

Present Bilal Ansari, Charles Bonenti, Cheryl Shanks, Catherine Yamamoto; Absent: Van Ellet, Leigh Short

Also present: Bob Scerbo, Ken Swiatek; Martin Filion (Willinet)

Business

1. Opening statement

The chair read the following statement:

Last Thursday, June 20, marked a major step forward toward a solution to our housing crisis.

Williams College announced that it has joined with Higher Ground, The Women's Institute, Berkshire Housing Development Corporation and Williamstown Elderly Housing to develop subsidized housing on land owned by the college that it will donate for this purpose.

In creating Affordable Housing, Williams College is embarking on a multi-dimensional exercise. Decisions about how many homes will be created, how these homes will be configured, and whom these homes will house will be based on neighborhood context and the site's natural configuration, community input, and financial feasibility. These factors have yet to be determined.

But the first step – the most important step – has been taken: the college has dedicated a site.

In his remarks at the celebratory announcement, Williams President Adam Falk said that the project is 1) separate from and complementary to the town's affordable housing efforts, and 2) that it will meet some, but not all, of the community's affordable housing needs.

In the 38 meetings of this committee in the 22 months since Tropical Storm Irene, we have stated repeatedly that a single site is not the solution to our housing crisis, but rather that one site is a first step toward a solution.

Because multiple sites will be required to meet our town's affordable housing needs, we welcome – and are grateful for – the college's announcement. We congratulate Williams and its partners on their successful identification of a site. Their action demonstrates how forward progress can be made when common goal and determination to achieve that goal are present.

This committee pledges to work together in good faith with all other town committees and all residents, in a spirit of cooperation, to solve our town's housing

crisis. All of our town committees have publicly stated that they recognize that we have a housing crisis. All have publicly stated that we must address that crisis. The time to act is now.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the May 14 meeting were approved, 3-0-1. The minutes of the May 28 meeting were approved 3-0-1.

3. Sites

A. History

Both the Photec and 59 Water St sites were voted at a previous Town Meeting to be surplus property that the Town could dispose of. In 2004, the Town received at least one response for 59 Water but did not accept any. In 2007, the Town received and accepted an RFP for the Photec site, but the respondent withdrew before starting the project. In the meantime, contamination was found at each site and was remediated, in part by our committee, at 59 Water fully, and at Photec incompletely but sufficiently to allow a specific type of housing use.

B. Current status

1. 59 Water

In May, engineers O'Reilly Talbott & Okun signed off on the site: remediation is complete.

2. Photec

Tighe & Bond remains unable to finish its sampling due to continued high water on the Photec embankment. This needs to be concluded but no one anticipates bad news.

C. Issues discussed: whether

1. To put the two sites on the same timeline, by delaying 59 Water and accelerating Photec, so that a single RFP would cover both or so that two RFPs could be sent at the same time

2. To request proposals for the demolition of the Photec cube so that information about this cost was available to prospective developers in advance of any submissions

3. To accept Tighe & Bond's offer to perform pre-RFP technical assistance for the Photec site for \$18,500 and/or construction-phase technical services for the Photec site for 14,300

4. To conduct neighborhood listening sessions itself, in addition to those a development consultant might hold

D. Decisions

1. Cathy will ask Rita Farrell, our helpful MHP advisor, whether we should hire a consultant to help us answer these questions, and whether she can

provide a model scope of services for such a consultant. If she has a model, Cathy will make it available for the next meeting.

2. If we do get a consultant, we will ask the consultant his or her opinion about the answers to the issues we discussed (simultaneous RFPs, cube information, T & B help, listening sessions). If not, we will continue to tackle these ourselves.

3. The list of criteria to evaluate RFPs will be obtained from Tom Sheldon and be made available for the next meeting. The committee will think about priorities and weighting of the various criteria, but hand this too off for a consultant's review if engaging a consultant appears to be the wisest course

4. News

A. State housing conference

Cathy attended the housing conference in Devens this year, as she did last year. It was excellent. The committee voted 4-0-0 that her expenses should be reimbursed from AHC funds.

B. Long-Term Coordinating Committee

Last meeting Bob Scerbo gave a presentation; next meeting Higher Ground will give a presentation.

5. Summary of tasks

A. Get advice and scope from Rita Farrell

B. Get criteria draft from Tom Sheldon

C. Rough out a timeline

Documents used: Tighe & Bond submission of activities and costs related to a Photec RFP.

Next Meeting: July 2, at 7:00 pm