

LAND USE COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2023 7:00 PM
All Remote Meeting

Members Present: Carolyn Barthel, Alejna Brugos, Peter Coffin, Barry Iadarola, Anne Mazar and Frank Niro

Others Present: Phil Cieply, Lisa Moczynski and Lawney Tinio.

The meeting opened at 7:00 PM and all present introduced themselves.

The Alejna/Peter motion to accept the 6/13/23 minutes of the meeting as presented was so voted unanimously.

Phil gave an overview of the new Senior Center which is in the design phase and looking at four potential locations: the current location, 8 Morrison Drive, 3 Milford Street and 131 North Avenue. Phil laid out the pros and cons of each site, listened to comments and answered questions. He will be back with an update when the Senior Center Building Committee has chosen the best location.

Lisa Moczynski, Metacomet Land Trust President, made a presentation to partner with the town to hold a conservation restriction on 116+/- acres of the Vandersluis property at 101 and 109 North Avenue jointly with MLT. MLT wrote a proposal for a MA Conservation Partnership Grant for \$175,000 which requires matching funds that would come from MLT and \$225,000 from the CPA funds. The value of the conservation restriction, which would be for the owner to give up all building rights on the property in perpetuity, is valued at \$1,655,000 and the VanderSluis' are willing to take a fraction of this cost - \$350,000 - to preserve their property. Barry voiced a concern that hunting would not be allowed on the property. The committee asked questions and decided to take a vote at the next LUC meeting.

Lawney gave a presentation on selling part of the Trask property to the person who holds a life estate on the property, who would then sell it to Mr. Meehan who would use it for farming and in return build two sports fields on the town portion of the land. The committee asked questions and talked about the benefits and the complexities of the property. Anne mentioned that the Select Board is requesting that the Building Inspector assess all the buildings on the property before any decisions will be made. Any sale of a portion of the property would have to go to a town meeting vote.

Carolyn discussed the frustration of the town waiting for DPU approval for four years in order to move forward with municipal aggregation to green up the electric supply and make it more affordable for residents. The committee agreed that Carolyn could pull together a letter, to be passed by the committee first, and then sent to the Select Board for their signature to streamline the process for municipal aggregation and allow more local control. The letter would be sent to the state legislators because of pending legislation.

The next meeting will include a public meeting to make comments on the Action Plan in the updated Mendon Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The 150-year-old sycamore trees at Founders' Park are in need of much care and the Tree Warden said that he would take over responsibility for their care and use his budget for pruning and other treatments for the trees.

The Frank/Peter motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 PM was so voted unanimously.

Submitted by Frank Niro