

**53 River Street Master Plan Special Committee Minutes**

**2 28 2018 - Exchange Hall Acton**

**Prepared by Michele Holland**

Peter Berry called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Camille Duquet, Don Boyle, Peter Berry, John Cook, William Klauer, Louis York, Robert Whittlesey, Michele Holland, William Alesbury, Peter Hocknell and Matthew Selby in attendance.

Agenda, Committee Charge, and a plan of the land were handed out to members.

Review of the agenda items, and the committee charge amended by the board of selectman on 1-8-18.

Election of Peter Berry as chairman was proposed, moved and seconded, with unanimous consent.

Michele Holland volunteered to scribe.

Vice Chairman election was tabled until next meeting.

Plot was purchased with free cash for \$875,000 and consists of approximately 7.25 acres along the river and includes about 1.5 acres of upland, with the remaining as wetlands. A study submitted to the CPC to evaluate removing the dam was pulled back to have this committee discuss the options for usage. Suggestions for usage are for affordable senior housing, park with fishing platform and nature trails, historic landmark.

Requested information for next meeting all to be supplied by Selby,

Motion to purchase property,

Contract for Conway School of Landscape Design

Proposal from Lazarro to build 24 units for comparison

This committee should expect to continue for at least one year.

Public comments: from Kathryn Acerbo-Bachmann at 50 River St. who supports open space/park; from David Honn at 105 School, who is the chair of the Historic District Commission, reminds us that we will need to run decisions by them and would like to have public access to the water; and from Marc Quesnel of 56 River who supports open space or park.

Peter Berry is liaison on the sidewalk committee, and says that River St is in the works to have sidewalks installed.

John Cook suggested that we take a look at the boardwalk on the Assabet River Rail Trail and suggested an interpretive trail would be a good use of the wetlands.

Cami suggested we have handicapped access, as in the Arboretum trails.

Selby suggests that we engage Conway School of Landscape Design, [www.csld.edu](http://www.csld.edu), to do a preliminary study. Tom Tidman in conservation has used their services, which would include 3 master students to work up a design for the property, including a 5000SF (footprint) building and 17 parking spaces.

Questions of Scope of work, and insurance were discussed. This school selects certain projects for their services and we have been selected. Review of the contract is requested by members. Cost of the master students is \$7000. Cost of professional could range from \$15,000 to \$20,000 but would have more flexibility, and broader scope of the entire plot and projects. Funding for the Conway School project has been approved by the Town Manager to come from Selby's professional services budget.

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) funds would be available to cover projects that incorporate open spaces, recreations, historic and affordable housing since these fall under their purview.

Peter Berry said that the Lazzaro proposal was at the maximum for this acreage at 24 condo units, and was within the South Acton Village zoning district, which encourages denser housing to create a village.

Selby stated an environmental study was done, which showed a slightly elevated level of arsenic, likely due to the RR coal burning, or coal burned at the factories on site.

Money to demolish the buildings, possibly fill in the raceway, and/or repair the dam are not known at this time. Lazzaro had filled in with rubble at and behind the rock wall area.

The 5000 SF housing might consist of 12 flats with garage spaces underneath, and an elevator for senior/affordable housing.

Public comment: from Dave Honn suggests we hire a professional designer such as Dennis Dale.

Bill Klauer discussed what we might find under the soil at this site. Not only possible hazardous materials or items, but also artifacts which would trigger an archeology study at the least.

Our meeting days were decided to be on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month, to work around the meetings of the historical commission. It was suggested that we invite other committees of interest, such as the historic district commission, conservation, affordable housing.

Public: Kathryn said affordable housing was not mentioned at the original purchase discussion, and suggests that not all 4 uses be considered, maybe 3. She prefers the park.

The process used by the 348-364 Main Street Committee (Walker property) was done at committee, who came up with the suggested usages, and then presented to the public at a forum.

Topics for next meeting

1. Should we use the Conway school?
2. Should we go to the public for input on usage, or develop the concepts at committee, then present to the public.
3. When we should walk the lot as a group.

We must put up a plaque to acknowledge the Lazzaro Family within five years, per the purchase and sale agreement.

Next meeting March 7<sup>th</sup> at 730pm at the Exchange Hall Victoria room.

Adjourned at 8:55 pm.