

Present

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

Stephen Dravis (iBerkshires), Martin Filion (Willinet)

**Business**

1. Minutes

The minutes of the June 25 meeting were approved 4-0-0 (before Bilal arrived).

2. RFPs

A. RFP-C for an RFP-D?

The committee discussed whether to write the Requests for Proposals (RFP) to develop town properties itself or to hire a consultant to help it draft such an RFP. If the committee hires such a consultant, it will need to do that through a different, prior RFP. An RFP to solicit proposals for actual development is below noted as an RFP-D, and an RFP to hire a consultant to help the committee draft, distribute, and evaluate RFP-Ds is below noted as an RFP-C.

B. Reasons to hire a consultant to help us draft, distribute and review one or more RFPs for affordable housing development, i.e. to send out an RFP-C:

1. Committees are bad at meeting deadlines
2. Committees overcomplicate some things and skip over others
3. An expert can do many of the same tasks better, e.g. facilitate listening sessions.

C. We will send out an RFP-C

1. It will be based on the model "RFP Scope of Services" dated May 2013 which we received from Rita Farrell, with some rewording. The committee discussed how to edit it. A list of documents that any respondent would need to take into account would be appended to the RFP.

2. The consultant hired via an RFP-C, described in the Scope we write, would be responsible for:

a. Drafting the RFP-D(s)

We imagine that this would include walking the site(s); reviewing the background studies, engineering reports and legal status of the property(s); reviewing John Ryan's Housing Needs Assessment; engaging in public listening sessions with neighbors and abutters, as well as with residents and town

employees generally; helping the committee to shape the goals and criteria for evaluating received proposals based on all of this input; finalizing the scope of services; establishing a timeline for the work.

b. Advising on distributing the RFP-D(s)

1. Helping to identify likely developers, of which at least three are needed.

2. Advising on bundling the RFP-Ds

c. Evaluating the RFP-D(s)

The consultant would assist the committee in assessing the RFP-Ds it received according to criteria established in advance and publicized on the RFP-D itself.

3. All town RFPs are sent from the office of the Town Manager.

4. The committee will draft the RFP-C now and give it to the Town Manager for editing and correcting.

5. The committee envisions getting the draft to the Town Manager by July 8, sending it out by July 12, and setting a deadline of August 5 for responses.

6. The committee will make itself available July 23 to answer any questions from prospective consultants.

D. Creating and sending out the RFP-D

1. If the committee met August 6 to review responses, it could choose a consultant then.

2. The consultant would then have four weeks, between this approximate date of hiring and September 9, to write the RFP-D, including performing the tasks outlined above.

3. If the RFP-D were distributed to possible developers during that second week of September, then the earliest response that could be expected is November 4, which is eight weeks from the RFP-D going out; mid-November would be the likely reception time.

E. Is the fall town meeting October 15?

The committee voted to pursue this, with Cheryl sending the draft RFP-C to Peter Fohlin, and helping the Town Manager's office to send it out to prospective consultants, 5-0-0.

3. Dates and locations of listening sessions

They would likely be held in the second half of August while the consultant is crafting the RFPs. The committee decided that it will wait to schedule these until after it chooses and speaks with a consultant.

#### 4. Report on Conservation Commission meeting

Cathy Yamamoto and Stan Parese attended the ConCom's June 27 meeting and presented it with information about affordable housing in town.

#### 5. Conservation restrictions on possible development property

##### A. Chicken and egg

The committee discussed a chicken-and-egg problem. On one hand, it cannot hire someone to evaluate land not legally available for development, e.g. the Lowry and Burbank properties, which are under the administration of the ConCom. On the other hand, the ConCom is unable to give the go-ahead without knowing what it is giving the go-ahead to. Neither committee members nor town residents can fairly be asked to weigh one tangible use of land against one that has no specifics or information attached to it.

##### B. Break the egg

The committee decided that this stalemate is in no one's interest, and either it or the Select Board should request that the ConCom initiate steps to allow a development evaluation to take place. That way, the AHC can discover whether the site is developable, and investigate what the specifics of a development could be, so the alternative being proposed to the current use is clear.

##### C. Breaker

Because the Select Board requested that Lowry and Burbank properties be placed under the authority of the ConCom, the Select Board should be the entity to request that they be removed. The Select Board has not yet done this. We will ask them to.

The committee voted to write a letter to the Select Board asking them to do this. Cheryl will write this. As many of the AHC members as can be present should attend the meeting at which this would be discussed (probably July 8), 5-0-0.

#### 6. Christmas Brook

Christmas Brook's outflow into the Green River continues to be restricted by a too-small pipe that is under the 59 Water St property. This needs to be addressed; it will affect RFP-Ds for that site.

#### 7. Suggestions for the Trust

One of the committee's responsibilities is to let the Trust know if we identify areas that need work done and are under their purview. Possibilities?

A. To gather information about how to make the purchase of existing houses affordable to people with low incomes, and how to ensure that the houses remain affordable. One such program, known as the soft second program, is now called the one mortgage program. Deeds would get restrictions attached.

B. To gather and make available information/funding so that people can alter or upgrade their current houses to remain in them safely and affordably. The CET/Williamstown COOL committee have programs to assist with weatherizing and energy conservation. Perhaps the Trust could underwrite some of these and/or a complementary program for upgrades unrelated to energy use, e.g. mobility adaptability.

C. To establish an inventory of relatively low-cost properties that are vacant and can be assessed for purchase and use. Kim Burnham said that about 12 to 15 properties currently meet this description.

#### 8. Next steps

A. Cheryl edits Scope of Services for a development consultant based on the committee's discussion and has it ready for the Town Manager by July 8.

B. Cheryl ensures that the RFP-C is sent to at least three consultants, aiming for a July 12 distribution.

C. Cheryl writes a short letter to the Select Board asking it to act re ConCom

D. All members show for Select Board meeting (might have to be posted as an AHC meeting) July 8

E. Cathy relays suggestions to the Trust

Documents used: RFP Scope of Services model draft by Rita Farrell May 2013; Criteria list written by Van Ellet, Tom Sheldon, and Leigh Short, dated May 31.

**Next meeting: July 8**  
**(technically a meeting--all members to be at Select Board meeting)**

**then: July 9**

**then: July 23**  
**(to answer any questions possible consultants might have)**