

LAND ACQUISITION AND HISTORIC PROPERTY INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL VIDEO MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2020
6:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kilpatrick, Ellen Dougan, Patrick Clancy, Helen Robbins, Jack Prior, Eric Prause, Patrick Kennedy, Joel Janenda

STAFF PRESENT: Kyle Shiel, Senior Planner
David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner
Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Economic Development

Adoption of June 24th, 2020 minutes

Mr. Kennedy made a motion to adopt the minutes as written. Mr. Prior seconded and all members voted in favor.

Adoption of 2021 meeting schedule

Mr. Kennedy made a motion to adopt the 2021 meeting schedule as written. Mr. Clancy seconded and all members voted in favor.

Election of officers

Mr. Janenda made a motion to have Mr. Kilpatrick continue as committee chair. Mr. Clancy seconded and all members were in favor. Mr. Kennedy offered to serve as vice-chair and all members were in agreement.

Historic property overview

Mr. Shiel said he contacted the General Manager to inquire about Town-owned historic properties that may be potential funding requests in the near future. He said there were no major buildings on the near horizon that would likely meet the committee's previous standards for historical significance. He said the single exception is the Old Manchester Museum, which had an architectural assessment completed late in 2019 and would likely be submitting a request to the committee in the near future. He asked Mr. Prior if he could brief the committee on the Manchester Historical Society's likely request.

Mr. Prior said the windows and foundation were the two most likely areas of focus. He said the furnace has already been addressed, as has repainting. He said the HVAC system could use an

upgrade, but the windows and foundation would take precedence. Ms. Dougan asked if there were associated costs for the proposed work. Mr. Shiel said the architectural assessment did not have detailed cost estimates, but he would forward the study to the committee for context on the building. Mr. Prior said if the Historical Society submits a funding request to the committee it would include a detailed scope with cost estimates.

Map Update and Potential Priorities

Mr. Shiel said the priority map had recently been updated by Mr. Laiuppa with slight revisions to the legend and some property updates to reflect recent purchases by the Manchester Land Conservation Trust (MLCT). Mr. Shiel said 213 Greenwood Drive was previously listed as a potential acquisition target, but was recently acquired by MLCT.

Ms. Dougan asked about the property on Hackmatack Street. Mr. Anderson said it was a relatively steep property that would be somewhat difficult to develop, but not impossible. He said there had been inquiries about potential development of the site, but they have never proceeded to the point of submitting applications. Mr. Janenda asked what value the site may have beyond passive open space. Mr. Shiel agreed with Mr. Janenda that the primary benefit would be passive open space and maintaining the rural character of the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Laiuppa said there may be some ancillary environmental benefits such as maintaining wildlife habitat or groundwater recharge. Mr. Kennedy said the isolated, non-contiguous nature of the property would likely not make it valuable as a piece to connect to existing trails or other open space corridors.

It was recognized that Parcel Y (701 Lydall) is one of the larger properties identified on the Priority Parcel map. There was some discussion about the property and the adjacent lands to that parcel. Ms. Robbins said much of the property consisted of wetlands. She also said that the abutting properties owned by the Land Trust are adjacent to and surrounded by the Lydall Woods development.

Ms. Dougan asked if there were parcels listed on the map that had significant potential for development. Mr. Shiel said 40 Glen Road was already developed and has excellent highway access, so it could be considered a target for redevelopment of some type. He said 260 Tolland Turnpike was the site of a former mill and had frontage to Tolland Turnpike and was likely another site that had some sort of potential for redevelopment as opposed to open space.

Ms. Dougan asked if the bond referendum had precedent in state law regarding how the bond funds were to be allocated. Mr. Kennedy said in his view the open language in the referendum was typical and intended to provide the Town flexibility in how the funds are spent. He said such decisions are policy decisions to be made by boards and commissions. Mr. Kilpatrick said when this committee was initially established, there was a general consensus to only spend significant amounts of funding for buildings with significant historical value, as opposed to buildings which were simply of a certain age.

It was brought to the attention of the Committee that the Metropolitan District Commission, who owns Parcel J (705 Keeney Street), is interested in selling the land to the Town. Mr. Shiel said that he and Mr. Laiuppa had visited the property earlier in the year. The property is not easily accessible because of the elevation difference between the parcel and the road. It is wooded and contains wetlands. The parcel has some development potential but would require some investment by a developer to make it easier to access.

Future Agenda Items

There was some general discussion about identifying a mechanism for tracking parcels that come up for sale. The concern is that one of the priority parcels may become available and the Committee might be aware of its availability until it is too late. Mr. Anderson said that he is typically made aware of larger parcels that become available but that it is still possible for some of these properties to become available without him knowing.

Mr. Prause thought it would be a good exercise to identify priority characteristics that could be used to identify those parcels that may be of a higher interest to the Committee. He thought that, during this exercise, we may find that there are certain parcels that should come off the list.

Mr. Prause said it may be worth considering how the committee may proactively look to acquire properties for possible open space or recreation use. Mr. Shiel the Town is beginning a parks and recreation masterplan process which may be a good opportunity for the committee to involve themselves to develop a possible implementation strategy. Mr. Kilpatrick agreed, saying it made sense for the committee to be involved in the planning process in some way.

Mr. Kennedy made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Clancy seconded and all members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 pm.