

Building Use Committee Meeting Minutes

1/4/21

Virtual/phone meeting called to order 5:34 p.m.

Members present: Barbara Travers, Susan Gruen, Pam Porter, Pat McGahan, Mary Sumner, Lyra Johnson-Fuller, Eileen McVay-Lively (ex-officio member), and Kara Leistyna, all not recording. Robin Jenkins joined meeting at about 5:40. Members absent: Victoria Burrington.

Barbara reviewed the agenda: we will go over report/summarize, decide on action steps, and discuss briefly the current building use policies, Hilltown Drama request. Barbara received an email to discuss. Pam needed the agenda, couldn't find it in email. Going forward Barbara will be sure to email agenda. It is on the town website, Mary had a bit of trouble getting in on website.

The committee reviewed meeting minutes from 12/14/20. Lyra asked about the charge Susan had mentioned on page 1-it was a policy, rather than a charge, Mary noted to change the word charge to policy in the sentence before it. Barbara made a motion to approve minutes as amended, moved by Pam, and 2nded by Pat. It was voted unanimously to approve minutes, with Kara abstaining from vote because she wasn't present at meeting.

Marketing Investigation for Buildings Report: Pam summarized for us. The report was of findings to gain revenue for the town, experts and realtors (Randy Crochier from FRCOG), Timothy Grader, & Phil Pless) were brought in to assess the buildings' potentials and make suggestions. Marketing the kitchen space at 18 Jacobs Rd. was discussed with Randy. The status of each buildings' codes were researched. Mary looked into online marketing possibilities. Storage was looked at for the buildings. Any discussion? Barbara asked: what open-ended tasks should we focus on? Pam said we should focus on the recommendations given by experts and follow up with the kitchen repairs to get it ready for commercial use. Experts emphasized that the kitchen was a low-hanging fruit, there is a real need for commercial kitchen rentals in the area. The select board needs to figure out what spaces are needed for town use and how to use them, but for our group we can focus on the kitchen, and we are excited about marketing Heath. The select board was very pleased with the report. We can work on the website and work on kitchen's needs with the expertise within our group. Our group can work on what stuff we can get rid of or retain. We have an "E-Bay wiz" on our committee who could help move things on-line? We were also given the task to help create a community needs assessment. The committee had wanted to do a community needs assessment for what businesses would work in Heath. For example would a co-op or small store in the center work/be desirable to residents?

Barbara asked: what was the select board's vision for their survey? Pam: They wanted us to do a questionnaire with a different purpose.

Pat said she's not an expert on E-Bay but knows about Craig's List and Free Market.

No other questions from group.

2.

Barbara asked: What were the goals of the report, goals of exploration? We're talking about just Sawyer Hall, Community Hall, and 18 Jacobs Rd. in looking for ways to market/create revenue. Pam: We looked at everything. Barbara: All buildings have potential. Given the suggestions for buildings, where does this fit in with the facilities task force? Where does our committee end on code issues? Jim Cerone said each building has code designations. The insulation project is underway at Community Hall. Pam: There's nothing new we need help from the Facilities Task Force with right now. Community Hall has been closed because of the pandemic. There is a lack of ventilation there. There are plans work on heating issue and updating duct work. Town officials have chosen to not have this building open because of the pandemic.

Barbara: So no group gatherings there, but people have interest in renting the Community Hall for internet use. What is the status of the WiFi in the building? Pam: Equipment was offered by Doug Mason to help connect WiFi to Community Hall, when it was attempted to put to use, IT guys refused to set up the connection because it would jeopardize Heath's data.

Susan: A group of people had cleaned up Community Hall to get ready for internet use, and Randy Crochier had done an assessment of the space and approved it for 8 families to use for online schooling. We had written a protocol for use, and requested that the Mary Lyon Foundation put in a booster for internet. We also had put in requests to do educational programs at Community Hall.

Eileen: I have concerns about using the Community Hall, there is no ventilation system there at all, limited heat availability. Even if you physically distanced people, there's zero ventilation.

The question was raised about ventilation in the gym at 18 Jacobs Rd.

Pam: The gym and café at 18 Jacobs have ventilation systems that were checked and repaired. The Select Board had voted to accept Doug Mason's offer of internet equipment for the Community Hall , but then IT said it wouldn't work.

Kara: I'm mostly listening tonight, but it may not be in this committee's purview to discuss ventilation. I don't understand why IT refused to connect internet, the town nurse has Firewall in her office in the Community Hall.

Barbara: Ventilation is likely beyond our scope. It was discussed at a meeting that the booster Doug Mason offered had older technology that wouldn't work. They would have to re-do contract, wouldn't be covered under current contract, may pose security threat to town.

Pam: Is the Facilities Task Force looking at internet infrastructure? Barbara: No

Barbara: We need to say we want to use the buildings, what do we need to do to make this possible? Our charge is for utilizing the buildings, let's look at immediate use needs and future needs. The kitchen at 18 Jacobs Rd. would be good to work on, short-term rentals, and brainstorming ways to use buildings.

Robin: Thank you Barbara for clarifying our charge so we can narrow it down to specific goals.

3.

Pam: We don't want to delay long on the specific things we can work on for the kitchen at 18 Jacobs. The kitchen could be rented during the pandemic to individuals; it has its own entrance.

Barbara asked if the group agreed about having the kitchen as a goal for the next agenda. The majority gave thumbs up signals.

Susan: We should see if there are 3 or 4 people willing to rent the kitchen first, no point in working on it now.

Kara: We're still in research stage, don't have enough info yet, agrees with Susan.

Pam: There are small repairs we can do now, there's no reason to do nothing. Randy said we could create how to use the kitchen instructions, we can promote, there is a need for it.

Barbara: There are some soft touch things we can do. This is a town asset that should be prepared for rentals. We can tap into Tim Lively, Tom Lively, and the facilities task force's knowledge. What are the costs for renting out kitchen?

Kara: Careful planning is important, wondering about insurance and ventilation for kitchen? Do we really want to be landlords? We should do some list making, brainstorming, and cost analysis.

Barbara: It sounds like we want to move slowly on the kitchen. Pam: We don't want to move slowly.

Barbara asked Pam to create a spreadsheet of steps toward marketing, then assign tasks, questions that can be answered.

Pat: appreciates the pace but we've been working on this for months, that's why we don't want to go slowly. Pam: we have a to-do list from Randy that we can add to/expand.

Mary: When we presented the report to the select board they had thoughts about it, cost analysis, might do more brainstorming. Pam: We will share list from Randy.

Barbara: We will make sure not to undermine/double efforts of other committees. List will be a best next step. Any more discussion? None.

Next on agenda: Barbara asked if we should read through/discuss policies now? Mary said policies haven't been read thoroughly. Kara would like to thoroughly read both policies and discuss edits next time. Barbara noted the policies are on the town website. Susan, Lyra, and Robin would like to table policy reading for next meeting. Pam wants to be clear that we have a policy that's separate from that's

separate from the building use form. Eileen said she read through the policies and made comments/edits, some things were not correct on the community hall policy. She does not use kitchen at Community Hall as the Senior Center coordinator. Eileen said she is sad we aren't able to use the Community Hall; happy to share her notes.

Barbara said thank you, we'll start with the community hall documents at the next meeting. We all have the common goal of wanting Heath to thrive.

4.

Barbara had a quick update about the request from Jonathan Diamond for Hilltown Drama. The request is tabled so that Board of Health can investigate, they are meeting this Wed. Barbara asked: Is 18 Jacobs Rd. able to do a camp, health concerns aside? Pam: we really can't make a judgment on this now.

**At this point I was disconnected from meeting briefly-Lyra*

Barbara received an email from Betsy's (?) daughter requesting the use of Community Hall for internet purposes. The consensus was that this won't work for now, based on earlier discussion.

We voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:04

Respectfully Submitted by

Lyra Johnson-Fuller

