

**TOWN OF SOMERS  
SOMERSVILLE MILL STRATEGIC PLANNING AD HOC COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, August 25, 2015  
7:00pm  
Selectmen's Conference Room  
Town Hall**

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Tim Keeney called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Members Present:**

Members present included Chairman Tim Keeney, Vice Chairman Brad Pellissier and Members Erik Ness and Ralph Williams. Member Tim Potrikus was not available. Also present were Graham Stevens-DEEP Director of Constituent Affairs and Land Management, Ann Moses-Chairman of Somers Open Space and Trails Committee, Albert Grant and Arend Knuttel from the Scantic River Watershed Association, Evan Plotkin and David Wolos from NA Plotkin and First Selectman Lisa Pellegrini (recording) and one interested resident.

**Discussion with representatives from DEEP, Scantic River Watershed Association and Somers Open Space and Trails Committee re recreation use of Somersville Mill Site:**

Introductions are made and Chairman Keeney begins discussion by sharing a description of the property and highlighting multiple use aspects of the site with Director Stevens. Director Stevens says that a partnership with DECD through their brownfield program enables problem-solving and unlocks new possibilities for brownfield remediation and redevelopment. Chairman Keeney asked about the state possibly taking over the property or a portion of the property as a state owned park. Director Stevens acknowledged the state reviews open space acquisition opportunities. Continuous areas (linked or adjacent properties) are ideal from the state point of view with regards to maintenance management. In discontinued areas the state usually enters into a memorandum of understanding with the town. Usually the town is required to perform the daily maintenance (stewardship) of the property. Lengthy discussion follows about problems the Town of Enfield is having with a state owned park.

Director Stevens said that there is a process for state acquisition of property. DEEP has a committee that reviews applications. They are ranked and reviewed by multiple division units. Properties must be remediated as DEEP does not acquire brownfields. DEEP also reviews title work, A2 surveys and encumbrances on a property.

Director Stevens said the mill site property does have attractive features such as river access and possible bridge access, however it must be cleaned up.

Chairman Keeney introduces real estate developers Evan Plokin and David Wolos from NA Plokin. Discussion follows regarding possible development of the site and what it may look like. Lengthy discussion follows regarding incorporating the Grammar School property in a development district for the mill. Challenges include limited parking, property owned by the town adjacent to the school and parking easements. However, Mr. Plokin says that the waterfront is an attraction to development and that any development in the future needs to be oriented to the water.

Albert Grant and Arend Knuttel from the Scantic River Watershed Association spoke about importance of river access for recreation, as well as the potential the property has for recreation opportunities. Both said that it was important for the town to have a vision of how they would like to use the property. Having a vision enables the town to seek grants. They believe the bridge over the Scantic is important to repair as it affords access to both sides of the property and connects to the Baily Road trail. There was also brief discussion about the desire for a fish ladder at the dam.

Open Space and Trails Committee (OSTC) Chairman Ann Moses shared with the group her committee's mission statement. It included the promotion of passive recreation, open space and trail maintenance. She explained the group's goals and strategies to promote trail management and appropriate signage. She also talked about the importance of interconnecting trails, the benefits of a linear trail system and the ways to appropriately manage linear trail systems. She stated the OSTC would be in favor of managing an open space at the Mill site and there was discussion with Director Stevens regarding DEEP municipal management agreements and stewardship requirements.

Director Stevens said there are grants available (Open Space Grants) to acquire property and it may be possible for DEEP to acquire open space and have the municipality manage the day to day maintenance of the property once the site is cleaned. It was discussed that state and federal grants are stackable and Director Stevens said that it be a good idea to have a design rendering of the site.

Lengthy discussion amongst the group includes a vision of what the property could be and the desire for a Planned Development District was discussed. Director Stevens agreed that it would be necessary to be open and creative with zoning for the site. Vice Chairman Pellissier said it will be the developers that will bring creative ideas to the Town. The need to clean up the property to at least have an open vacant lot was further discussed. All agreed that there is a need to wait for the results of the environmental studies.

**Discussion on reuse and development of Somersville Mill Site:  
See Above.**

**Process Discussion and Schedule for Future Meetings:**

It was agreed the next meeting would be held on Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup>. Canton First Selectman Richard Barlow and Historical Society Chairman Carole Pyne will be guests.

Vice Chairman Pellissier shared his thoughts with the committee about reusing existing outer walls and preserving the corner marker stone with the intention of having any development built in the design of a historic mill.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**July 28, 2015 Minutes:**

*Vice Chairman Pellissier made a motion to approve the July 28th, 2015 Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mr. Williams. Vice Chairman Pellissier, Chairman Keeney, Mr. Ness and Mr. Williams approved. Motion passed.*

**August 4, 2015 Minutes**

Tabled until next meeting.

**August 11, 2015 Minutes**

Tabled until next meeting.

**Adjournment:**

*Mr. Ness made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm, seconded by Mr. Williams. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lisa Pellegrini, Recording

*Minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.*