

Select Board Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2021

Present: The members of the Select Board all participated remotely via using GoToWebinar: Mr. Frank DelVecchio, Chairman; Neil Rhein, Vice-Chair; Mr. Jess Aptowitz, Clerk; Mr. Michael Trowbridge and Mr. Steve Schoonveld. Mr. Kevin Dumas, Town Manager also participated using the GoToWebinar.

Mr. Barry LaCasse, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director was not present.

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TOWN CLERKS OFFICE

1. Call To Order Select Board Meeting - Pledge of Allegiance

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Chairman DelVecchio called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. He then asked those present to state the Pledge of Allegiance. He reminded everyone that the meeting was being broadcast live and taped for future broadcast on Mansfield Cable. Chairman DelVecchio read a statement and provided an email address and phone number to those watching directing residents to send their questions in, and they would receive a response within twenty-four hours.

2. Discussion of 50 West Street Property

Mr. Dumas provided a presentation to the Select Board on the 50 West Street property, the former Police Station. He explained why the Town has continue to maintain the building since the Police have moved to East Street in their new building. He began by explaining the T-Band frequency spectrum issue and explained that the FCC was planning to auction the T-band frequency, however that was resolved in January through an Act of Congress and public safety departments across the country can continue to use the T-Band frequency range for radio communication. He stated that the cost to maintain the facility is \$10,000-\$12,000 per year, but it has been necessary because the cost to relocate the tower would have been a waste of taxpayers' money if the tower was not going to be needed. Mr. Rob Verdone, SEMRECC Director is working to purchase a new radio system that can be located at 500 East Street and hopefully receive a grant to help with the cost. Mr. Dumas then explained why he recommended that the property at 50 West Street be retained instead of making the property surplus and available for disposition. He stated that it was his professional opinion that the Town retain the property because it is waterfront property with linkage to Kingman and Fulton Ponds and he provided an example from the Master Plan that stated "creating a cohesive greenway corridor of Mansfield's open spaces and recreation area."

Mr. Schoonveld commented that it seemed like the Town was forever tied to that building if items couldn't be moved. Mr. Dumas then further explained that the master fire alarm box could be moved to Town Hall, but there is a cost. The recommendation also from Mr. Verdone was that communities should never give up a good stable radio tower because it can be very easily be reused should another system or tower fail. Mr. Dumas also stated that due to grandfathered conditions the tower could not be built in its current place because of the set back from the river.

Mr. Trowbridge asked how much square footage the equipment takes up. Mr. Dumas stated that they could possible build a small building next to the tower to host the equipment. Mr. Trowbridge said he was in favor of keeping the building and gutting it and then asked if the equipment could stay in the basement and Mr. Dumas said it could.

Mr. Aptowitz asked when the analysis was done on the building was it determined what the property could be sold for. Mr. Dumas responded that the feasibility study was only to access whether it would fit the needs of the Council on Aging and Parks and Rec, not its current value. Mr. Aptowitz then commented that it was a prime piece of real estate and maybe there is not money right now, but maybe in a few years down the road it could be renovated.

Mr. Rhein asked if the tower and "brains" of the radio were moved would SEMRECC cover the costs and Mr. Dumas answered that if the tower was going to service all four towns than it could be SEMRECC, but if it was just going to service Mansfield it would not. Mr. Rhein then asked what the property is zoned for and Mr. Trowbridge answered that it is zoned as R3 and it could be approximately two duplexes that could be build on that footprint. Mr. Dumas added that with the required setbacks if the building was torn down it would have to be rebuilt further away from the river. Mr. Trowbridge also noted that if this property were sold for \$500,000 and the Town wanted to buy another

property it may be difficult to find and would come with a much higher price. Mr. Dumas added that in the study it was stated that a COA should be built near the Downtown and there is not much property in that area.

Chairman DelVecchio stated that the property connects to South Common, Kingman Pond, Fulton Pond and he would not want to lose this sense of place and wanted the Board to act thoughtfully on this.

Mr. Dumas then continued his presentation and highlighted the possible future uses for 50 West Street. He stated that the Master Plan referenced a multigenerational community center, however the site has space constraints and by losing the grandfather development rights it would be difficult to create a community center. The feasibility study by Abacus showed that 50 West would be suitable for a repurposed or new COA Facility with Park and Rec moving over to Hope Street. A new COA facility is estimated to cost \$7.7 million or a refurbished building at \$8.4 million, however these were 2019 estimates. Mr. Dumas also noted that there is a new grant opportunity available and could possibly provide up to \$4 million in grants for the Town when repurposing a municipal building.

Chairman DelVecchio asked if the building will be usable given that it has been vacant for an extended period of time. Mr. Dumas answered that although the building needs a new roof it should remain reusable and it is being maintained and is insured as a storage facility for its full building value.

Mr. Schoonveld said he thought it would be necessary to know what the value of the property was before deciding because the residents would want to know that information. Mr. Rhein agreed with Mr. Schoonveld that he would also like to be able to make an informed decision.

Mr. Trowbridge asked what the dates were for the reuse grant. Mr. Dumas answered that it was June. Mr. Trowbridge then asked for this to be a continued agenda item over the next few weeks. Mr. DelVecchio had no problem with that being on the agenda. Mr. Schoonveld commented that the Town could apply and then decide to not use the grant if necessary.

3. Any items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting

Chairman DelVecchio stated that he had a scheduling item in regards to an email he received from Dr. Dulaski from Northeastern University. There were five groups of students that completed studies of Mansfield streets. He said he would be reaching out to better understand the timeline as his initial email stated that they needed two and a half hours. Mr. Trowbridge thought it may work to have it on a non-Select Board meeting night.

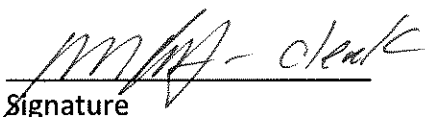
4. Adjourn

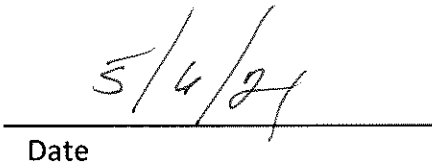
Motion: To adjourn the April 14, 2021 Select Board Meeting at 6:27PM. (Schoonveld/Trowbridge)

Roll Call Vote:

Rhein – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Schoonveld – Yes Aptowitz – Yes DelVecchio - Yes

Passes 5:0


Signature


Date

Minutes prepared by Carrie Champagne