

Minutes of October 19, 2006 Focus Committee Meeting

Present: Bob Fichtel, Chair; Pat Frederick, Christina Sargent, and Town Planner Eric Smith

Bob called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

The minutes of the September 21st meeting were read and corrections made. Bob moved to accept the minutes with corrections. So voted.

Bob would like to work with Attorney Dan Perkins to trace ownership history of the “donut hole” land parcel, believed to belong to the Town, on Winchendon Road. Contiguous properties’ ownership is known.

Christina had brought copies of Ashburnham maps from 1855 and 1870, and a copy of Stearns’ history of the town. She read Stearns’ entries on several individuals with names possibly relating to the property, but none seemed to fit the case. Christina has looked up records in other sources, but to date has not identified positive ownership history of the land parcel.

Bob suggested we ask Donna Burton, in the Assessors’ office, for Real Estate Tax records which would show when the Town assumed ownership of the land.

Eric had brought a 1957 Valuation and Tax List booklet, but there was no reference there to this property.

Eric reported that Steve Nims had spoken with a son of the Garlick family at the time of Mr. Garlick’s burial, asking if the family had any plans for their land on Williams and Platts Roads, because the Town might be interested in it. To date there has been no response. The Garlick family lives in Fitchburg.

Eric had brought a printout of the Table of Organization for structuring the proposed DPW under the newly created position of “DPW Director/Town Engineer”: Water/Sewer, Solid Waste Management, and Highway/Grounds department heads would report to this person, who in turn would report to the Town Administrator.

At our next meeting we should invite Steve Nims and Jim Zarozinski, and also George Allan, if he would like to attend, to review plans for the proposed Public Works barn.

Bob had called Christine Egan of the Community Development Action Grant (CDAG) program, but has not received a response yet. Ms. Egan had said she would contact the Boston Society of Architects in an effort to have them work with the Focus Committee on the present Highway Barn location and make recommendations for the best reuse of that property.

At the next meeting of the Planning Board on November 9th, at 7:30 PM, two UMASS graduate students will present their report on “Industrial Land Use

Suitability Assessment – Ashburnham, MA”. Eric has been working with these students in this program.

One suggestion was to use a piece of Ashburnham’s Light Industry zoned property for an “Incubator” building offering secretarial assistance, high-speed internet connections, office space, copy machines, etc. for local people who need office space outside their homes, but do not want a long commute.

Rick Sisson has shown Christina what he has begun doing with his land on Murray Road. Part of that site might be good for condo-like contractor storage bays (such as we read about at an earlier meeting) or an incubator building.

The North Central MA Economic Development Corporation is going to draw up a regional development strategy. Eric will be attending their meeting Nov. 30 at 8:00 AM, at the Four Points Sheraton hotel in Leominster.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM. The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 16th at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Frederick