

Selectmen's Working Session
Tuesday, August 17, 2004
Ayer Town Hall, 2nd Floor Petitioned Area, Main Street, Ayer, MA

6:00p.m. Open Session

The Board met with Chairman Bresnahan, Selectman Fay and Selectman Maxant. Selectman Sullivan and Selectman Morrison absent. Present for the discussion William Oelfke-Chairman-Ayer Planning Board, Philip Berry-Downtown merchant, and Shaun Suhoski, Economic Developer, Town Administrator-Anita Scheipers. Sitting in for the meeting: Patricia Walsh, Ruth Rhonemus, James Luchessi, Calvin Moore, Nick Laggis, Manny Velez and Edward Kelley.

Mr. Suhoski opened the meeting by explaining the proposal for hiring a consultant for Downtown planning. Mr. Suhoski advised to the cost of consultant approximately \$10K to be funded from CDBG Program income. Cecil Urban Design Group of Boston, MA has submitted a proposal. (see attached)

Mr. Berry speaking for the Downtown business community does feel need for additional parking but need to decide where and how much is needed. Future needs/usage of the Town needs to be determined and where the additional parking is to be made when MART plans regional station.

Other areas mentioned by Mr. Berry

- survey conducted re suggested model
- concerns of survey re crime
- lease of sixty two (62) parking spaces at his location in Depot Square up in December of this year
- need to develop more attractions in Ayer as well as parking
- station stop is in need of updating
- traffic issues

Mr. Berry stated of real concern if train skips Ayer and combines Shirley stop and concern is ugly parking garage/design a real issue in historic downtown.

A number of people expressed their view that we need to do more "homework" before hiring a consultant, including Messer's Phil Berry, William Oelfke, Selectman Fay and Selectman Maxant. Chairman Bresnahan expressed his view that he thought a consultant would be helpful now but that doing more homework first is a viable alternative.

Chairman Bresnahan suggested the Town address the planning itself and MART address MBTA station, and suggested the establishment of Train Station Sub-Committee to do tasks. This committee to consist of members such as Planning Board, Historical Commission, citizens, business representatives, commuter representatives and Board of Selectmen and staff (to be defined).

Chairman Bresnahan stated that it was clear this evening that the Board of Selectmen in attendance were not yet ready to hire a consultant. Instead, it was agreed by concurrence that the Board of Selectmen would take the following steps:

1. Seek answer to questions on report from Ayer Business Alliance.
2. Seek out volunteer assistance from local professional "City" planners.
3. Determine whether we would benefit from a Town survey.
4. Establish a Train Station Study Committee which would consist of the above mentioned groups.

The Board in attendance agreed that we would continue to address this at upcoming meetings.

Chairman Bresnahan called for a motion to adjourn. Selectman Fay moved the Board adjourn from the Working Session, 2nd by Selectman Maxant, VOTE: unanimous, so moved.

6:50p.m. Work Shop concluded.

DATE: _____

James M. Fay, Acting Clerk

AYER BOARD OF SELECTMEN