

Members Present: Jo Lown, Chair, Bill Linnane, Judy Lucas (arrived 7:20 p.m.), Cliff Watts, John E. Arnold, Brigitte Casemyr, Michael Meachen. Absent: Christine Hirsch, Ian Johnson.

At 7:00 p.m. Ms. Lown called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

### **Open Forum**

There were no requests to address the Committee.

### **Approval of minutes – Meeting No. 3, September 18, 2008.**

Mr. Linnane moved to approve the minutes of meeting No. 3, September 18, 2008. The vote to approve the minutes was 5 in favor and 1 abstention, with 6 being present.

### **Economic Development (Selectmen)**

Rod Jane, Selectman, presented the Warrant Article on **Creation of an Economic Development Committee**. The Board of Selectmen has endorsed this Article by a 5 – 0 consensus. They would like to institutionalize this as a Standing Committee rather than an Ad-hoc Committee and so need Town Meeting approval. They are also requesting funding of \$10,000 to prepare marketing collateral, PowerPoint Presentation, and web site.

Westborough has grown substantially in the last 15 years, from a population of about 12,000 to 18,000. The town faces many challenges ahead with much competition for business. This committee's mission would be to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses to Westborough in order to maximize current opportunity for commercial revenues to the town, which will lessen the burden on residential taxpayers. This committee would try to work with businesses to help them move to, expand, or remain in Westborough. The committee would also provide economic development strategy and policy expertise to the Board of Selectmen. Other Massachusetts towns of similar size have a structure in place for development. This work is done administratively by town employees, but not in a coordinated, pro-active manner. The committee would also evaluate the many programs offered by the Commonwealth to help towns with economic development, and would work cooperatively with the MA Office of Business Development and the Corridor 9 Chamber of Commerce.

The committee would consist of the Town Coordinator, a member of the Board of Selectmen (appointed by the BOS,) Town Planner, DPW Director, Town Assessor, Building Commissioner, two members of the Westborough Business Community, and Town Counsel.

Several points were questioned by AFC members:

- Committee meetings would be subject to Open Meeting laws. Individual meetings with businesses would not be public. Town Counsel would be on the Committee to maintain legal standing and ensure ethics violations do not occur.
- The committee would operate as a team, with sales and marketing coming from committee members more experienced in this area. Other members with more knowledge in the areas of zoning, permitting and infrastructure will be used to help businesses with these issues.
- The uncertain future of the State Hospital could be a great opportunity to make use of the space for redevelopment. There may be ways the Commonwealth would help with this as it has done in other towns. The Committee would be able to work cooperatively with the state to find an appropriate use for the land.
- The Board of Selectmen would be the appointing authority.

- Term of service on the committee would be one year.
- Business leaders could be a non-resident of Westborough who runs a business in town, a resident who runs a business in town, or a resident who runs a business elsewhere.
- The term of service only applies to the business members. Other lengths of terms were discussed. The Board of Selectmen wanted to keep this consistent with other town committees, and members may be appointed for successive terms.
- Members are allowed to delegate someone to vote for them at meetings. Can the Board of Selectmen oversee the designees? Mr. Jane will bring this up with the Board.
- While this is another meeting for town employees to attend, they have been able to successfully meet for working sessions early mornings at the DPW.
- The \$10,000 would pay for development of a brochure and a PowerPoint presentation at minimum, and possibly a web site. A local advertising/marketing company may be willing to negotiate a lower rate. \$10,000 yearly would be the upper limit for marketing material costs. This needs to be done professionally to be done well. The material will be used with all business visits with current and prospective businesses. The return on investment for this purchase would be difficult to measure. The committee would need approval of the Board of Selectmen before spending any money.
- The AFC was interested in learning which types of businesses the committee would be trying to attract. Would there be any cost-benefit analysis done to help determine which types of business to focus on in order to maximize the return to the town?

Ms. Lucas recognized the need to be welcoming to businesses, and this committee would fill this need. Ms. Casemyr stated support for this idea.

#### **Zoning Amendment (Municipal Building)**

Dexter Blois and John R. Arnold presented the Warrant Article to **Amend Zoning Bylaw/Dimension Standards.**

Town Meeting establishes the set-backs and building envelope plan for the Public Safety Building. This article will include the entire property in the building envelope plan as the entire site will be disturbed even where it is not built upon. There will be a formal Public Hearing by the Planning Board about this next Tuesday.

#### **Drainage Study; Ball fields Contract; Streets (DPW)**

John Walden and Carl Balduf presented the Warrant Article to perform a **Drainage Study** of Jack Straw Brook Watershed. The estimated cost for this study is \$60,000.

Jack Straw Brook overtopped three culverts on August 7 after the town received 3" of rain in one hour. The Warren Street culvert has overflowed three times in the last four years. The Ruggles Street and Bowman Lane culverts have only had one incident of flooding. All three culverts were clean and had no maintenance issues but could not handle to amount of rain. All three areas had serious flooding.

The study is to look at the entire watershed plan to find a way to alleviate these problems. The study will take two months. Two possible contractors have been identified. Results should be available after January 2009, although residents may not see the affects of the study for 18 months. Some of the actual work required may be eligible for Chapter 70 highway funds, although this will be a large job requiring the town to borrow funds.

Possible methods to mitigate the effects of flooding include sandbagging, curbing, and pumps. These are all reactive not proactive. All current catch basins in the watershed are functioning as intended. No other areas are available for use as catch basins.

John Walden presented the Warrant Article to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a **Ballfields Contract** lasting five years. Currently the town can only contract with a contractor for three years. Contractors are able to give a better price on a five-year contract. The Board of Selectmen will make sure there are opt-out clauses in the contract. This contract covers the grass parts of the schools as well as the state hospital property. The AFC asked for a list of properties covered, the total acreage, and the savings expected from the longer contract.

Mr. Walden presented Warrant Articles to accept **Primrose Lane** and **Various Roads**. Primrose Lane was already accepted by the town in 2005, but was not filed correctly so must be redone. Town Counsel has been working on technical issues. Olde Hickory Path, Whispering Pine Drive, Thistle Hill Lane, and Copperbeech Circle are finished. A \$5,000 bond for each road is kept for one to two years to insure the town in case of failure. This is a standard maintenance bond figure. Ms. Lown asked if this bond could be kept for longer or increased to include possible watershed/drainage issues. The \$5,000 figure has been used for at least 15 years.

### **Liaison Updates**

Mr. Linnane reported that the Historical Commission will present their article to the AFC on September 29.

Mr. Arnold reported that the Government Study Committee 2 will meet on October 1. Article 2, **Amend Town Meeting Bylaw** is still on the Warrant at this time. Ms. Lown asked if the Government Study Committee might comment on the pros and cons to this article.

Ms. Casemyr has spoken to Gail Silva in MIS/GIS about getting town email accounts for the new AFC members.

Ms. Casemyr shared information on the Operational Services Division of the Executive Office for Administration and Finance, the Commonwealth's centralized procurement department for commodity and service contracts. She will investigate further the possibility of scheduling a presentation for the AFC.

### **Comments and Concerns of Committee Members**

Ms. Lown reminded committee members of the Board of Selectmen meeting on Tuesday 9/23. Mr. Danis is scheduled to present actual numbers for the town's revenue and levy capacity. Ms. Casemyr and Ms. Lucas will attend, and Mr. Arnold may attend.

Ms. Lown distributed a preliminary draft of the letter to town members to put in the booklet.

Mr. Watts would like to add a reservation to the letter, stating that the numbers given depend on state funding at the level promised.

Mr. Linnane thanked Ms. Casemyr for her synopsis of the committees and departments he is now assigned to as liaison.

### **Adjournment**

At 8:40 p.m. Ms. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous, 7 in favor and 7 present.