

Schell Advisory April 12th Meeting Minutes (third meeting at Dickinson Library Community Room)

Present: Craig Johnson; Jerry Wagener; Jon McGowan; Barbara Richardson; Judy Wagner; and Steve Stoia.

Chair, Judy Wagner called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Judy offered an agenda and asked for additional items. The agenda suggested was: 1) Approval of previous meeting's (March 8th) minutes; 2) Process or mechanics of open meeting postings; 3) Strategies for getting public involvement in MASS DOT meeting (s); 4) Additional Items or issues – example Public Relations going forward; 5) second installment of Jerry Wagner's Special Report in Executive Session; 6) Schedule Next Meeting

Chair Judy made a motion to accept March 8th's minutes with some punctuation changes. Motion seconded by Barbara, and unanimously approved.

Moving to the second agenda item – Process- Judy pointed out that the notice for this meeting was not on the Town Hall List, even though this Clerk/Secretary followed the normal procedure for posting. It turns out that only the meetings taking place in Town Hall appear on that list. Judy suggested that we need clarification on this detail, and asked how does the public learn about the meetings.

Barbara stated that the official word is that meetings are on the website, and pointed out that the listing did not appear in Saturday's paper either. Judy suggested that we might provide a sign in Town Hall. It was decided that we would seek more clarification from Dan Campbell, and in the interim would post the meeting with an agenda item from that meeting to pique the curiosity of the public. Judy will provide that item for each meeting to this Secretary. Judy has talked with Dan about the Open Meeting Law, and reminded us to not talk amongst ourselves outside our meetings about meeting issues and concerns.

Moving on to agenda item 3, Judy told the group that she has not received a response to her letter to DOT, and asked the Committee to brainstorm on strategies for organizing public involvement with the project. Barbara reiterated the commitment of The Friends of Schell Bridge to share their resources with the Advisory Committee, including the Friends' online communications tool, Constant Contact. Barbara stated that addresses on this tool include those of: Rep. Paul Mark; Senator Stan Rosenberg; Mass DOT administrators and more. Jerry told the group that the Friends have a mass mailing permit, and a budget for these mailings from the Friends. Depending on the size, thickness and number, Jerry estimated that a bulk mailing to everyone in Town at about \$250 for a post card size mailing.

Judy suggested that we need to compose a friendly request to the Friends of Schell Bridge to formally ask for their help with the above resources.

Continuing with the theme of drawing the public into the discussion of DOT designs for the bridge, Barbara suggested newspaper articles and phone calls. Jerry suggested posters around town, and the Northfield Community Newsletter. Jerry also stated that this committee needs to present very well publicized public forums for input, so people can't say that they never heard about the opportunity to

have input, as occurred with the revised zoning bylaw meetings. Jerry said that it would be good to record responses from participants, and encourage everyone to speak up.

Barbara suggested that if DOT would send designs two weeks in advance of coming to Town, then the Committee could solicit public input through the previously mentioned modes above, and have a productive public session. Barbara suggested that we use the incentive of food to draw the public into the DOT design review meetings, and cited as many as 75 to 100 people in attendance at Friends meeting when food was offered. She also suggested that the Elementary School cafeteria or gym is a familiar and welcoming venue for Town residents. Judy suggested that prizes might be used to provide attendance incentives. Craig will ask the Bicycle Shop in Greenfield where he works for a prize donation

Jerry suggested we use the Cable Channel Calendar, and maybe find someone to do an updated program on the Schell from the station. Craig suggested a video that could be played on Access and created by the folks who have been doing the theater performances at the high school.

Judy asked how would we like the agenda for the DOT to roll out. Introductions by Stan Rosenberg ? FRCOG representatives, and sharing of designs ? Jon with Jerry's assistance, said that they will grade MASS DOT's designs on 5 points of design and engineering. Judy asked that Jerry and Jon share those grading points with the committee at the next meeting.

Barbara suggests that the public meeting contain a history and background of the bridge, and what citizens (Friends) have done over the past decade and more . The history would include the point where DOT states that we (the state) can't renovate, and that the original mission to preserve is dropped, and how much will actually be spent on the new bridge. Here Judy suggested that the audience be assured that the bridge will be paid for , and Barbara added that the State Department of Conservation will own the bridge (removing the Town's liability issues), and that no Town (taxpayer) money will be used to build, repair , and maintain the new structure.

Judy suggested that the potential economic impact on the Town be presented as part of the meeting, and cited the Great Allegheny Passage that had a major economic impact on that area after 25 years of work on it. Jerry cited a Rail Trails publication article entitled "Reviving Towns" for more proof of the potential positive impact of the Schell on Northfield. He will share his own article with Judy entitled "Reviving Northfield". Judy asked Craig at this point whether his employer Bob Perry at the bicycle shop had user info on bicyclists in the area. Barbara pointed out that the FRCOG had a new initiative and maps to encourage bicycling in the county Jerry suggested that we use the Economic Impact Study of The Schell Bridge produced by UMASS as well.

Barbara suggested that we ask the PTO to disseminate info on the Schell, and try to recruit allies like Bob Perry; Dave Thomas; and Bob Emberle to endorse the project. Barbara stated that we are still listed on the TIP, the Transportation Implementation Plan of the Federal Government.

Page 3) 4/12/17

The Committee then discussed going into Executive Session to delve deeper into Jerry Wagoner's Report of last meeting that involved sensitive matters of land ownership and potential funding. Barbara made the motion and it was seconded by Judy. The motion was carried unanimously with Barbara Richardson; Judy Wagner; Jon Mc Gowan; Craig Johnson; Jerry Wagener; and Steve Stoia. The minutes of that Executive Session appear on a separate sheet or page 4, as I don't know the prescribed way to keep them more private.

Regular Meeting Minutes continue here with the final agenda item Next Meeting Scheduled. Judy asked whether the group would indeed like to meet, and all present agreed that it might be prudent to continue some themes. Judy suggested that we bring back responses from people we would like as allies in this project, and Judy will look at Economic Impact Studies

The group agreed on May 10th at 7P.m. for the next meeting, and Judy will inquire whether the library is available. Judy will send this Secretary a draft of the May 10th agenda.

Respectfully submitted by Steve Stoia, Clerk/Secretary

April 12th Executive Session Minutes of April 12th Schell Advisory Committee Meeting

Jerry Wagener passed out a GIS map of parcels on the East side of the Schell Bridge owned by the National Christian Foundation (10 acres and 2 acres), Northfield Mount Hermon School. First Light (but in this case an easement), and a private party. Jerry informed the Committee that he has talked with NCF at least twice, but in a hectic time for them most recently with the activity at the empty campus. They nevertheless instructed Jerry to come up with a line that would delineate the area of interest for the Town and a park. Jerry has done that on the map and the area delineated is about 4 acres. NCF will get an appraisal, but as said before this is not high on their priority list. Jerry has mentioned to NCF that the Schell (Friends ?) might buy this parcel. Working with our former Town Administrator, Brian Noble, Jerry found that Brian thought that DCR could be the purchaser.

At this junction of the meeting several scenarios were presented, and this secretary suggested that the newspaper had carried a story about Jerry's negotiations with NCF, where the idea of the Town purchasing the land for a Park was printed. This idea appeared in another editorial as well. This secretary suggested that the principal of no taxpayer money being used for the Schell be carried over to the parks for the sake of public relations going forward, and that creative PILOT scenarios might be employed with our new neighbors. Example – To realize the goal of senior housing for Northfield residents who wanted to stay in Town, NCF, the College or both could gift the land to the Town, who would sell it to a developer, who committed to build senior condos on the river, and to building a park for residents and the public that the developer will maintain. This scenario might be duplicated in other parts of the property to create taxable developed property.

Jerry then continued to describe the "lay of the land" as presented by the map. There are many owners and players here including: First Light who owns a steep area right by the river; DCR who owns the Boat Ramp; the Town who owns a right of way. Not enough room for playing fields here. Abutters are aware of some of the interests and in the Schell Bridge history.

Jerry has tried to keep the Selectboard informed, but needs to sit with Jack Spanbauer as there is no permanent Town Administrator currently. Jerry has been working with the Community Parks Committee focusing on the idea of playing fields on Pierson Road. He talked to NCF about this idea. The Foundation was willing to entertain the idea of leasing the land until the new owners were in place (Thomas Aquinas ?). However, the Recreation Commission was not willing to invest any funds with the prospect that they would lose those resources to the new owner. So, the Community Park Committee can't find land at this point. Jerry stated that NMH owns a large parcel of land by the Boat Ramp, but it is not clear whether they would negotiate. Jerry reminded the Committee that NMH still owns the reservoir, and that that reservoir is one of 2 open reservoirs that is allowed not to filtrate. Jerry expects that the DEP will probably require filtration soon, and that upwards of a million dollars will be needed for that process. Big wells could be an alternative for NMH, and that project would take up much of the land by the Boat ramp, squelching any talk of Parks.

Submitted by Steve Stoia