

Richmond Recreational Needs  
Assessment Committee  
March 26, 2014 at 7:00 PM  
Richmond Town Hall – First Floor Council Chambers

Meeting called to order by Chairman Denise Stetson at 7:02 PM. Notice of the meeting and the agenda were posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Law on March 21, 2014.

Present: Denise L. Stetson, Town Planner  
Henry R. Oppenheimer, Town Council Liaison  
Iva J. Lipton, Elder Affairs Committee Liaison  
Carolyn S. Richard, Planning Board Liaison  
Dennis McGinity, Richmond Senior Center Liaison  
Robert Rock, Town Administrator (at 7:45 PM)  
Nell Carpenter, Richmond Recreation Director

Absent Lawrence Casey, Finance Board Liaison

Vacancy: Economic Development Commission Liaison

Chair asked for any corrections, amendments or changes to the minutes of February 26, 2014. Hearing none, she declared the minutes as written and presented the record of that meeting.

Chair noted that committee member Carolyn Richard would be resigning for personal reasons.

Denise Stetson noted for the record that she had participated in a site walk of the Richmond Commons 14 acre parcel last week with representatives from the Westerly Arcadia YMCA. Mrs. Stetson also presented two visual aids, one an aerial photograph of the parcel and the other an engineer's line drawing of the same land and described various features of the topography and other land constrictions, including significant ledge outcroppings. She also noted that the current open gravel roadway running north from Rte 138 to the southwesterly corner of the parcel will eventually be constructed by Richmond Commons; however any road construction northerly of that point would be the Town's responsibility.

Discussion ensued on certain federal and/or state grants which still may be available for walking trails or development of passive recreation. The Town had previously lost out on some grant monies because it did not own the fee to the subject land at the time of application and, consequently, was ineligible.

Mrs. Stetson further described how a contiguous 5 acre buildable parcel could be configured if a parcel to the south (designated as Lot 12 on Tax Assessor's Plat 6C and owned now or formerly by Michael McCann and Laura McCann) was appended to the 14 acre parcel. This would also add an additional 2 to 3 acres with frontage on Route 138. A wetland separates the northerly and southerly portions of the lot.

It was noted that two of the three plans prepared by Professor Green's students assumed the incorporation and use of a portion of TAP 6C Lot 12.

Henry Oppenheimer suggested that the committee re-focus and return to its original purpose and charge, which is to assess the recreational needs of Richmond residents and not be concerned at this point with needs of other entities, such as the YMCA.

Joshua Comerford, a Richmond resident and member of the Town's EDC, questioned if the public has been sufficiently informed of this committee's work and just how much of an impact its decisions eventually will have on the community.

Mrs. Stetson described the various public relations efforts made by this committee, including disseminating literature in the schools and using the Town's website. She noted that 125 residents responded to the written survey and that the URI students' workshops were well advertised and attended. The question now is how will this all be reported to the Town Council.

Mr. McGinity suggested that given the many constrictions on the property and the anticipated site and roadway construction costs, it may be better to just develop hiking trails and other passive outdoor activities.

It is a consensus among committee members and residents in attendance that calculating the estimated costs of a building project on that property may be helpful in reporting to the Town Council. For example, there are websites and other sources which can price commercial buildings and appurtenances such as the projects envisioned by Professor Green's students. The Town also is a member of the RIRPA, which offers help in estimating construction costs.

Mrs. Stetson, Mr. Comerford and Mrs. Carpenter will collaborate in researching these figures.

Further discussion ensued on whether grant money would be available for constructing any kind of Senior Center or recreation facility. Mr. Rock described a USDA grant available for small RI communities, but competition for the money was steep and it was only available for equipment purchases, not building construction.

Mrs. Stetson noted there are myriad rules connected to grant monies regarding so-called "matching funds" and "in-kind" contributions. Many grants require matching efforts by the community and the matching can take various forms, such as other grants, or even town donated or volunteer labor. She further noted that the RIDEM would be the most likely source for grant money, if any is available.

Mr. Oppenheimer recommended that this committee finish its work as soon as possible and submit it to the now sitting Town Council. The current Town Council members, some of whom may not run for re-election, are more familiar with the background leading up to the current proposals and are in a better position to evaluate a report from this committee.

It was further noted that Richmond Commons has no time frame or deadline for the construction of the proposed roadway leading from Route 138 to the 14 acres parcel, which may seriously

affect any proposed use of the property. The maps also show a sliver of unused land along the easterly side of the roadway, which appears to be unusable by Richmond Commons. If the parcel is ever developed, it may be useful to acquire this additional property from Richmond Commons.

Mrs. Lipton requested that a meeting of this committee be called as soon as the pricing information is available from the sub-committee, rather than wait until the next stated meeting.

Jacqueline Kenyon, a Richmond resident, said she recently has heard more frequent discussion in Town regarding the use of the proposed land and that many residents would favor collaboration with the YMCA. She urged the committee to explore any such partnership to the fullest.

The committee thanked Mrs. Stetson for her research and the discussion items outlined in her March 19, 2014 Memos, which are attached hereto and made a part of these minutes.

On a MOTION by Mr. McGinity, seconded Mrs. Lipton, it was voted to ADJOURN at 8:20 PM to the next stated meeting on April 23, 2014, or at the call of the Chair.

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Carolyn S. Richard, Secretary