

TOWN OF SOMERS
SOMERSVILLE MILL STRATEGIC PLANNING AD HOC COMMITTEE
INITIAL MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, June 25, 2015
7:00pm
Selectmen's Conference Room
Town Hall

Call to Order:

First Selectman Lisa Pellegrini called the first meeting of the Somersville Mill Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee to order at 7:00pm.

Members Present:

Members present included Tim Keeney, Erik Ness, Brad Pellissier and Ralph Williams. Committee Member Tim Potrikus was conferenced in via phone. Also present were First Selectman Lisa Pellegrini, Town Engineer Jeff Bord and interested residents.

Introductions and Welcome:

Ms. Pellegrini welcomed members of the committee and thanked them for volunteering to serve on the committee. She asked all members to introduce themselves. The Committee members possess very desirable and diversified areas of expertise in areas such as environmental law, environmental consultation, planning, law, energy, research and reporting. In addition one member does own properties in very close proximity to the mill and has a family history intertwined with the mill.

Review of Charge from Board of Selectmen:

Ms. Pellegrini began by explaining that the committee was formed as a means to help to ultimately facilitate clean up the mill site property. She explained that it would be ideal if the beauty of the Scantic Riverway could be restored and to also have the property back on the tax roles as a revenue producing property. The Somersville Mill is not owned by the Town. The owners of the site appear to have abandoned the site and are non-responsive. The site was previously in a tax sale a few years ago, however it was not sold. The Town does have an option to take over the property; however the Selectmen are unwilling to burden the taxpayers with ownership of the property without having some type of idea as to the environmental liability and cleanup costs. During the last year the Town was successful in receiving a Brownfield Assessment Grant for Phase I and II Environmental Studies. There also appears to be support from state and federal agencies in providing help and assistance with the Mill site.

As authorized by the Selectmen, the purpose of the committee is to serve as an Advisory Committee to the Board of Selectmen to assist in providing strategic planning options for the Somersville Mill site. The committee would have six months to complete their assignment; however there would be an option to extend the timeframe. The Committee is assigned the following charges:

1. Identify potential reuse of the Somersville Mill property

2. Identify potential sources of funding to be used to remediate the Somersville Mill property
3. Identify risks associated with taking title to the Somersville Mill property

Review of Time Lines:

Ms. Pellegrini shared with the group a synopsis of what is currently transpiring with regard to the mill site. This includes the current Brownfield Assessment Grant, as well as grant opportunities the town is applying for. The most recent being the MetroHartford Brownfield Assessment Grant for Phase III Environmental Studies and a Remediation Plan that is being applied thru the Capital Region Council of Government (CRCOG). In addition, the Town recently completed the Plan of Conservation and Development and is looking to work with a planning consultant to review the possibility of instituting special zoning regulations for the mill area.

Elections of Officers:

Chairman-

Mr. Pellissier made a motion to elect Tim Keeney as Chairman of the Somersville Mill Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee, seconded by Mr. Williams. Motion passed 5-0.

Vice Chairman-

Mr. Keeney made a motion to elect Brad Pellissier as Vice Chairman of the Somersville Mill Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee, seconded by Mr. Ness. Motion passed 5-0.

Secretary-

The position was not filled, as the Town will provide staff to take minutes of the meetings.

At this time Ms. Pellegrini turned the meeting over to Mr. Keeney to chair.

Process Discussion and Schedule for Future Meetings:

Mr. Keeney discussed the need to meet with others to gain further information. Ms. Pellegrini said several resources were available to provide the committee with information. Examples included the various town attorneys (general, tax and environmental) as well as the DECD, CRCOG, Planimetrics and other planning consultants.

Throughout the meeting the group began lively discussion as to possibilities for the future of the site, as well as what speakers they would like to have come to the meetings. All agreed that this is an extraordinary opportunity to come together and do something constructive. All appreciated the history the site represents and would like to ensure that such special history is not lost. Discussion also included improvements already made to the area including intersection, sidewalk and lighting upgrades, as well as increased sewer capacity.

Town Engineer Jeff Bord distributed maps depicting the 100 year flood zone and examples of scenarios where possible trails, walkways, parking and buildings could be

incorporated on the site. The discussion then centered on flooding issues and mitigation possibilities.

The group determined that in the short time frame it would be advantageous to have meetings twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 7th, pending the availability of guest speakers.

Adjournment:

Mr. Pellissier made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Williams. Motion passed 5-0 and meeting was adjourned at 8:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Pellegrini, Recording

Minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.