



Pequitside Task Force
Pequitside Farm – Tavern Room
79 Pleasant Street
Canton, Ma. 02021
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MINUTES

March 19, 2018 @ 7:00 P.M.

Attendance:

Voting Members: Tom Theodore (Board of Selectmen), Stacy Gorman (Playground and Recreation Commission), Betsy Sugameli (Conservation Commission), David Hiltz (Canton High School Athletic Dept.), Karen Erikson (abutter and citizen-at-large)

Non-Voting Members: Joshua Cohen (Chairman, Conservation Commission), Marv Feldman (alternate, abutter and citizen-at-large), Kristen Phelps (Community Preservation Committee), Elizabeth Francis (Parks and Recreation Director), Cynthia O'Connell (Conservation Agent)

Absent: Gerald Carmichael (Historical Commission), Reuki Schutt (Community Club), Chief Doody (Fire Dept.)

Introductions: Josh Cohen convened the meeting at 7:00 pm by welcoming the Task Force and requesting that each attendee introduce him/herself. Mr. Cohen counseled members to meet, collaborate and plan with the goal to address the directive: “What is the best use of the Pequitside Farm property?”

Election of Officers: Tom Theodore was elected Chairman, Stacy Gorman was elected Vice-Chair, and Betsy Sugameli was elected Clerk.

Review of Existing Engineering Plans for Pequitside Improvements:

Review of Gale Assoc. Plans revised through Oct. 13, 2017: Agent O'Connell provided a history of proposed improvements to Pequitside emphasizing efforts within the last five years, including a 2016 Town Meeting allocation of \$100,000 for a detailed engineering study and proposed redevelopment plan for the property. Usage of Pequitside, as well as adequacy and maintenance of the facilities required to meet usage demand, was evaluated. Of particular concern were safety issues relating to traffic egress, circulation and parking. Also problematic is an access drive that extends onto the private property of an abutter. It was noted that the Town of Stoughton owns an easement on the property for pipes connecting its water system to the MWRA. Agent O'Connell noted that in fact the pipes are not located on the easement. The 2016

Plan was to provide a detailed property survey featuring topography, utilities, easements, wetlands, etc. and the contract was awarded to Gale Associates.

(Prior to the assignment of Gale, a Landscape Architect Intern studied the Property and developed 5 schematics, which were made available to the Task Force.)

In summarizing public usage of the Property, Agent O'Connell read from a two-page listing of community groups, Town Government committees, and subcommittees, as well as private groups who regularly utilize Pequitside resources, ranging from the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Garden Club, Youth Soccer, CHS Cross Country, Park and Rec., etc. In addition, examples of single-use requests for the facility were provided. Noted were other informal daily uses by dog-walkers, playground seekers, gardeners, walkers and public park visitors. Agent O'Connell will provide the two-page listing to Task Force Members.

Members Feldman and Erikson cited historical use of the property highlighting horseback riding, tennis and floral gardens featuring lilacs. Questions about past usage of the Barn were raised. Also, potential uses were discussed including extending a path with a boardwalk to Pequit Brook, and creating a combination pickleball/tennis court.

Karen Erikson brought up the term 'passive recreation' and members discussed its interpretation. Does Recreation include cultural recreation? What distinguishes 'Active' from 'Passive' Recreation? Historical and legal documentation was requested to help clarify the meaning of 'passive recreation' and its application or misapplication to various uses of the Property. Stacey Gorman also brought up the complication of Art. 97 and further discussion was delayed until all members receive a packet of documentation, including the originating Warrant Article and funding mechanisms, via email from Agent O'Connell.

Status of Peer Review and Permits:

Agent O'Connell related that current cost estimates based on the Gale permitting plans dated October 2017 for Property improvement would be approximately \$1,000,000 for the entire project. Should the Committee recommend improvements to just the current parking areas, without redesign, the cost would be approximately \$350,000. In addition, there is an ongoing code assessment of the Barn to be completed in June 2018 for \$30,000.

The permitting plans were submitted to the Conservation Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board. Peer reviews were conducted by the Town Engineer and by Professional Services Corporation, the Planning Board's consultant. Comments were provided to Gale Associates, but the cost to address these comments will be an additional 10,000. All of the permit applications have been withdrawn pending a revised scope of services from this Task Force.

Review of project budget/request for change order: Betsy Sugameli spoke of budgetary concerns of various proposals including capital requests regarding future plans of the property including building usage, in light of other anticipated, and competing, Town requests. Agent O'Connell explained that some repairs and maintenance issues are met by expenditures from the Property Revolving Fund, now at about \$51,000, and accrued as a result of rental income. Josh

Cohen read that the annual budget for Pequitside was \$10,000. Betsy Sugameli offered that other capital requests could be submitted to the Town Capital Outlay and Finance Committees and/or through a Warrant Process at Town Meeting.

Status of code assessment of rear barn: Other references to funding, involved the Little Red House and the Barn, included a discussion of funding through grants and Community Preservation Act Funds, with references to legal technicalities of Historical Preservation Restrictions, and differences over labor issues. Kristen Phelps explained the Little Red House Warrant Article for vote at this coming Town Meeting. Discussion of building usage will be delayed until after Town Meeting and upon completion of the code assessment of the Barn in June.

Discussion of regular meeting date/time going forward: Discussion returned to the goals of the Task Force and to the directed question: “What is the best use of the Pequitside Farm property?” Discussions centered on maintaining and creating an environment that is multi-use, multi-generational, multi-recreational, that reflects the character of the Canton Community and falls within the constraints of Conservation concerns and specific property restrictions. As to the specifics, the Task Force requested legal and historical documentation to provide a common font of knowledge from which to build future proposals with consensus.

Committee members elected to meet on Mondays with the next meeting scheduled for Monday, April 23 @7:00 PM in the Tavern Room at Pequitside Farm.

Tom Theodore adjourned the Meeting at 8:15.

Submitted By: Betsy Sugameli