

TOWN OF ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS
ADAMS TOWN HALL BUILDING, 1st FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP MINUTES JANUARY 30, 2019

CALL TO ORDER: The Workshop Meeting was called to order by Chairman Duval at 6:30 p.m. Vice Chairman Nowak, Members Blanchard, Hoyt and Bush. Also present were Interim Town Administrator Cesan and Community Development Program Manager Ferguson.

Discussion on FY19 Community Development Block Grant Program: The deadline for the Fiscal Year 2019 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is March 1st. The initial plan was to follow up on design work for the Coal and Grain site from 2017 but there is concern that there is not time to adequately consider all the issues with the project. There is \$200,000 in site cleanup money but the work has not started yet and the park design needs to be informed by the remediation approach. Staff requested Board input on the proposed activities, suggesting the importance of continuing housing rehabilitation efforts and undertaking a public facility improvement project. Proposed this year is to do six to eight housing units under the Housing Rehabilitation Program, which is a reasonable number considering the program is staff intensive and new department staff will have a learning curve. It requires dealing with plumbers, electricians and contractors and is inevitably complicated. The Russell Field Project is further along and meets criteria in the Block Grant because it is a town-wide program that will benefit low to moderate income residents. The park design has really focused on making the facility a resource for all ages – not only youth sports but senior residents. The COA Director was a member of the project steering committee to help bring this focus. A Public Hearing has been advertised for February 13th at 7:10 p.m. as part of the Selectmen's Meeting. The preliminary financial breakdown of what would be requested was outlined for the Board. It was noted that the Housing Rehabilitation Program has not been done over the last couple years because there were large construction projects for the Visitors Center Parking Lot and the Memorial School HVAC System. The strategy of the application was briefly reviewed. There is a waiting list for the Housing Rehabilitation Program and the Town has sent out a letter to those on the list inquiring their current level of interest. The program will be advertised and outreach will be done at the Council on Aging to be sure seniors are aware of the program. Work done will be on 6-8 units. Board members stated that the housing rehabilitation program is very important to residents and agreed even a small number of units is helpful, noting they often receive inquiries from interested citizens about the program. Brief discussion took place about the current state of federal funding and the affects the government shutdown had on the program. The use of a targeted area in the past was discussed and it was noted that the state is moving away from this as a requirement, however staff thought it still was valuable to the Town's community development program. The Town already has a Route 8 Target Area approved by the Department of Housing and Community Development. It was pointed out that the Parks Commission needed to understand this is a grant application and not yet received funds.

Update on Progress with Hoosac Valley Park Project: The Board was updated that the Town will delay applying for CDBG for this project but will still be designing it to bid ready plans. The Steering Committee has met twice and has scheduled another meeting in the next week. The buildings on the property were identified and it was explained that the intent is to make a new entrance from the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail into the park to be safer and provide additional access to the park from the trail for a loop effect. The design possibilities were reviewed and included a series of paths, a fenced in place for off-leash dogs, a children's play area, a pollinator garden, and the incorporation of the train theme and industrial history of the site. The removal of contaminants is being looked at now, the LSP has been hired and a scope of cleanup work is forthcoming. One feature from the landscape architects is to take the barn building, stabilize it and make it into a space for events with a stage. Discussion took place about the location of the Dog Park and potential for barking at individuals on the Bike Trail. Screening was proposed to protect the dog area from sight of the bike trail, and the elevation difference should help also. It was noted that there is slate missing from the grain elevator roof that is adjacent to the trail which should be addressed for safety during better weather. The barn building was noted as having formerly been a location to store hay. The Environmental Protection Agency

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awarded \$200,000 for cleanup and TRC Solutions, Inc. is developing the scope of the cleanup. It will then go out to bid to hire a contractor to do the cleanup, which is anticipated in spring or summer. Green Communities Grant funds were discussed and the Town can reapply for the grant by the end of the month. A suggestion was made to install solar at that location. A desire was expressed to hire an architect to evaluate the Grain Elevator but it would need to wait until the beginning of the new Fiscal Year. Brief discussion took place regarding liability of the Town for the dog park. The Animal Control Officer has been consulted about it and is supportive but the Town needs to set rules for compliance. The space would be self-maintained by the users and the Town will provide bag receptacles and barrels. It was noted this would be a perfect to walk down the trail from 7 Hoosac Street to be eventually developed as new multi-family and from the town center. An educational play area may be incorporated. The Board of Health is looking at ways to make the community healthier so fitness items along the path could be a possibility. The final design approach will be decided after adequate public input is received. The Coal and Grain Building would be able to accommodate restroom facilities and a possible source of revenue for the town to rent out for functions. Discussion took place about the status of the rail car or caboose and other railroad items that could work in the space. Train parts, tracks, and wheels were noted as possibilities. A caboose would have bunk beds and artifacts in it, which would generate interest. Concern was expressed about kids climbing on the coal bunker and tank saddles and hiding in them. Maintenance of the area was discussed and it was noted that the additional park will require more maintenance. Location of tracks and placement of a car for people to get on it was discussed. Staffing to maintain and supervise the park was noted as being needed. A suggestion was made to acquire volunteer gardeners to maintain the park. Landscaping of the Roundabout, Adams Station Park and the Visitors Center was hired out last year. It was noted that the DPW does a great job with maintaining the parks and playing fields but small parks like were not maintained as well.

Update on Russell Field Improvement Project: The design was explained and noted as being essentially completed. The Parks Commission has been working on this for over a year, along with their established project Steering Committee. Although initially reorientation of the playing fields was proposed, the field configuration is being kept the same after investigations by the park designer. A walking path is proposed to go around the entire park, but it may need to be phased due to costs. The path will go to the tennis court and fitness areas. Problems with the foundation of the tennis courts were noted; they have been repaired numerous times and they will need to be completely rebuilt. When painted, the courts will also be prepared for pickle ball. The tot lot will be redone and discussion has taken place about providing an adult fitness area for the Town's senior population. Accessibility to the park is very poor; the steps are falling apart and new entranceways are needed for pedestrian safety. The backstop needs to be relocated away from the existing building so that emergency vehicles have room; the building behind home plate could be a project taken on by the McCann Technical School as a project in the fall of 2019. It was noted that McCann School had redone the new dugouts at Renfrew Field and other work at Town parks. Green Communities Grant funds are being investigated for lighting, as well as the boiler in Town Hall and retrofit lighting in other areas. With the approval of Conservation Commission, some drainage improvements were done by the DPW. The Town will get letters of support and ask for the leagues to contribute small amounts of money toward improvement of the park. Hopefully a grant will be secured for this project as this is a highly used facility and there are many safety issues confronted users.

Discussion on Town Common Improvement Project: The Board was updated on the Adams Suffrage Centennial Celebration Committee. The sculptor of the Susan B. Anthony statue suggested a landscape architect to assist in preparing the designated area for the base. This area was completed in 1986 and needs to be completely redone. A recommendation was made to develop a new gazebo to look more Victorian to complement the downtown's street lights and to replace the pressure treated wood that looks tired and old. Walkways were noted as being uneven and trees were described as overcrowding. The exterior of the

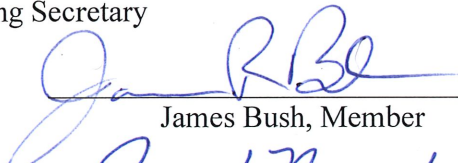
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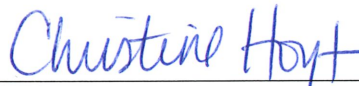
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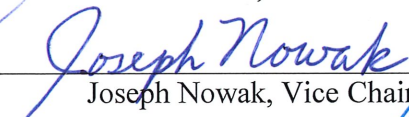
sidewalk is in rough shape and not a very safe place to walk. It was explained that this would be on the application under the PARC Grant administered by the Division of Conservation Services with a June or July deadline and would require a 30% match. This would need to go before Town Meeting in June. Timing for the work with the engineer needs to be received. It was noted that the Town Common is on the side of the downtown area and a desire was expressed to connect it visually to Town Hall through wayfinding or other means. A suggestion was made to rename it the Susan B. Anthony Town Common. Brief discussion took place about the management of the trees in the Town Common and the planting of a permanent Christmas Tree. Clarification was made about the financial match being structured for the work being done. The expense of the project was noted because of new walkways and benches, redoing the lawn area and gazebo. The viability of the current gazebo was questioned, and it was noted that updating it would make it nicer and handicapped accessible. The plans from 1986 have been recovered. It was noted that if there is an active Agricultural Commission there may be a way to get some funding.

ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Blanchard. Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.*

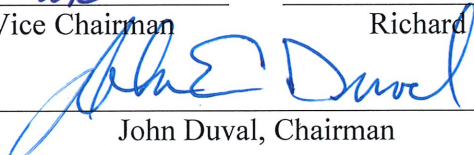
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


James Bush, Member


Christine Hoyt, Member


Joseph Nowak, Vice Chairman


Richard Blanchard, Member


John Duval, Chairman