

Ashburnham Focus Committee Meeting, February 19, 2008

Present: Bob Fichtel, Chairman; Pat Frederick, secretary; Christina Sargent, Sallie Thoma and Town Planner Eric Smith.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by Chairman Fichtel.

Committee members reviewed the minutes of the January 22nd meeting. Eric made two corrections: that Town Administrator Paul Boushell's first name be inserted (first full paragraph), and the title of the Village Center Zoning District Study Committee be corrected in the paragraph near the end of the minutes (rather than "Village Center Study Committee").

Bob reported having tried three times to leave messages on Mrs. Richard Hurley's telephone answering machine, but with no response. He had also asked Paul Teixeira of RCAP Solutions about the Town's chances of receiving HUD assistance for senior housing. Christina had spoken with Gil Carreiro about his land abutting the town-owned property where the Highway Department is currently located. Gil would like the Town to purchase the land, and retain ownership. Paul Teixeira seems very interested in the land. HUD funds would purchase and develop the property, which would be overseen by a "Town Housing Authority". RCAP Solutions would partner with the Town. Bob is waiting to hear from Paul Teixeira again.

Christina showed the committee a 1904 map. Nick Reitsel and Gil Carreiro are interested in creating a pedestrian walkway between their two properties.

The committee looked at a "Site Favorability Matrix" chart from George Allan. Ownership and land use will be researched by Christina. The committee considered the property descriptions, one at a time.

Town Engineer Donald Ouellette would like the committee to reconsider the town-owned property on School Street, South Ashburnham, for relocating the Highway Department. Problems with that parcel include its access through a residential neighborhood, its proximity to Ashley Court senior housing, and its active use as a ball field. The Historical Commission wants to place a monument there, commemorating the Emeline Jewell Whitney School which once stood on the site, and Habitat for Humanity is interested in building a house there. Its remoteness from the center of town is another disadvantage.

Eric will consult Town records, to see who has been paying the Real Estate taxes on Garlick family-owned land. A certified letter should be sent to Garlick daughter, Mrs. Hurley, in Leominster, concerning the family's intentions for the property, and stating the Town's potential interest in acquiring it.

Bob has written a sample Warrant article about authorizing the Select Board to sell Town-owned land to raise money for purchasing other land more useful to the Town. The article needs to be more specific as to *which* properties are under consideration to be sold; opinions on the article should be sought from the Select Board and Advisory Board. Bob will send the draft article to the Selectmen and Paul Boushell for their approval.

Eric has not yet heard from the ULI-Boston Technical Assistance Panel (TAP). They may get to us by Fall, 2008; at this time, they are working with Pawtucket, RI.

The next Focus Committee meeting will be on Monday, March 17th at 5:00 in the Malcolm Stewart Community Room at the Stevens Memorial Library.

Bob moved that the meeting be adjourned at 7:35 PM; seconded by Sallie Thoma; so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia H. Frederick, Secretary