

CUMBERLAND PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX SITE LOCATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Meeting, Monday, April 13, 2015
6:30 PM

Call to Order at 6:30 PM

1) Attendance Roster:

State and Town Officials: Mayor William S. Murray, Councilman Robert G. Shaw, Finance Director Brian Silvia, Water Department Superintendent Chris Champi

Committee Members: Sean Thompson (ex officio), Josh O'Neill (ex officio), John Desmarais (ex officio) Mark Lindgren, Thomas Cabana, Kim McCarthy, Pam Thurlow, Alan Bourgette, Jeff Mutter, Alex Marszalkowski, Tom Letourneau, Dana Newbrook, Frank Matta, Tim Draper

Committee Members Absent: None

Members of the Public: Al Santos, Roger and Margo Brooks, Paul Buss, Rosemary Reilly, Janice Pier, Alice Clemente. Other members of the public did not sign in.

2) Approval of March, 24 Meeting Minutes: The Minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote of committee members present.

3) Remarks from Mayor William S. Murray

Mayor Murray said that his goal is for the committee to find the best; most economic site for a future public safety complex. He stated that the Monastery property has not purposely been left off the agenda. That property is on the table and this committee is charged with looking at everything in Town, both public and private property for options for a location for the public safety complex. He does not want the committee to get bogged down with just this one piece of property to the exclusion of other possibilities. Mayor Murray stated that he will be providing information at a future meeting of the committee on the Town's legal opinion on whether the Monastery can be utilized for a future Public Safety Complex. He stated that the ideal situation is a parcel of at least 10 acres in size so that we are not limited for future development.

The Mayor stated that he has not ruled out acquiring private land if the right deal comes forward. He stated that he has not considered eminent domain as part of this process. He wanted to explain that planning department staff time has been considerable thus far and that he didn't want staff to spend time researching properties that did not meet the criteria of being centrally located and less than 10 acres. The Mayor has been in talks on several properties that are privately held in the last two weeks.

Mayor Murray said he was meeting with Brad Dean on Thursday to discuss the 1226 Mendon Rd. property that was suggested and has been out on the agenda. He stated that he will be meeting about a parcel on Angell Rd. soon and will update the committee. Mayor Murray relayed to the committee that he met with the President of National Grid in Rhode Island,

Timothy Horan, and toured the site on Mendon Rd. last Wednesday. He toured the site because of public safety officials concerns with the existing LNG tank and to get a feel for how the site was laid out. The Mayor mentioned that National Grid currently is taking the position that the entire parcel must be sold, so that if this site was eventually chosen, he would need to consider the impact of removing the property from the Town's tax rolls.

Questions from the Committee

Kim asked the Mayor which sites should be taken out of consideration and if we had enough information to make that decision. Kim asked about the 6-acre requirement, and whether it was absolutely necessary for the new complex. Mayor Murray responded that he believed the 10 acres was the minimum necessary for the complex and potential future growth, including perhaps a Town Hall or Senior Center.

Kim wanted to know what the restrictions were on the parcels given to the Town by the Lambert family (Plat 33 Lots 158 and 188). Chief Desmarais stated that he had walked the site last week and can attest that the lower parcel (158) had a lot of wet ground and that combined with the slopes and access issues were not ideal. Kim indicated that a walk-through most likely is not sufficient to know whether the land is buildable, and indicated that there is a significant section of the parcel that appears not to have any wetlands issues. Josh then explained the DEM wetlands application process and how difficult it would be to go through the application process in any appreciable way before the June 15th deadline we are working with. The Town would have to submit an application for the determination of the presence of wetlands and hire someone to do wetlands flagging for the initial determination of the presence and types of wetlands on the parcel.

Mark stated that he spoke with staff at DEM and they confirmed Josh's explanation of the DEM wetlands application process and that it would be too time consuming to go through that for every site being discussed. Mayor Murray chimed in and stated that if the sites look feasible to the committee members and met the basic criteria outlined at the beginning of this process then please keep them on the table for recommendations.

Kim wanted to know when the Town Solicitor will have the information available for the committee on the Town's opinion of what it can do with the Monastery land. Mayor Murray told the committee members that the information from the Solicitors office will be presented to the committee at the first meeting in May on Monday May 11.

4) Remarks from Finance Director on Bond Financing and Timelines

Finance Director Brian Silvia stated that the bond amount is for \$12.5 million. He went over the rates, which are conservative estimates for the borrowing costs. The bonds have not yet been issued, but it is anticipated that the first debt service payment will occur in fiscal year 2018. The financing is being done this way to have minimal impact on the tax levy (i.e. if this debt is incurred at or around the same time that other debts are paid off, there should be no need to raise taxes beyond the current level as a result of the bond issuance). Brian stated that increases in the cost of construction could have a big impact if the process is delayed, but there will be little fiscal impact if the project is constructed before fiscal year 2018. Brian indicated that his fiscal

projections called for construction to begin in calendar year 2016, and that it would have little or no impact if the Committee did not finalize its recommendations by the current June 15 deadline. The majority of the payments on the bond will take place between 2017– 2020. Mayor Murray added that there is a lot of pressure from other interests in Town for future bond funded projects so he wants to get this one started. Several Committee members requested clarification, which Brian provided. There were no additional questions for Brian.

5) Sites Continued from Previous Meeting

Schofield Farm (Plat 42 Lot 4)

The Water Department Superintendent Chris Champi was on hand to explain the Water Department's current testing and long term use for the site for town water supply. Chris stated that the Water Department began assessing the site in 2011. Chris displayed a map of the site showing where current wells existed and where observation wells were proposed for pumping tests. In 2014 they began short term testing of groundwater withdrawal (18 days). Chris stated that he just applied to DEM for a permit for groundwater withdrawal. He stated that there may be a need for structures for the wells. No construction or placement of structures can occur within 400 feet of the wells. Chris stated that as part of the DEM permitting process, watershed protection areas will be established for the well sites. He stated that the watershed protection areas could be as much as 2,000 feet for the well. He would not know the exact details until after the application process is complete, but if the protection area established is close to that number, it would preclude all of the site for development. Chris stated that DEM established the watershed protection areas and the Department of Health adds other restrictions that relate to structures on site.

Jeff Mutter asked Chris and the Mayor if the Town is determining that water supply use is the best use for the property. They answered in the affirmative. Mark asked if we were sure that this is what will end up on the site. Chris said yes, this is very likely. The Mayor added that Pawtucket Water Supply is proposing a rate increase of 20% that will affect users in Cumberland and that we need to be in a place where we can get all our water supply from Cumberland sources and rely less on Pawtucket. Chris reiterated the DEM wetland permitting process for the committee to understand and he stated that the costs of wetlands flagging can be quite a lot as he has spent \$25,000 on it already for the site.

Kim then made a motion to remove Schofield Farm (Plat 42 Lot 4) from consideration based on the representations from the Town that it is likely to be used for water supply, and cannot be built on as a result of the location of the wells. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

National Grid Property

After hearing earlier from Mayor Murray on the National Grid property and that he was in discussion with them, Mark made a motion to continue this site for consideration. Tom Cabana seconded his motion to continue. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to continue this site for consideration at future meetings.

Plat 33 Lots 158 and 188 (Former Lambert Property)

Kim stated that these two parcels are a lot of land overall and are town owned without deed restrictions so we should continue to give these sites serious consideration. Sean Thompson summarized a recent visit to the site where he and Chief Desmarais walked the two parcels. Chief Desmarais said there are serious problems with access to the parcels and the impact creating access would have on the residential neighborhood Lambert Avenue and Morgan Avenue. Jeff said we should still consider this site, since we are not going to find a perfect parcel and we should still recommend several parcels to the Mayor by June, so this site should stay on the table. The Mayor added that he would be happy if the committee ends up recommended 3 or 4 sites to him by June.

Tom Letourneau asked how much was set aside in the Kaestle and Boos estimate for construction site work, such as identifying wetlands and clearing property. Brian and Sean mentioned that \$750,000 was estimated for site work. Some sites will cost less and some will cost more depending on if access roads needed to be built, the availability of water and sewer, as well as wetlands issues. Several committee members asked if a developer could help provide construction costs estimates for the sites under consideration. The Mayor said we may be able to do that if time allows.

Mark made a motion to continue Plat 33 Lots 158 and 188 for consideration and future meetings. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

6) Site Submitted for Committee Review

1226 Mendon Rd. (Plat 58 Lot 56)

Chairman Lindgren stated that it is a superfund site (OU1), and that he had been informed that the site had 3 leach fields on the site that were remediated, but any outside disturbance (beyond the building envelope) would be a big problem. Mark said he spoke with Dave Newton of EPA region 1 who is listed as the contact for the Superfund Site (OU1 and OU2) and he came away from the conversation thinking this site would be a big headache. Mark then read from the deed restriction agreement that the Town entered into with the EPA stating that no public access buildings should be built on the site.

Thomas made a motion to remove the site from committee review; Chairman Mark Lindgren seconded that motion. Discussion then commenced between Chairman Lindgren and Jayne Guertin in the audience who had provided information on the site to the Chairman. Jayne said she had spoken with a staff person at DEM and also Dave Newton and said she had a different impression, especially since the site is being marketed for sale by a major commercial real estate broker. Mark said he reviewed some of the EPA information on the site and just doesn't feel that the site is practical. Jeff Mutter wanted to clarify if Mr. Dean, the owner of the building, had submitted this to the Town for review.

The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove this site from consideration.

Epheta House (Plat 53 Lot 1604)

Josh explained that a lengthy email was received from a Town resident, who wished to remain anonymous, that suggested many sites, but many of which had already been reviewed by the committee. There were two parcels of Town owned land in the email that had not already been considered, which is why they were added to the agenda.

Josh mentioned that the Town is planning some recreation trail improvements to this property.

Kim made a motion to remove the Epheta House property from consideration because it does not meet the stated criteria of having access to a main road or being located outside of a heavily residential area. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove this site from consideration

Diamond Hill Park (Plat 59 Lot 15)

Josh explained that this was another suggestion from the email from the resident who wished to remain anonymous. The committee reviewed the site and discussed that much of the land was already used for recreation and that additional building would be difficult.

The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove this site from consideration

7) Other Sites for Consideration at Future Meetings

Mayor Murray told the committee that he is talking to property owners on Angell Rd. He will update the committee when he has more information. Tom Letourneau mentioned that he wanted a site for consideration at the next meeting near Grove Rd. and Angell Rd. He stated that he would like to see the Town-owned land merged with several private parcels through purchase to get the required 10 acres. Josh mentioned that if this was his recommendation, we could not discuss it further on an agenda without the Town reaching out to the property owners as the Town does not own the land north of Grove Rd.

8) Public Comments

The Chairman then opened up the meeting to public comments.

Al Santos:

Al said that the committee is looking at sites all over Town that have problems. The committee should be focusing on the Monastery land as it is the ideal and best suited site. Al asked the committee why they won't just endorse the Monastery site as they would be crazy not to. Kim responded to Al that the Monastery land has restrictions and that it is not legal to build on it now. Al responded that the property was originally purchased by the Town for public facilities and that is what we should use it for.

Janice Pier:

She asked the committee how “married” the Town was to the need for a six-acre parcel, and to the building specs presented by Public Safety officials created by Kaestle and Boos. Chairman Lindgren stated that the specs are a beginning concept and will likely change as the Town gets closer to actual construction, but that the specs represent what is needed in general for the departments in a new facility. Mark stated that you do not know the final costs until the plans are finalized and you go out to bid on the project. Janice indicated that the Town should consider a different layout and smaller parcels of land, and perhaps repurposing an existing commercial property. Tom and Mark indicated that public safety buildings generally are not remodeled/repurposed because of the special features that they require.

End Public Comment

The next meeting is currently scheduled to be held on Tuesday April 28th in Meeting Rooms 1 and 2 of the Cumberland Public Library at 6:30pm.

8) Adjournment at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh O’Neill, CFM, MPA
Staff