

Public Safety Property Reuse Working Group

April 21, 2022

7:00 PM

Ipswich Town Hall
25 Green Street, Room B-2

Minutes

Working Group members present: Gordon Harris, Chair, Linda Alexson, Scott Glosserman, Laurie Paskavitz, John Sarni, Paul Seaman.

Also present: Ethan Parsons, Planning Director; Donald Greenough, Ipswich Housing Partnership; Carl Gardner.

Not present: Keith Anderson, Janice Clements-Skelton, Janet Craft, Jeff Poirier

Gordon Harris called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and committee members introduced themselves. Donald Greenough attended on behalf of the Ipswich Housing Partnership.

Citizens Queries: Dan Lovy, Citizens for the Arts, and Mike Krizansky, resident of District Condominiums, attended but had no queries.

Action Items Follow-Up

John Sarni presented a short draft survey. Discussion followed regarding survey questions and focus. Survey should be used to gauge community feedback regarding importance of the properties to the town, interest in retaining municipal ownership or selling/leasing, and suggestions for the working group. Survey questions should not be too specific or contain potential uses. It should be kept simple.

It is important to ascertain what the community needs and if one or both sites could be used for those purposes. What additional services could be provided with these properties? The town should not liquidate municipal assets unless necessary but needs to consider potential revenues to offset costs of other projects. Community impact must be considered.

Ethan advised not to rule out possibilities due to lack of funding. There are funding opportunities available. Scott mentioned MassDevelopment's Underutilized Properties Program.

Laurie and Gordon produced a list of former municipally-owned properties that were sold. Most became housing.

Working Group Timeline

Gordon will give a brief report to the Annual Town Meeting on May 10.

It is anticipated that the Working Group's recommendations would be presented to the Select Board in mid to late September, in advance of the fall town meeting. In the meantime, the group should provide a status report to the Select Board in mid-June and seek the Select Board's direction. Questions were raised about the scope of the working group's charge (i.e., is the group supposed to propose conceptual ideas for re-use of the properties, or actually develop revenue/cost projections, etc., for recommendations?).

Procedural Objectives

The group determined the following 4 criteria should be used in developing recommendations:

Feasibility, Desirability, Financial, and Community Benefit

Recommendations include GIS mapping of each site, lot configuration and neighborhood. Consider more than just the existing building(s) for possible opportunities. Draw upon the Community Development Plan, Housing Production Plan and other already available reports for information, statistics, needs and interests, and build from there.

Research the highest and best use of each property and intersect that with the needs of the community. There are costs and benefits of architectural preservation, and it is possible to sell to a private purchaser with preservation requirements.

Determine if there is money available for a consultant to assist the working group. This is a process that should be done once and done right.

Research what funding sources and grant opportunities are available.

Obtain an inventory of current municipal properties and their uses.

Laurie suggested writing a newspaper article on the committee's work. The initial community communication could be the report at town meeting followed by a newspaper article.

Action Items

John and Scott will work on further developing the survey. Ethan and the Planning Department intern will assist.

Scott will explore potential grants and funding opportunities and report back. He also volunteered to create an online "product board" to solicit and share ideas for the properties. A similar program was used by the CDP consultant. He will show it to the group at the next meeting.

Ethan will request an inventory of municipal buildings and department uses from the Facilities Director. He offered to put together a "profile" for each property, including map, parcel size, current zoning, condition of structures, etc. This information is probably available in the materials for the new public safety facility project.

Laurie and Gordon will work on town meeting talking points and post-town meeting communications strategy.

Dan Lovy offered to do research.

Mike Krizansky suggested communicating clearly to avoid misunderstanding.

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Laurie Paskavitz moved to approve the March 30 minutes. Paul Seaman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, May 5, at 7:00 PM.

Adjourn

Vote: Linda Alexson moved to adjourn. Scott Glosserman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Linda Alexson