

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
MONDAY, September 22, 2008

#39-08, #40-08

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Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons Allen Ross, Patricia Pruitt; Patricia Allen (absent) Town Administrator, Frank Abbondanzio; Administrative Secretary Wendy Bogusz; Dan Laroche, Town Planner; David Jensen, Building Inspector; Arn Albertini, Greenfield Recorder; David Detmold, Montague Reporter; Hugh Massey, WHAI

Approve minutes of September 15, 2008

Pruitt makes the motion to approve the minutes of September 15, 2008 with corrections. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye

Fuss & O'Neil Public Presentation on Strathmore

Laroche: Last fall the town approved an expedited permitting process and identified their priority development sites. Back in 2007 the state legislature approved the expedited permitting law, Chapter 43D which allows communities to adopt it and identify sites that will designate priority development sites which means the Town is held to approving development within 120 days of receiving an application from a developer. As a carrot for communities to adopt 43D there was grant money attached to this program and communities could apply up to \$100,000 to receive on these technical assistance grants. The Town of Montague applied and we received the full \$100,000. In our application we said we would do two things, 1) to establish the permitting process for the priority development site and 2) was to do structural analysis of the Strathmore mill and to update the feasibility study that was done in 2005 because a lot has happened to the mill since 2005. The old feasibility study needed updating and we had to get a handle on some of the structural issues of the building. The other thing we focused on was the pedestrian bridge which is key to access onto the site.

Eric Bernardin, Fuss & O'Neil: As part of the final report we are going to focus on five different areas. This is a development assessment that we did looking at the pedestrian bridge, some utilities investigation work, vehicular access and parking, and structural assessment to buildings 1 & 11 that were affected by the fire that took down building 10 and then we looked at some of the revised information for the architectural feasibility study. This report brought forward and additional investigation built on the feasibility study that was done in 2005. The whole site was looked at to see if the existing bridge could be put in a different location to be better for development. The bridge is currently at the center point of the mill and is at the center point where all the utilities come into the mill. The bridge is deficient in several areas, structurally it is weak in several areas, it has lead paint on the bridge, the decking is deficient, it also is not ADA compatible, it has stairs at both ends. We came up with two proposals and estimates in the study, 1) was to modify the existing bridge, by taking the main span of the bridge and picked it up and raised it up to come in at the next floor elevation in the mill complex; instead of coming in at level 4 you would come into level 5 of the mill. We would have to put in a new 60' span, with a roof over the bridge. The cost for this is estimated at \$600,000 – \$620,000 to repair existing the bridge. 2) The new location is in the same spot but would remove this existing abutment and go with a single span bridge that would be 210' prefabricated bridge with roof. The estimated price for a new bridge is \$700,000 - \$711,000.

Mark Sternick, Dietz & Co., Architects: We looked conceptually at other places that would make sense but for a number of reasons, current location makes the most sense. (goes over how you would use bridge and have access). Two new stair towers would have to be created because the existing stair tower is not structurally sound.

Ross asks how this fits in with Historic permitting:

Sternick responds that this would be allowed and is encouraged under historic regulations. They are very specific and very careful when you have a historic building, maintaining the character of that building. When you have additions they are very interested in not trying to copy and make new things look historic. They are very interested in having connectors and additions be and look modern and be accents to the historic nature of the building but be completely modern in the fact they are brand new.

Bernardin: Utilities at the current location: Fire suppression water comes down an access road from the Southworth Mill and provides different service entrances throughout the mill building. The fire system has been up kept and some improvements have been made since the fire. Domestic service to mill is cut off and comes across the pedestrian bridge and enters building 4. A new water line would be reconnected to the pump on Canal Street and feed into the mill would need to be recreated From an electrical standpoint, right now the electric service comes off

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of the main station and comes over and feeds into Swift River Hydro. We had a meeting on site with WMECO and it was determined that a new service for the mill complex would be best and the best location would be overhead, on top of the bridge along with a new transformer installed near building 4. There are 3 sewer lines and only 1 is working for Southworth. There is another line Southworth would like to reconnect that was damaged in the fire, sanitary services would have to be reactivated for sewer service. Maintaining water and sewer across the bridge was the most economical.

Sternick: Parking: We studied 10 or 11 areas in town and focused our thoughts on areas 300' from bridge. There are two lots in front of building that could be expanded to give 29 spaces. There is a potential for 234 spaces possible but 117 of them are marked on the site. Owner should work with the town to develop spots. Likely phase 1 would be 94 – 110 spaces. (See drawing)

Bernardin: Structural Assessment: A lot of damaged was shown in building 1 where building 10 tied into it. During the fire it was more than likely some pulling on the existing structure as building 10 collapsed. Buildings 4, 5 & 6 we did see some significant damage in a corner of the building that would need to be replaced. A new stair tower will need to be installed to allow construction.

Sternick: A main consideration is building 11 is now a stand-alone building which it never was. This opens the opportunity to look at it as a residential building. It would work well for 20 live/work units or artist studio units. There is an elevator shaft that could be used but not the elevator. Two new stairs would have to be put into the building we would create new double loaded corridor within the building and new entrances at both the lower area and the two ends of the building. Building 11 is 7 levels and 2 of the levels have beam heights of 6'10" – 7'. This opens up an opportunity to open those floors up and create units with lofts. Building 1 offers the same opportunities it did originally, both elevator shafts would have to come down and new stairs would be put in and an elevator tower would be installed in such a way that it would be accessed directly off the pedestrian walk way, but would also serve as the elevator to the whole area of buildings. Looked at developing a plaza where building 10 was and give upper plaza to other building. Continues to go over plans (see Site Development Assessment). The buildings need work, but basically the buildings are in good shape, repointing work could be done in phases over a period of years.

Ross: the roof tops, building 4 and 1 and 2, roof tops are solid enough to support an observation deck?

Sternick feels it is a reasonable thing to do, should not be a big deal, but would have to be reviewed by structural engineer.

Ross: Foot bridge is responsibility of utilities, but is essential part to development of buildings.

43D committee worked with this agency on the development of this report

Part of their original proposal is designing bridge plans to Mass. Highways 25% design plans, but committee suggests holding off on this at this point. The money has been left to the side for this.

Dan Laroche, Town Planner, Sign Letter of Intent for Heritage Landscape Grant

Laroche: An opportunity has come about for some technical assistance through the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) called Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. They are doing reconnaissance survey work in the Pioneer Valley. They have identified 40 communities that are eligible for this grant funding and 10 communities will be awarded with their assistance in putting together an inventory program for the Town that will look at heritage landscapes. Heritage landscapes are broader brush view of areas, landscape scale areas in town. I would like the Selectboard to sign the letter of intent, which is the grant application.

Pruitt makes the motion to approve, sign and forward the application to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for the Connecticut River Valley reconnaissance survey program.

Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye

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Ruth Nervig, Community Coalition for Teens, License to place banner across Avenue A

Pruitt makes the motion to approve the license to place a banner in the public right of way for the Community Coalition for Teens of the G/M Community School partnership to run October 23 – November 23, 2008. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye

Application for Entertainment License

Pruitt makes the motion to approve the license for entertainment for Patty Cake, Patty Cake at 104 Fourth Street for Sunday through Thursday from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM and Friday, Saturdays and Holidays from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye.

License to Place a Sign or Object in the Public Way – Patty Cake Patty Cake

Travis LaDoyt: Originally we wanted to have music indoor for the Arts and Leaves Festival and I have a band and we wanted to play, but I thought I would rather play outdoors. We have a fenced in area, but the speakers would be on the sidewalk because the band would also be in this area.

Discussion about possible noise and if residents have been notified of the event.

Pruitt makes the motion to approve the October 5 event with music for a 2-hour period (time to be determined) and allow speakers to be placed in the right of way. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye

License to Place a Sign or Object in the Public Way – Peaceful Palm Studio

Jensen goes over current sign policy that should be revisited at a later date. He has spoken about this request to Tom and he is skeptical about the location as it is in the handicap accessibility but is willing to give it a 2 week trial.

Pruitt makes a motion to approve the placement of a sandwich board sign at Avenue A and Third Street for a period of 2 weeks to be revisited at the meeting on October 6th for the Peaceful Palm Studio at 37 Third Street. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye

Ross would like the sign policy put on the agenda at a later date to be reviewed for this specific issue.

Town Administrators Report

CSO Change Order #5

Pruitt makes the motion to approve the CSO Change Order request #5 that involves the removal of the dissolved flotation thickener in the amount of \$21,856.00. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Ross – Aye, Pruitt - Aye

Program Income Hearing (Sprinklers at Shea Theater)

All of the sprinkler heads were painted in the Shea Theater some time ago. This request is to replace these.

Pruitt makes the motion to approve the request for \$5100 for the Shea Sprinkler Head replacement project to come from Program Income. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye

Other

Request for Letter of Support

Chong Collette has written a letter requesting a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen for Pastor Sohyung Ryu's application before the Immigration Service who is currently serving as the pastor of the Greatness Life Korean Church located in Millers Falls which was established in 2004. He currently has been denied his residence request, because he was not a full time pastor and the church does not need him.

Pruitt makes the motion to authorize Frank Abbondanzio to write a letter of support for Pastor Sohyung Ryu as a resident of Montague and employed as a Pastor at the Greatness Life Korean Church in Millers Falls. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye

Other

- WMECO is having their annual dinner at Bills Restaurant on Wednesday September 24 at 5:30 PM. Frank will attend this meeting as Selectmen will be at a Finance Committee Meeting.

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District Meeting

Ross; It was a long meeting with constructive dialog; there is still a spread of proposals and I hope we can work together and come out with a school budget that is acceptable to all parties. It will be a challenge and the Selectboard is meeting with the Finance Committee on Wednesday to further discuss this. Hopefully we will have another district meeting and agreement will be met.

Update on Railroad Salvage

David Jensen: Mr. Kosuda showed up in court with a structural engineer. He has had discussions with an abatement contractor and a demolitions contractor. The Engineer was paid up to the day he appeared in court and they had a number of discussions on strategy, general building stability and the ability to do the work and concluded that probably demolition of the 4 story section was the preferred alternative at the moment. Mr. Kosuda had engaged a person to do an environmental assessment to find out what kind of materials were in the building that needed to be treated special. This was in process at the time of the court hearing. The engineer testified it would take about 2 weeks to get results back. Our attorney moved to have Mr. Kosuda attached personally to the lawsuit, and not just through the LLC. Arguments for this will happen in 2 weeks as Kosuda's attorney did not feel he was ready. There was no specific requirement that Mr. Kosuda pursue any other avenue up until that court date. At this point if that happens, we did argued that a receiver is appropriate even now, even though he has made some efforts. The judge was leary of placing another level of bureaucracy in here and she did take note that Mr. Kosuda's behavior is now under the scrutiny of the court and essentially out of our hands. The judge has no intention of dropping the ball on this one. In some sense Mr. Kosuda left with less requirements than he had a week ago, but on the other hand the court has made the statement they are taking it very seriously. He is allowed to leave the state. We are really down to assembling numbers and a time schedule. The engineer and myself made the point there is a minimum number of stable areas in the building. Most of the asbestos is still in a modestly stable part of building and can be removed for an affordable price. If we get into severe weather, all bets are off on numbers that have been presented. The judge also made note that timeliness is important here.

Pruitt makes the motion to go into executive session at 8:45 for collective bargaining and only coming out to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross – Aye.

Pruitt makes the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM Seconded by Ross, approved unanimously. Pruitt – Aye, Ross - Aye

There will not be a Selectmen's Meeting on **Monday, September 29, 2008**