. Nelson and Mr. Dalida jointly explained how that would work if need be. Discussion then shifted to the MassWorks timeline. Mr. Nelson noted that given the way the application would work would likely mean no road work started until 2020. Ms. Bacon interjected to say that work on affordable housing would start once the developer is selected, approved, and has the resources and time to build. Mr. Metzler noted that any RFP that is done will not be open ended; it will have a shelf life. This prompted some discussion of development and how it would work and whether a developer would be willing to wait. The Board suggested that by the time the RFP is done, proposals vetted, design work and engineering done, it would take a year or more. So that would likely get closer to that 2020 date.

Ms. Bacon then moved discussion to a question about affordable ownership units that could be built in part or whole by Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Nelson suggested a developer would likely be happy to allow Habitat to build those. Ms. Bacon then went into the calculations for affordability and how the rentals and ownership units would work and how the Commonwealth would weigh each. It was suggested of the 40 units, 30 could be rentals and the remaining 10 as owner. Ms. Bacon said the rentals could potentially be closer to 26. She then elaborated further on how Habitat could help. They would likely build two duplex's which would entail a total of 4 units. They would conform to the rest of the units. The use of Habitat would be an option left to the developer. Ms. Bacon then clarified that the access road would be built to public road standards with pricing as public or private, and the Habitat option would be in. This was generally agreed. Ms. Naughton asked whether CPA funds could be used. Ms. Bacon felt that it would be unlikely. Ms. Bacon then answered some questions as to the developers and what the town is likely to attract. Mr. Metzler interjected to note that the town may not get a nonprofit, it could end up with a for profit. There was then some ensuing discussion of who would answer questions for the RFP. The Board felt it would be the Chief Procurement Officer.

The CPO would be the best person to answer questions relating to the topic and that person could contact the appropriate officials otherwise needed. In the meantime, someone should be the point person until the town is able to hire a new Town Administrator. Mr. DeNyse inquired as to the public nature of the responses to the RFP. Ms. Bacon responded that the process is public, including questions and answers to developers. Mr. Nelson then suggested someone needs to own the MassWorks process. Mr. Dalida stated Roads Commission would since the necessary road work would fall under their jurisdiction. There was some side discussion about the possible need to build a foot bridge over Salmon Brook for any sidewalk that might get installed on that length of Pleasant Street. Mr. Dalida had a few thoughts, including the costs for any engineering. Mr. Nelson felt that there would have to be a town meeting vote on most if not all of this anyway. Mr. Metzler, in his capacity as Town Moderator, suggested that some of this should be discussed in a Special Town Meeting. Such a meeting could be scheduled in March or April. The Board's major concern for such a meeting would be having solid numbers for the water infrastructure project. The engineer's estimates are always all over the place until the plans are finalized. Then you get market prices. Discussion ended shortly thereafter with the agreement to continue work on all fronts.

The joint meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Voelker

Admin. Assistant to the Selectboard & Town Administrator

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