


Town of Tewksbury
MINUTES

TOWN CLERK
BOARD OF REGISTRARS
TEWKSBURY, MA

2022 AUG -5 PM 12:57

Committee: Tewksbury North and Trahan School Reuse Committee

Date: June 16, 2022

Time: 6:30 pm

Location: Town Hall

Members & Staff present: Bruce Shick, Kristin Smith, Lorna Garey, Kayla Biagioni-Smith, Robert Fowler, Mark Kratman, Steve Sadwick

Members not present: Ken Duffet

The meeting was called to order at: 6:30 pm

Meeting Motions / Actions and Summary of Discussions:

1. Citizen comment section:

Keith Anderson asks how long until the buildings are torn down so that they do not become eyesores or vandalized. In addition, he is not in favor of parks and asks if there is a possibility of affordable housing on the sites.

Steve Sadwick suggested that if the buildings are transferred from the schools to the town they will be temporarily mothballed. He assures that there will be no repeat of the old police station.

Jayne Wellman spoke as a resident and member of ESBC. The ESBC has multiple contracts for moving school items from the two closing schools to the new school. She reports that the ESBC believes that the Reuse Committee is tasked with decommissioning the buildings. She reports that the recommendation is that the budget for demolition come from the ESBC budget. There may be close to sufficient funds to take down one or both schools. The Center School came down with funds from the building contracts. Town manager Richard Montuori has requested a quote from Consigli, which recently demolished the Center School, for both buildings.

Wellman also reports that MSBA recommended that the town consider applying for a new Early Elementary School building, likely sited on the North St. site as it would keep schools in the center of town for public safety.

Keith Anderson suggests that there may be a deed restriction on the Dewing that the land must be used for education. Steve Sadwick will look into that question.

2. Approval of minutes

Minutes from the May 19 meeting were reviewed and approved with no adjustments.

Motion to approve minutes: Kayla Biagioni-Smith. Seconded by Kristen Smith. Motion carried 5-0 with Mark Kratman abstaining.

3. Steve Sadwick report

Assistant town manager Steve Sadwick responded to written questions from the Reuse Committee:

Q. What are the parameters for incorporating into the site, or moving to another location, the playground areas that were put in place using CPA funds?

A. Steve believes the equipment can be moved but it would require a report to the state and a town meeting vote. Playgrounds may be moved on the site itself without a vote. If that were to happen it would need to be recertified for structural integrity. The cost could be significant.

Q. When will the Town officially know its next 10-year requirement for affordable housing? What is your best guess where we will stand once the Ames Pond apartment complex is completed?

A. As of April the State still had not received certain data from the census bureau. We have 12,139 housing units. Question is whether they are year-round. Ten years ago there were about 40 homes that fit the seasonal description but that is unlikely to repeat. We are now at 10.1% affordable. We will most likely dip below that. We also have a floating unknown number of group homes. Assuming that we have 1,088 units plus Ames Pond 300 units plus some additional units in one-off developments. If we have an approved comprehensive permit they go on the inventory as soon as they are permitted and stay on for two years. We will likely be a bit over 11%.

Q. Assuming that we are not required to create affordable housing once Ames Pond is completed, can the Town do whatever is permitted on the sites by zoning?

A. Yes

Q. When can we expect to see the projected cost of maintaining the empty buildings?

A. Maybe within the next 2 - 3 weeks, but will likely be a ballpark.

Q. When will we be putting the RFP together to obtain firm cost estimates/bids for demolishing the buildings and making the sites "level" and ready for another use?

A. Consigli has been to the sites already and is preparing estimates for the town. We will likely get a fairly firm number shortly. The Center School will yield some insights as it also had asbestos.

Q. How many units of single-family housing (senior, affordable, etc.) could be built at each site under the new zoning?

A. The new zoning bylaw lacks a municipal district, so the sites will revert back to what the surrounding district is. North St. is zoned R40 and potentially 15 lots, but unlikely due to wetlands. Trahan is South Village Business and 6.5 acres. At MFD it could be 45.5 units. Single family housing is not allowed in SVB so that we do not end up with homes on 38.

Q. How many units could be built in a single, multi-unit building occupying roughly the same square footage as the existing schools? Could such a building be multi story?

A. Zero at North St., 45 at Trahan. Trahan could be 2.5 stories / 40 feet. No waiver allowed on height.

Q. Can the \$5 Million+ in the Affordable Housing Trust be used to pay for demolishing a building if the property is then used for affordable housing?

A. Yes, with a liberal interpretation of the law. The argument could be made that it would further the cause of affordable housing.

Q. If there is an appetite to build a performance venue or meeting facility, could that be done without zoning changes?

A. No on North St., yes at Trahan.

Q. Would zoning allow for a solar farm to be located on either site? Is there any other reason solar might not be an option?

A. Yes by special permit by the Planning Board. Mark Kratman suggests that there is already a solar farm on 93 and Billerica has one, so utility companies may not wish to purchase the power. It may not be cost-effective as solar has become less lucrative.

Q. Could either site be eligible for 40B affordable housing if it were sold prior to the actual inventory of affordable housing exceeding the 10% requirement?

A. We are not currently below 10% and can deny projects we don't want.

North Specific Questions:

Q. Could a cell tower be placed on the site if it were to make economic sense? Could the revenues from such a cell tower be restricted to be used for maintaining the Town assets, a park, etc., that replaced the school assuming it has been demolished?

A. Yes and possibly, Steve would need to consult the department of revenue guidance. Cell towers would trigger a notice to abutters. Federal courts can preempt local zoning so a cellular provider may be able to override. However the market is different now.

Q. If the North is turned into a park, could the town use it as a native plant nursery and sell the plants at a cost that covers the costs?

A. Yes, commercial agriculture is allowed in R40.

Trahan Specific Questions:

Q. What type of businesses would be allowed if the site were sold to a developer?

A. See table of usage in zoning bylaw. Any project would need to be put out to an RFP. Mark Kratman says he has worked on hundreds of projects in Boston. But when they figured the numbers they ended up keeping the school. There may be historic tax credits. Historic depends on the age of the building, Steve believes more than 50 years. Trahan was built in the 1950s.

Mr. Fowler says Soldier On will be 21 units that will go toward our affordable numbers. He spoke with leadership and they are interested in looking at the sites/buildings.

The Committee thanks Mr. Sadwick for his time and expertise.

Discussion among Committee on a mixed-use development at Trahan with senior housing and open/park space for recreation.

Members are asked to review the survey and drone footage and return with feedback.

Motion to meet on June 30 to finalize survey: Kayla Baigioni-Smith Second: Lorna Garey Unanimous.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Mark Kratman. Seconded by Lorna Garey. The motion was carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm

Next meetings 1st & 3rd Thursdays through 2022:

June 30

July 7 & 21
August 4 & 18
Sept. 1 & 15
Oct. 6 & 20
Nov. 3 & 17
Dec. 1 & 15
Time: 6:30 pm
Place: Town Hall

Minutes approved by Committee on: JUNE 30, 2022
(Date)