

Rogers and Oxford Study Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Present: Barbara Acksen, Albert Benac, Steve Desroches, Lisa Elliott, Gail Isaksen, Nils Isaksen, Pamela Kuechler, Sue Loo, Jeffrey Lucas, Beverly Rasmussen, Gayla Reilly, Karen Vilandry

Ex-officio: Selectman Bob Espindola

Guests: Gary Lavalette, Mark Badway, John Farrell, Bill Roth

Absent: Tom Alden, Paul Kitchen, Jimmie Oliver, Rona Trachtenberg, Daniel Freitas, John Medeiros

Minutes from the November 7, 2013 were approved.

Secretary reported that she had phoned Gail Isaksen and she is interested in staying on the committee. Rona Trachtenberg emailed to ask for minutes but did not indicate her intentions to remain on the committee. Sec'y will follow up. It was noted that Jimmie Oliver had passed away the previous week. Sec'y will contact town hall about Daniel Freitas.

Bill Roth, Town Planner reported that there are three options for the Oxford and Rogers buildings: 1. municipal use, 2. long term lease, or 3. sell the buildings. His opinion is that the town has no current need for the buildings and that the \$3-5 million needed to renovate would require a debt over-ride exclusion. He stated that the Rogers property could be sold (retaining the neighborhood park), but that would entail demolishing the building and selling the four 1-acre house lots for \$125,000 resulting in a deficit. Sale of the Oxford property would be similar, consolidating the property into one lot and making changes in the streets. He recommended the second option: leasing the property to a development company for housing or educational uses. The Peabody Company manages housing at the old Sacred Hearts property on Main Street. Local colleges and universities might be looking for satellite sites.

John Farrell, from the Planning Board and a property manager out side of town, explained municipal use housing vs development use housing. Funding would be needed to convert ot municipal housing. Fairhaven has 400 units but needs 700. The town can create restrictions on the use or appearance of the buildings (ie. exterior to remain true to its present appearance.)

Gayla Riley, Bob Espindola, Sue Loo, Barbara Acksen, Bev Rasmussen and Gail Isaksen volunteered to research "Request For Proposal" (RFP) and bring examples to next meeting.

A brainstorming session at the end of the meeting produced these possible ideas for re-use of either of the two buildings:

Higher Education (Mass Maritime, NorthEast Maritime, UMassD, Berkley, BCC, Bridgewater, etc)

Housing

Marine or Wind Commerce

Museum

Community Center

Artists work/live space (similar to Ropeworks in NB)

Inn or Bed & Breakfast.

It was agreed that we need to meet more frequently to accomplish our task before the agenda deadline for the May town meeting.. The next meetings will be at 6:30 pm on January 2 and 16 in the Banquet Room.

Lisa Elliott, sec'y