

MINUTES
Library Reuse Committee
Sharon Community Center, Hearing Room
March 14, 2024 meeting
7 pm

Present at the meeting were Gail Ader, Judy Crosby, Roni Thaler, Michael Fillion and Joel Fishman

AGENDA ITEM 1. Approval of Minutes of 02/22/24 meeting: Minutes are not ready, will be distributed at next meeting, scheduled for March 28.

AGENDA ITEM 2. Election of Committee Chair: Judy nominated Joel for Chair; Roni seconded; passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Further Updates Regarding Committee Process (RFP discussion, review of samples provided by Fred Turkington, planning for next steps): Joel read Fred's email (attached to these minutes). Fred clarified that the town does not have the resources to outsource the RFP and therefore will create one in-house. He further clarified that the timeline for the release of the RFP is late May/early June with subsequent reporting to select board late October/early November. To this end, Fred suggested the LRC to meet with various town boards and committees to seek their input regarding the future use of the library.

The goal would be to meet with other boards and committees simultaneously to encourage an exchange of ideas among various committee and board members.

Judy added that she had spoken with Fred who was clear that he would like us to participate in the preparation of an RFP by providing information to his staff, as broad as possible, to solicit a wide variety of responses. As the LRC did with the Commission on Disabilities (COD), we can solicit "wish list" items for the library reuse and include them in the RFP, as priority points above and beyond the base criteria on the scoring rubric. Examples include universal Design, Green/LEAD certified construction, etc.

Judy has started the outreach process by contacting the town's Planning Board and inviting them to the next LRC meeting on March 28. The LRC agreed to meet with Planning Board on 3/28. Judy will follow up with the Planning Board to confirm the date. Judy mentioned that given the difficulties finding a date that works for everyone, it would be challenging to get a quorum for all the boards and cttee's at the same time so perhaps meeting with them in smaller groups would work better.

Per Roni's suggestion, Joel will contact all other town boards and committees and invite them to the same meeting. Mike suggested to reach out to the town's Conservation Commission and to do a walk through of the lot adjacent to the town parking lot to determine if there are any wetlands in that area.

Judy asked how exactly the town distributes RFP's. It goes on the town website and a second website that serves as a sort of RFP clearinghouse for professionals interested in these types of

projects. Roni wondered if there are specific websites for RFP's located in a Historic District, to attract developers specialized in a historic renovation. Judy believes the town will alert builders and contractors who specialize in historic buildings and multiuse development. Dave said information about the building's historic designation should be included in the RFP. Joel will prepare a report with all the fact finding the committee has done so far that is relevant for the RFP. Judy suggested that the feedback received from COD and eventually from other boards & cttee's be included in that report.

The issue of hazardous materials was raised. Committee members agreed there will clearly be some hazardous remediation needed at the library but most likely nothing like that of the Wilbur property which sat empty for two decades and was in a state of disrepair with consequential exposure of environmental hazards

AGENDA ITEM 4: Interaction among Committee Members, Town employees, Town Counsel and Third Parties: Joel said that town counsel Dick Gelerman suggested that Dick and Joel meet with the Historical Society about lease issues and easement access with the goal of exploring parking and septic accessibility. Gail mentioned she saw the surveyors on the property this week. The committee discussed the location of septic systems in the area and the possibility that a new developer could include upgrades to the current septic systems serving local businesses and/or the First Congregational Church. Roni reminded the committee that the parking lot behind the buildings in Sharon center is not owned by the town. The town has use of it in exchange for maintenance and plowing.

Agenda 5: Meetings with Other Town Boards: Joel represented LRC in front of the town's Finance Committee and distributed the draft article for use of High Street land for septic and parking.

Joel affirmed that Don Williams, Vice-President of the Sharon Historical Society, has not located an amended lease for their use of the property where the Carriage House is located. He could only locate the original one. The Town needs to prepare an amended lease and get access for parking and/or septic on that property and adjacent property. The committee feels that a better understanding of the septic options is needed to explore all of the options. Kevin Davis could help with this.

Agenda Item 6: Meetings with Other Town Boards. Joel will get contact information from Melissa Imbaro and on behalf of the LRC, email them to invite them to our next meeting on 3/28 in which the planning board will be present. Gail offered to help with this communication if needed. The LRC also agreed to offer the boards and committees alternative dates of our next two meetings if they are unable to make it to the 3/28. The committee discussed how to communicate what we have learned so far so as to provide the boards and committees context around limitations of the use of the property. This will better direct their feedback toward feasible potential uses. Joel could reach out before the meeting to solicit their ideas and thoughts regarding the building's use.

AGENDA ITEM 7: DEI Training and OML: All LRC members have completed the mandatory DEI training except Mike. Judy reminded committee members about the Open

Meeting Law(OML) as it regards email communication. Group emails should only discuss logistics of meetings. Any substantive matters should not be discussed in group emails. One member can speak to another member (limit 2) about substantive matters but no one can share that with a third member of the committee as it will violate OML. As for amending the minutes, committee members should email their suggestions *individually* to Gail (the clerk) who will then bring them to the next meeting to be discussed and approved by the committee in person.

AGENDA ITEM 8: Topics Not Anticipated at the Time of This Posting: Roni spoke with Dave Wluka who suggested the LRC consider an Adult Day Care for the site. Roni explained that Adult Day Care is for elders seeking more socialization and engagement during the day and there is a shortage of such services which she experienced firsthand when seeking them out for a family member. Adult day care clients require higher level of support and usually includes van transportation so parking need would be minimal although handicapped parking would be important with this demographic. Unlike a daycare or preschool, there would be no need for a playground. Roni feels the neighbors would not be opposed to an Adult Daycare as it is a low impact use and fulfills a community need. Judy mentioned that there is a need for services for all adults, in town 22 and over. Gail asked if there is a current senior center and the answer was “yes.” The town has an Adult Center with a full slate of programming. It is a more independent demographic. The library would need upgrades and ADA accessibility.

As a service to the community, Judy mentioned two events: that Sharon Basketball team would be playing at the MIAA Basketball State Championships against Catholic Memorial at the Tsongas arena in Lowell the following evening (3/15) and that Sharon High School had progressed to the finals of the Massachusetts Education Theatre Guild in Boston and would be performing next Thursday (3/21).

Roni motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mike seconded and motioned passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.