

Present

Bilal Ansari, Charles Bonenti, Van Ellet, Cheryl Shanks, Catherine Yamamoto (chair);
invited: Susan Puddester, Higher Ground; absent: Leigh Short

Also present: Joan Burns, Vivian Jaffe; Stephen Dravis (iBerkshires), Alex Elvin
(Advocate), Martin Filion (Willinet)

Business

1. Minutes

The minutes of the September 3 meeting were approved 5-0-0. Charles moved, Van seconded.

2. Meetings schedules

A. AHC

Timothy Geller is only able to attend on a Wednesday, at 5 pm. We will try to schedule our next meeting October 2 at 5 pm, to hear his presentation, and after that meet jointly with the Affordable Housing Trust, to hear what they have been working on, possibly at 6 or 7 pm. The next meetings would be the 59 Water listening session on September 30, the Photech listening session October 10, and the next regular meeting after that would be October 17.

B. Conservation Commission

Cathy Yamamoto is scheduled to attend the Conservation Commission meeting September 26 and hopes to add information about the site's legal and political history to the committee's Lowry archive.

C. Special Town Meeting

Still no date because the town is being cautious about the first-refusal waiting period.

3. Updates on sites

A. 59 Water St.

1. The state issued a determining pronouncement of a Class A outcome, meaning that the site is ready for development without restrictions

2. Because the site is so close to the Green River as well as the Christmas Brook culvert, it is likely that someone will need to evaluate surface flooding and wetlands issues.

B. Photech

1. Tighe & Bond collected samples to determine the ecological risk from the existing hot spot. Results take 48 days, so they will not be available until late November or early December.
2. This may affect the timing of the site being included in the RFP.
3. The committee had the following questions for someone. Perhaps Tighe & Bond, Tim Kaiser, or Leigh Short would know the answers.
 - a. How far down do the pollutants go?
 - b. What would be involved in raising the elevation at the site?
 - c. Where does the deed place the property line with respect to the river?

C. Cable Mills: spring construction?

D. Higher Ground/Proprietors Fields

1. Next steps are a site survey and Massachusetts EPA assessment, a visit by the Fire Chief and others concerned with safety, and a discussion with abutters and residents.
2. Molly Wolihan is scheduled to speak to the Spruces Roof Group about permitting. We hope that the project will receive a friendly 40B comprehensive permit.
3. Funding applications have gone out to for state Department of Housing and Community Development (\$315,000) and Block Grant (\$400,000) funds.

E. Spruces site

1. Conservation status: putting a deed restriction on the land is a condition of the FEMA grant, and yet we know that land is easily put into conservation when there is no competing need, and when a competing need does arise it is difficult to take it out of conservation.
2. We should send a letter to the Selectmen asking for the a) status and b) use of the Spruces land. Bilal moved, Charles seconded, 5-0-0. Cathy will send this letter.

4. Presentation of Higher Ground survey of former Spruces residents

Susan Puddester of Higher Ground presented the results of a June 2013 survey that HG completed asking how Sprucians had fared and what they wanted. [The data are in the attached document.]

A. Bilal Ansari observed that this was real, up-to-date information about actual people, rather than anecdotes.

B. Susan Puddester observed that, essentially, the only former Sprucians who still lived in Williamstown were those who remained at the Spruces. Only 5 of 155 residents had found non-Spruces housing in Williamstown.

C. Cathy Yamamoto observed that this group were elderly homeowners who had no place to move to if they wanted to stay in town.

D. The committee voted to endorse, and to actively cooperate with and support, Higher Ground's efforts to resettle the Sprucians, near Proprietors Fields or elsewhere. Van moved, Charles seconded, vote 5-0-0.

5. Web site

A. We would like to know if the committee site is used, and if so, what people seek there. Peter Fohlin might know.

B. We do not have on hand copies of what is on the web site now and what could be on it so we will postpone a specific discussion.

C. We do know that one area we want documented is the affordable housing that exists right now in Williamstown. For each we need the number of units, year built, address, criteria for acceptance, and address of landlord/how to apply.

1. Church Corners: Charles

2. Family housing (Spring Meadow and Stetson Court): Cathy

3. Meadowvale: Van

4. Proprietors Fields: Bilal

6. RFP Criteria: put off.

Documents consulted: Higher Ground Survey

Next meeting: September 30

**Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Shanks, Secretary**