



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: Monday, June 16, 2014
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chair Pepe, Vice Chair Fritze, Clerk G. Woodbury, Members Stevens & C. Woodbury. Administrator Gaudette was on vacation.

At 6:14 p.m. Chairman Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Action Item: Fish & Game Club Lease for Senior Center/Council on Aging

Selectmen G. Woodbury noted the Fish & Game Club is asking for access to the pavilion during Center hours and the Director has concerns. The Board agreed to delay finalizing the lease until the Administrator and Director can meet to discuss.

Discussion: FY2015 SEBRSD Budget Update

G. Woodbury reported that the School Committee reduced their budget by \$190,000. A Special Town Meeting will be held on June 26th to vote on the new number. Details may be found on the website where the full text of the Warrant is posted.

Discussion: Special Town Meeting Update

None

6:30 p.m. Public Forum Workshop for CDBG Downtown Property Assessment Project

Chairman Pepe opened the public forum at 6:30 pm.

Town Planner Michelle Buck introduced the project noting the CDBG involves between fifty to sixty buildings and is managed by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) who works with a variety of contractors.

Bill Giezentanner and Brian Barber, consultants from Community Preservation Associates were present. A map of the study area was presented. A power point presentation included information on the following:

- A downtown area Spencer can be proud of & that will accommodate future growth
- Previous studies and infrastructure upgrades will be followed. \$16.8 million has been invested to date
- Perform a physical inventory and assessment of fifty to sixty properties
- Gather information from various sources
- Develop re-use recommendations –Implementation Plan will include re-use strategies
- A public meeting to be held in September to present recommendations and a final report presented in November
- Physical assessments include foundations, siding, chimneys and site assessment

- Publicity will be an important part of the process; people to be aware and not surprised; the idea is to help owners improve their property

Mr. Giezentanner hopes to gain public input to identify ten to twenty specific properties to begin the process.

Andrew Loew from PVPC was present and emphasized this is a site specific project. Bill Scanlon from PVPC will be the lead.

Mr. Barber noted that funding will be combination of private along with possible town incentives. Discussion on various questions from the public included:

- Some funding is available through the CDBG administered by PVPC
- The Assessment will cost \$79,000 and take place over a seven month period with a team of five people
- The permitting phase will take place once the agreement in place and will be the responsibility of the property owner
- Parking may be in the scope of the project for some properties; on street parking will not be part of the project
- A suggestion was made to consider a re-use for the Ragsdale property and the building across from Barnstorm Cycles
- A list of distressed properties in the area has been identified and ways to improve the overall character of the area will be looked at
- Projects will relate to existing plans in already in place
- Grant constraints allow for funding only in areas with lower income properties.
- The goal is to encourage private development and reverse distressed properties
- The initial focus will be on the first ten properties with owner cooperation
- Tools can be used to adopt incentives for owners to alleviate the fear of having property taxes raised after improvements are made
- Strong Town leadership will assist the process and help to get businesses on board
- Owners must be on board for this to happen; this is the starting point and additional grant funding for specific work may come out of this in the future

The hearing was closed hearing at 8:10 pm.

Questions may be sent to Michelle Buck as the primary contact.

Mr. G. Woodbury noted this is a great opportunity for the Town. Others communities have succeeded with this process. He pointed out the single tax rate in place helps to encourage businesses.

The meeting was adjourned 8:12 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials
Fish & Game Lease & CDBG Presentation