



Select Board

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Select Board Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2020

21 State Line Road, Town Hall

Open Meeting

Quorum present: Roger Kavanagh, Select Board Chair, Kathleen Keresey, Select Board Member, Eric Shimelonis, Select Board Member, Marie Ryan, Town Administrator

Also present:

Dana Bixby, Planning Board Chair

Roger opened the meeting at 1:03 PM. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss:

- the proposed structure of the committee that will oversee and coordinate the development of a Master Plan for West Stockbridge with support from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)
- the financial details of the proposed consulting agreement with BRPC.

Dana Bixby, Planning Board Chair, reviewed her vision for the Master Planning process and her position on the most effective structure for developing a plan. She believes that the Planning Board should lead the process and the steering committee that guides decision making should consist of no more than 5 people versus the 10 person committee defined in the BRPC proposal.

She also suggested that the agreement with BRPC should be modified so that 10% of the grant money could be held back as a contingency for hiring other subject matter experts who could make contributions to the plan on topics that may not be within the expertise of the BRPC consulting staff. Specifically, she proposed reducing the estimate for Drafting the Open Space and Recreation plan from \$40,000 to \$36,000, and the estimate for developing proposed amendments to existing by-laws from \$10,000K to \$8,000.

Kathleen said she was concerned that the structure Dana proposed would exclude participation by members of the Vision Committee who she felt were instrumental in bringing forward and nurturing the idea of developing a Master Plan for West Stockbridge.

The Board and Dana discussed the pros / cons of the structure of the steering committee and the larger “umbrella” committee that would perform community outreach and gather data on specific topics for the Master Plan. They also discussed the possibility that the proposed structure could decrease the transparency of the Master Planning process. At the conclusion of the discussion Dana stated that her view of the committee structure was the only way she would be willing to take the lead on developing the Master Plan.

Roger asked what role the Select Board would play in the Master Planning process. Dana said that the Planning Board and Select Board would have shared authority and that the Planning Board would keep the Select Board fully apprised of its deliberations and decisions. Dana left the meeting at that point so she could make it to a business appointment.

Roger observed that the process used to develop the proposed steering committee structure had not been as transparent as it could have been but emphasized that it was essential for the Board to reach an agreement so that the consulting agreement with BRPC could be signed and Master Planning process could get started.

Eric then made the following motion, which he felt would address the issues that had been discussed but not resolved:

I make a motion to put the Planning Board in charge of the Master Plan process, with no other prescribed committee members, to lead the process forward, to form committees and do outreach as they deem necessary, and to proceed with transparency and strict adherence to open meeting laws.

Kathleen seconded the motion, all were in favor. Roger asked Marie to let Dana know of the Boards decision so that Dana could contact BRPC and have the agreement amended so that it could be brought to the Board to be signed.

Roger made a motion to adjourn, Eric seconded and all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marie V. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

- Agreement Between West Stockbridge and Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Master Plan and Opened Space and Recreation Plan – Committee Structure Recommendations