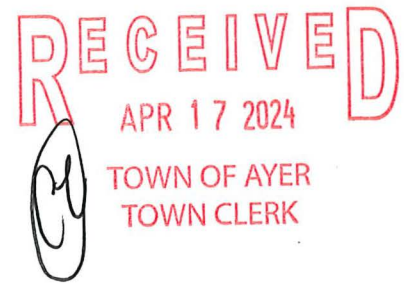


Town of Ayer

Senior Center Site Selection and Building Committee

Meeting Minutes from February 8, 2024



Attendance: Katie Petrossi (Chair); Ken Diskin (Vice Chair); Dennis Curran (Clerk); Dan Van Schalkwyk; Ellen FitzPatrick; Carolyn McCreary; Dave Cibor

Absent: Chris Prehl; Dave Grubb

Also in Attendance: Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager); Matt Hernon (Town Engineer); Pauline Conley, Resident (On Zoom); Geof Tillotson, Resident; Barry Swartzel, Resident (On Zoom).

Call to Order/Approval of Agenda:

The February 8, 2024, meeting of the Senior Center Site Selection and Building Committee was called to order at 5:03pm by K. Petrossi in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Ayer Town Hall and on Zoom for a remote participation option for the Public.

K. Petrossi read the following statement into the record:

This meeting will be held in-person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend this in-person meeting. Please note that while an option for remote attendance and/or participation via Zoom is being provided as a courtesy to the public, the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law. Members of the public with particular interest in a specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person vs. virtual attendance accordingly. This meeting will be live on Zoom. The public may access the proceedings by joining Zoom (Meeting ID# 852 5823 2163) or by calling (929-205-6099). For additional information about remote participation, please contact Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager at atm@aver.ma.us or 978-772-8220 ext. 100 prior to the meeting.

Motion: A motion was made by C. McCreary and seconded by D. Curran to approve the meeting agenda. **Motion passed 7-0.**

Approval of Minutes from the January 11, 2024 Meeting and from the January 31, 2024 Site Visit:

The Committee reviewed the DRAFT meeting minutes from the January 11, 2024 meeting.

D. Van Schalkwyk asked that the minutes on page 3 in reference to 115 Washington Street indicate a portion of the parcel not the whole parcel.

Motion: A motion was made by D. Curran and seconded by E. FitzPatrick to approve the January 11, 2024 meeting minutes as presented and amended. **Motion passed 7-0.**

K. Petrossi indicated that DRAFT meeting minutes were prepared from the Site Walk on January 31, 2024 and perhaps those minutes could be reviewed and approved after the overview from the Site Walk is presented.

Review of January 31st Site Visits:

K. Diskin provided an overview of the January 31st Site Visits by the Committee. The purpose of the site visits was for the Committee to see the parcels with their own eyes. Matt Hernon, the Town Engineer, also attended.

K. Diskin provided an overview of the parcels visited on the January 31st Site Visits by the Committee as follows:

115 Washington Street:

There is a potential parcel of land near the practice field area off of the Groton Harvard Road side. From above the parcel is steep. We walked up the street to get a street view. The first thing you notice is it looked flattened.

K. Diskin said advantages to this site would be that it has a good street view; connectivity to the back of the school with trails and connectivity to track. Limitations to the site are there is no sewer and there is a potential for ledge.

D. Cibor stated that the topography of the site looks smooth.

D. Van Schalkwyk stated that he is researching more information on the Open Space Reservation Designation which might exist for the overall parcel.

K. Petrossi stated that one of the things we would want to know is the exact process involved with carving out a piece of land from this larger parcel under the schools. What is the process and what does that involve? She asked if the Town Manager would investigate this.

Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager) stated that he would look further into this and consult with Town Counsel regarding the legal process, and he will update the Committee at the next meeting.

0 Park Street:

K. Diskin provided an overview of this Town-owned parcel on Park Street that is steep and only has 70-80 feet of frontage. This parcel would work better if the Town could obtain an abutting private parcel.

D. Curran stated that the parcel is steep and would require a narrow long access driveway. Because we would have to acquire additional land, I would put this property at the back of the list.

K. Diskin stated there is most likely a lot of ledge at this site.

0 Macpherson Road:

K. Diskin stated that the Town owns a lot of DPW land on Macpherson Road. There are questions as to where Macpherson and where Bishop Road legally begins. Additionally, there are questions about the location and placement of the gate. Could this gate be moved? The parcel is good sized and has good topography, but it is a remote site from Town in terms of visibility. There are advantages and limitations to the site. There are currently no utilities to the site. MassDevelopment also owns a

triangle of land next to this parcel which would be advantageous if we had this parcel. The other triangular piece of land next to this parcel is owned by St. Mary's Church for the cemetery. The issue of the gate and road closures by MassDevelopment would need to be better understood.

K. Petrossi stated that the site is close to Town but has a remote feel. She asked if the Town Manager could investigate the ownership of the MassDevelopment triangle parcel and see what would be involved in potentially acquiring that land. Additionally, she asked if the Town Manager would look into the issues of the road; gate location; and road closures.

Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager) stated that he would reach out to MassDevelopment and advise back to the Committee at the next meeting.

D. Curran stated that what is nice about this site is that it opens many possibilities.

D. Van Schalkwyk pointed out on the map of this site that the highlighted purple is the Town's brush dump. He is researching to learn more about the siting and permitting of the brush dump and the history behind it being located on this parcel.

D. Curran stated that we need more clarity on some of these questions with respect to this site.

K. Diskin stated that he saw a lot of possibilities and opportunities for this parcel.

25 Brook Street:

K. Diskin advised that this is a DPW parcel which would be a small piece of a larger parcel. This parcel is in front of the DPW Administration Building at the end of Brook Street. The site is walkable and is next to a small neighborhood. It is a good location and there is no thru traffic. Getting the neighbors on board would be important. There could be some ledge challenges.

D. Van Schalkwyk stated that this site would be a little tight. We would need some clear delineation and security between DPW operations and this site.

K. Diskin pointed out that part of the property is in the Conservation buffer zone.

D. Van Schalkwyk stated that there may be some of the property in the flood plain.

K. Diskin stated that some of the limitations to the site would be that it is tight. It would need to be clearly delineated from DPW and the neighborhood would need to be on board.

K. Petrossi stated that at first, she was skeptical of this location but is intrigued by the lot.

C. McCreary stated that it could be a beautiful site.

E. FitzPatrick stated that it looked like there could be a lot of ledge.

D. Curran stated that the architect should take a look at it and tell us more.

E. FitzPatrick stated that she is concerned with the proximity to neighbors and will they be supportive.

K. Diskin stated that the goal was to look at DPW land as potential sites and this parcel came out of that.

K. Petrossi stated that all sites will have limitations but through the process we should understand more about whether these limitations can be resolved.

0 West Main Street:

K. Diskin stated that this parcel is near West Main Street and Sculley Road. We would need to work with a private abutter and MassDevelopment to make this work.

K. Petrossi stated that coming over the bridge and making that left turn is tough. I would have traffic concerns and as such place this more to the bottom of the list.

D. Cibor stated that making that corner is hard.

The Committee further discussed the parcels that were part of the Site Walk on January 31, 2024.

C. McCreary stated that she would like to have an architect review and advise on these potential sites.

D. Curran stated that we need more information on 115 Washington Street and 0 Macpherson Road, especially about what other parties we may need to work with as well as the process involved.

Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager) stated that he would find out about the process for 115 Washington Street and reach out to MassDevelopment regarding 0 Macpherson Road. He asked D. Van Schalkwyk to work with him on Macpherson Road.

K. Petrossi stated that we should perform our due diligence with respect to 25 Brook Street and we do need neighborhood support, but we should have an architect look at it.

D. Curran stated that during the site tour, Heather from Conservation did not rule out the 25 Brook Street site.

K. Diskin stated that we should reach out to C. Prehl and D. Grubb to brief them and get their thoughts.

K. Petrossi stated that she would do that.

K. Diskin stated that at this time we should keep 115 Washington Street; 0 Macpherson Road; and 25 Brook Street on the list of Town-owned sites and we need to perform further research and due diligence.

Motion: A motion was made by E. FitzPatrick and seconded by D. Cibor to approve the minutes from the January 31, 2024 Site Walk. **Motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

Discussion on Issuing an RFP for Privately-Owned Land:

K. Petrossi stated that so far, the focus has been on Town-own land as the priority. However, currently do we want to begin to discuss looking at potential private sites?

E. FitzPatrick stated that we should look at private sites. And though last time there were not a lot of options, someone may have changed their mind and situations change. I think it would be good to keep both tracks going.

D. Curran agreed. We need to look at both public and private potential sites as part of our overall due diligence and to further develop public support that we have looked at everything. The original RFP for sites only got one formal response.

K. Petrossi stated that the original RFP was issued in May of 2022 from the previous Working Group and only received one response for a site on Devens. Should we reissue this RFP or table to the next meeting? I do think we need to omit the Devens reference from the original RFP as our charge from the Select Board is to find a site specifically within Ayer.

K. Diskin raised a concern that there may be apprehension from private developers if they find out our priority is a Town-owned site. I do think we need to reduce the complexity of the previous RFP and try to condense it.

D. Curran suggested that the original RFP be reviewed and revised for the next meeting.

K. Petrossi stated that she along with D. Van Schalkwyk and the Town Manager will review and revise the original RFP for review and discussion by the Committee at the next meeting.

Presentation of Architect Responses and Process for Scoring and Interviewing:

K. Petrossi stated that the Committee has received five (5) responses. She advised that each Committee Member review and evaluate each of the five (5) responses using a standard scoring sheet. She would collect all the individual evaluations and then the Committee as a whole would review.

D. Van Schalkwyk advised that the high scoring is the winner. You generally take the top three high scorers to further the process to include potential interviews. We do not consider the fees initially. We evaluate first and then review fees. We then decide whom to interview.

K. Petrossi stated that we should agree on a due date, and I will collect and compile the responses.

D. Van Schalkwyk stated that he reads each proposal first and puts them into three piles: Yes; Maybe; No. He then reviews them and scores them.

The Committee agreed to get their responses and scoring sheets to K. Petrossi by February 22, 2024.

Public Input:

Pauline Conley (Resident) commended the Committee for a great meeting.

Next Meeting:

The Committee scheduled its next meeting for Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 6pm in the First Floor Meeting Room of Town Hall with a Zoom link for public remote participation.

Adjournment:

Motion: A motion was made by D. Cibor and seconded by D. Curran to adjourn the meeting at 6:09pm.
Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

The meeting adjourned at 6:09pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Committee on February 29, 2024

Signed: D. A. Curran, Clerk April 17, 2024