

Present

Bilal Ansari, Charles Bonenti, Van Ellet, Cheryl Shanks, Leigh Short, Cathy Yamamoto (chair)

Also Present: Margaret Harwood, Suzanne Kemple; Stanley Parese, Fred Puddester and Tom Sheldon from the Affordable Housing Trust; Susan Puddester (Higher Ground); John Ryan by telephone; Robert Scerbo, Sarah Thurston, and three others; Kim Wells (Agriculture Commission); Ed Damon (North Adams Transcript), Jaime Bairstow (Willinet)

Business

1. Minutes

The minutes of the December 18 meeting were approved 6-0-0.

2. Conference Call with John Ryan

Development consultant, in Montpelier, Vermont, to discuss the sorts of information he plans to seek and where he hopes to find it. In response to committee members' questions, he said that:

- a. He wants "current and useful" information, and is likelier to search now for historical data, if needed, than to use the data he collected in 2000 for the town's master plan. Census and assessor's office data will be central.
- b. He wants information on existing conditions, specifically regarding types of housing, demographics including levels of income, and levels of need.
- c. He believes that he can account for the impact of college student use of off-campus housing and of possible changes in Williams College's plans for its real estate holdings.
- d. He plans to separate acute from long-term needs, but also to explain the way that immediate solutions to the current crisis will affect the town's long-term housing profile.
- e. He said that comparative data, either by county and state or by similar communities elsewhere, will help put his portrait of Williamstown into context.
- f. He will present his initial, key findings at a committee meeting tentatively scheduled for February 12.

3. Conflicts of interest

Cathy passed out conflict-of-interest guidelines, which the committee members have to know.

4. Property & housing studies

a. Townwide

Although the understanding among most members of the Affordable Housing Committee and the Trust was that the two committees would split the total cost of the Ryan and Lowry studies, in practice the Trust paid for 100% of the Lowry study so the work could commence, and the Committee only afterward voted to pay for most of the Ryan study. Hence, although the intention was to share both, technically the vote did not support that outcome. This doesn't matter, since the outcome is the same, but was a source of confusion at the meeting.

b. Photec

Tighe & Bond is submitting a proposal to draft an "invitation for bid" specification for the remediation, demolition, and disposal of the building. Such IFB would provide important information toward deciding whether to demolish or to include in an RFP for reuse.

The town will contract for a toxicity test and risk assessment of a limited, defined area of the river bank at a cost of approximately \$9,000. If no further action is required, an Activity and Use Limitation prohibiting single family homes (at an additional cost of about \$9,000) will be imposed and a Phase II/III report will be filed at DEP (total cost about \$18,000).

However, if the toxicity text and risk assessment find that remediation is required, the impacted sediment will have to be removed (estimated cost approximately \$25,000). After remediation, the town would proceed with the Activity and Use Limitation prohibiting single family homes at a cost of approximately \$9,000 and file the Phase II/III report at DEP, as noted above, for an approximate total cost of \$43,000 (\$9,000 + \$25,000 + \$9,000).

The silver contamination is separate from any building issues. The regulators will want the silver (on the river bank) evaluated and perhaps/probably dealt with. At the close of either of these combinations of steps, the property will be ready for reuse.

These costs will not be borne by the AHC.

c. 59 Water St

AHC alone is paying for the O'Reilly, Talbot & Okun Assessment of Diesel Tank Release at 59 Water Street. The base contract is for \$13,350. Test pits and sampling were completed November 30. We await laboratory results. No underground storage tanks (USTs) were found. The remedial efforts at Water could possibly be done with the recent holes dug but one needs to see the analytical data to know what if anything comes next. Diesel-type oils are easy to remediate with bio and sometimes can just be left where they are. Excavation might be able to do all that is required.

5. Public Comments

Since several members of the public were in attendance, the committee chair asked if they had questions or statements they wished to present.

a. ConCom

1. Bob Scerbo asked about the letter dated October 31, 2012, that the AHC sent to the Conservation Commission: what had become of this request and why hadn't this been taken up? Various people answered that in early November ConCom chairman Hank Art announced that while he was happy to receive statements, the committee was not going to take up the issue until February (2013), by which time he and other traveling committee members would be in town and more of the information that the ConCom needs, from the selectmen, other committees, remediation experts, etc., about financing and the state of other town properties would be in hand.

2. Jaime Bairstow said that ConCom has tentatively scheduled a large meeting for February 14.

b. Sites

1. Kim Wells asked why the committee was privileging Lowry by presenting statements about it and discussing it while not discussing Photec or 59 Water equally.

2. Bob Scerbo asked why the AHC was talking about posting conceptual plans for Lowry but not for Photec or 59 Water St.

3. Margaret Harwood said that she hopes to hear more about the building site near Proprietors Fields as well as the other sites.

4. Suzanne Kemple asked about using the sites adjacent, both north and south, to Cable Mills.

The committee responded by saying that because Lowry was not contaminated, AHC had officially funded a conceptual plan for it; after other properties' useable areas become clearer, conceptual site plans will be formally initiated for them as well. Apparently, Ann McCallum developed conceptual site plans for Photec and 59 Water St and showed them at a planning board meeting, but she did not give them to the AHC so the AHC can't comment on them or post them. Sites by Cable Mills are owned by Mitchell Properties, not by the town.

c. Plan descriptions

Sarah Thurston thanked the committee for referring to the plans as schematics and conceptual because others have mistakenly referred to them as engineering studies (apparently because they were done by Guntlow, an engineering firm).

6. Mission Statement

The committee decided to wait to discuss a draft mission statement.

7. Announcements

There is a CPC meeting Wednesday January 9; ConCom January 10; Selectmen January 14 and 28; and the Affordable Housing Trust applied for \$200,000 in CPA funds, which will be addressed at the CPC meeting January 9.

8. Web

The committee discussed posting everything on the web, caveat emptor. Leigh Short suggested posting one-page summaries. Peter Fohlin has already begun not only to post current minutes but also the minutes of previous meetings.

Documents consulted: none, though the state conflict of interest guidelines were handed out.

Next meeting: February 12, 2013 at 7 p.m.