



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 7:00PM
Town Hall Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Chair, Lucy Wallace in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Selectmen Marie Sobalvarro, Ron Ricci, Bill Johnson and Tim Clark were all in attendance as well as the Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet.

MINUTES

On a Ricci/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of 2/5, as presented.

CENTRAL EMS CORP. APPOINTMENTS

On a Ricci/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Barbara Hilton as the Town Rep. and Fire Chief Rick Sicard as the First Responder.

MUNICIPAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST UPDATE

Trust members Leo Blair, Barbara Brady, Chris Ready and Bruce Nickerson were all present. Leo Blair explained the trust has been actively seeking opportunities to expand affordable housing in Harvard and have begun negotiations on two properties which have been identified to achieve this goal. The properties are located at 361 Ayer Road (50 or less units) and 166 Littleton Road (20 or less units). He explained during the 60 day due diligence phase the trust will develop criteria which will create an opportunity for developers. He said both of the properties have the ability to meet specific needs. Blair said the Ayer Road property will consist of family housing with some semi-detached and some detached two and three bedroom duplex rental properties that can be added to our affordable housing units. He explained the Littleton Road property has several interesting opportunities. He said the property has three maybe four buildable frontage lots that can hold single family dwellings on Pinnacle Road, a main building which will be converted to condominiums and there will also be some additional detached units. Blair said this project will be appealing for the 55 and older lifestyle. There will be a preference to Harvard residents on the affordable units. He said the market rate units will be priced in the \$300,000 range. Barbara Brady said the projects will allow the town to address its affordable housing issue without over saturating any one area. Wallace asked about septic issues and Blair confirmed the developers will be responsible for all due diligence related to septic and water. He explained if the deals do not go through only \$30,000 will be lost and there is zero liability to the town or the trust. Blair said this approach will allow us to control the 40B process. He said the trust intends on involving the public in the development of the criteria.

WATER COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS

On a Sobalvarro/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint the Sewer Commissioners consisting of Kyle Hedrick, Rick Maiore and Cindy Russo to also serve as Water Commissioners concurrent with their Sewer Commissioner terms.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Stu Sklar, 39 Scott Road, said he does not want to see Harvard emulate Washington by getting nothing done nor leave the fate of the town hall project in the hands of three (?) BOS members. He said it seems people keep trying to derail the project and he was very disturbed at some of the comments made by ZBA members at their recent hearing. Therefore, he along with 15 other concerned citizens submitted a citizen's petition which states:

We the undersigned registered voters of Harvard request that the Selectmen insert in the warrant for the April 6, 2013 Annual Town Meeting a zoning bylaw amendment that adds the following new paragraph to section 125-3 A of the Code of the town of Harvard:

“(5) Any lawful nonconforming existing structure that is either owned or occupied by an Institutional use (as defined in 125-16) and located on land that is within 2,500 feet of the Town center intersection of routes 110 and 111 may be repaired, moved, enlarged or altered without requiring any zoning relief and shall be exempted from any and all provisions of the Protective Bylaws.

By signing this petition you are requesting that the Harvard Board of Selectmen place on the warrant for the 2013 Annual Town meeting a Bylaw amendment to eliminate the need for a variance or special permit for municipal projects like the renovation of Town Hall.”

Sklar said he would be happy to pull the petition if the BOS members move their own initiative forward.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Bragan informed the BOS they would need to go into executive session for a personnel matter related to a union contract issue.

Snow & Ice

On a Clark/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted unanimously to approve deficit spending on the snow and ice line of the DPW budget.

Bragan reported the Energy Advisory Committee has scheduled a boiler upgrade for the public safety building which will be handled in the next couple weeks by Leominster Plumbing and Heating.

SCHEMATIC DESIGN COMPLETION FOR THE HILDRETH HOUSE

Lucy Wallace said LLB and DTI are willing and able to work on revisions for the Hildreth House designs but approval for use of the remaining schematic design funds will be necessary. Wallace invited Hildreth House Improvement Committee members Connie Larrabee, Fran Nickerson, Pat Jennings and Laura Andrews to join the discussion. She acknowledged the great work the committee has done thus far and praised their creative thinking. Connie Larrabee said committee member Richard Blinn (not present) had provided a design the committee was pleased with and they have shared that with the architects. They plan to move forward with that design as the basis focusing on meeting programming needs. Tim Clark asked if they have considered site work specifically on how they can meet the parking area with the street. Larrabee

noted their mission does not include site work and at this time they are primarily focusing on the best way to provide services. She confirmed the committee plans to seek public input as the process evolves and they will also be meeting with the Building Inspector. Fran Nickerson noted in the previous plan access to the Hildreth House revolved around the parking plan which made the design quite expensive. She said this committee is much more finance driven. Ron Ricci recommended the committee consider seeking proposals from other architects and OPM firms. He said considering the committee is targeting ATM 2014 for their proposal there is time. He is concerned that using the same firms that drafted the initial design will not provide the best product. He said it would be wise for the committee to take a second look at what architects and OPM services we hire. Ricci made a motion seconded by Bill Johnson to seek another request for qualification to complete the design for the Hildreth House. Marie Sobalvarro and Wallace expressed concern over the delay this would cause. Laura Andrews pointed out when the first design was drafted LLB was told what residents wanted but not given a cost boundary. Clark asked the committee members if they were comfortable using the services of LLB and DTI. Larrabee confirmed the committee is comfortable with them and recommended the BOS approve the request. Bill Johnson agreed with Ricci's suggestion. He also complimented the committee for their fresh ideas and ability to think out of the box. He would like to see the same efforts on the side of the architects and OPM. The motion Ricci made was moved but did not carry. On Clark/Sobalvarro motion, the board voted to authorize \$25,000 for services as outlined in the letter from LLB dated Feb. 1, 2013 and \$4,321 from DTI for OPM services from the unspent funds for Hildreth House schematic design and authorize Chair of BOS to enter in contracts for these services. (Ricci – Nay)

MRPC - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) program

Economic Development Committee Chair Elaine Lazarus was present along with Planning Board member and EDC liaison Tim Schmoyer. Lazarus explained the CEDS program is available to private and public sectors that wish to plan for and implement local initiatives that will create and/or retain jobs. MRPC had given a date of March 8th for submission of proposals which did not give much time. Lazarus, Schmoyer and Johnson met over the weekend to brainstorm ideas for discussion. They drafted three potential projects to stimulate discussion: center parking project, commercial district planning project and commercial district road infrastructure improvements. Lucy Wallace contacted MRPC for some clarification on the program. She learned that the goal of the program was long term job growth, predicted on a plan based on community by-in. She added that MRPC has access to several pools of federal funding and, as such, suggested we develop and send them a summary of potential projects that could be matched to other funding sources. She also learned that the committee overseeing the CEDS program will update the plan on a quarterly basis. Therefore, we can submit project for CEDS consideration in the future. It was agreed the Planning Board could shepherd this initiative as they have a representative for MRPC.

Johnson proposed as an action item the BOS, Planning Board and EDC provide feedback on the three drafts along with any other projects that may qualify. Everyone agreed pursuing outside grant opportunities is a good idea.

RESIGNATION

On a Clark/Ricci motion, the board voted unanimously to accept the resignation from Robert Hewson from the Transfer Station Committee and send a letter of thanks.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT REVIEW

Town Administrator Tim Bragan began by reviewing all the warrant articles and providing some additional detail as needed. Once he was done the BOS decided to take each article one by one and stop for discussion as necessary.

Article 10: Planning Board – Town Planner

Tim Clark asked if the town would be better served by hiring a professional for one year who can provide the necessary services to the Planning Board. He is ready to support the funding but expressed uncertainty on creation of a new position considering the long term added liability the town will incur with providing benefits. He suggested hiring for the services for year one and if successful then move forward with creation of a new full time position. Lucy Wallace noted the ZBA and Conservation Commission had not expressed a need for the Planner position.

Bill Johnson said the two compelling arguments in favor of hiring a Planner are:

1. knowledge gained by the consultant in year one goes away when they leave
2. planning is a critical function which has no professional help

Johnson said a number of current and past leaders of volunteer government support the Planning Board's request. He said what we are voting on here is not just on us as individuals but something that needs to be brought to the town for their input. He expects alternatives will be debated but expressed the importance of having the discussion.

Marie Sobalvarro asked about the funding and expressed concern about taking on long-term benefits responsibilities at this time. Johnson said the position would be built into the omnibus budget next year and funded through raise and appropriate. Wallace thought completion of the Master Plan would have been helpful in guiding this process.

The board agreed to continue the meeting at 9:00am on Thursday, February 28th.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30pm and recessed until 9:00am on the 28th.

Documents referenced:

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION – Citizen Petition dated 2.26.2013

SCHEMATIC DESIGN COMPLETION FOR THE HILDRETH HOUSE

Letter from LLB dated 2.1.2013 and update from the HHIC dated 2.26.2013

MRPC - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) program

Memo from MRPC dated 2.7.2013 and three draft project proposals dated 2.21.2013

RESIGNATION – Letter from Robert Hewson dated 1.23.2013

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT REVIEW – dated 2.26.2013