

**TOWN OF SOMERS
SOMERSVILLE MILL STRATEGIC PLANNING AD HOC COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 3, 2015
7:00pm
Selectmen's Conference Room
Town Hall**

Call to Order:

Chairman Tim Keeney called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Members Present:

Members present included Chairman Tim Keeney, Vice Chairman Brad Pellissier and Members Erik Ness, Tim Potrikus and Ralph Williams. Also present were Attorney Adam Cohen (via conference call), First Selectman Lisa Pellegrini (recording), and two interested residents.

Discussion with Attorney Adam Cohen:

Chairman Tim Keeney welcomes Attorney Cohen and asks about his experience. Attorney Cohen states he is with Pullman & Comley LLC and has an office in Bridgeport and has been the Collection Counselor for the Town for the last 10 years or so. He handles the tax sales for the town. He has held the tax sales for the mill property in the past.

Currently, the delinquent taxes on the mill site total \$26,426.80. It will reach \$30,641.58 after January 2016 if the second half of the year's taxes are not paid. In addition, there is \$34,560 that is owed for the fencing and "make safe" work done by the Town after the mill fire. This does not include interest of 18% that is accrued. The interest currently owed is at \$14,553.60. That being said Attorney Cohen says that the amount owned is essentially meaningless as the property in its current state has no value. He believes the best thing that could happen is to find someone willing to accept the title of the property for \$1 or determine if the Town is willing to take over the property.

Chairman Keeney asks what would be the procedure for the Town to take over the property. Attorney Cohen stated the Town can take ownership at any time as the tax sale has been postponed. The sale would just need to be rescheduled. It should be noted that state law mandates a six months wait period before the transfer.

It was asked if any money spent during that time period to clean up the site would be at risk. He states if the Town was interested in taking over the site it was recommended to proceed with the process and then wait six months before proceeding with the actual work.

Questions asked include: Mr. Ness asks if you can attach a lien to the property when cleaning up the property. State law allows that as it is considered a "make safe" action.

Vice Chairman Pellissier asks if the Town should take title while looking at grant funding opportunities or would the state require possession first. Mr. Williams answered that according to Tim Sullivan you can apply for grants and include a plan for ownership. Discussion then centers on how much time it takes for grants to go through. The paperwork alone can take up to six months. Attorney Cohen is asked if there was an IRS lien in April of 2013. There was no IRS lien at the time of the tax sale, however the Town Clerk is able to look it up and identify any recent activity. Attorney Cohen did clarify that private liens are extinguished by the tax sale. A judicial foreclosure was discussed but really doesn't make sense in this situation. Mr. Potrikus asks if a property is purchased at a tax sale can the buyer back out and the answer is no.

Ms. Pellegrini, Mr. Ness and Chairman Pellegrini tell the group about Governor Malloy visiting the mill site on Friday, August 28th. DEEP Commissioner Klee was also there to tour the mill site.

Members then begin discussion about the possibility of some type of maintenance agreement with the state or other organization regarding the recreational space along the river. Vice Chairman Pellissier talked about an MOU the town could make with another entity to outline day to day trail maintenance. Trail networks and stewardship were discussed. Mr. Potrikus cautioned about releasing title of any piece of recreational land to the state, etc. before getting a developer. Mr. Williams said we should not give up the recreational aspect.

Members then discussed changes that would need to be made to the zoning regulations. Future planning and zoning meetings will need to address that.

Process Discussion and schedule for Future Meetings:

It was agreed to have a meeting on September 14th, 2015 at 7pm. The group believes it is time to start working on the conclusions for the final report for the selectmen.

Approval of Minutes:

August 27th, 2015 Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the August 27th, 2015 Meeting Minutes with the following amendments:

Under "Discussion with Canton First Selectman Dick Barlow re: development of historic mill site in Canton" section:

- 1. First paragraph, third sentence: Change "bench tools" to "edge tools".*
- 2. Third paragraph, second sentence: Change "Mr. Hess" to "Mr. Ness".*

Seconded by Mr. Potrikus. Chairman Keeney, Mr. Ness, Mr. Potrikus and Mr. Williams approved. Vice Chairman Pellissier abstained from voting. Motion passed.

August 11th, 2015 Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Potrikus made a motion to approve the August 11th, 2015 Meeting Minutes, seconded by Vice Chairman Pellissier. Chairman Keeney called for discussion to amend the minutes. Amendments were discussed and include the following:

Under “Discussion with Planimetrics re Somersville Mill Site” section:

- 1. The following statement was added to the end of the 4th paragraph: “Most likely one story buildings would be built for industrial use developments. If developments were for office use then buildings would most likely have the first floor as parking with offices on the second floor.”*
- 2. Eighth paragraph, first sentence, change “...was the ground zero number” to “...was a good number.”*
- 3. Fourteenth paragraph, add to end of paragraph: “Mr. Chalder agrees.”*
- 4. Fifteenth paragraph, add to end of paragraph: “Mr. Chalder stated any developer would most likely need to prepare a discounted cash flow analysis for the remediation and cleanup.”*
- 5. Sixteenth paragraph, add to end of paragraph: “There were also discussions about the merits of having a landscape architect prepare sketches.”*

Mr. Potrikus amended his motion to approve the minutes of the August 11th, 2015 Meeting Minutes with the addition of the above listed revisions, seconded by Vice Chairman Pellissier. All members approved and the motion passed.

Adjournment:

Mr. Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:01pm, seconded by Mr. Potrikus. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Pellegrini, Recording

Minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.