

LAND ACQUISITION AND HISTORIC PROPERTY INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL VIDEO MEETING

March 25, 2021

6:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

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

STAFF PRESENT: Kyle Shiel, Senior Planner
David Laiuppa, Environmental Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Bill and Linda Lehmann-Taylor; Property owners, 220 Bobby Lane
Kevin Rockoff; Agent for 220 Bobby Lane
Several Manchester residents

Meeting called to order

Mr. Kilpatrick called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM

General meeting discussion regarding 220 Bobby Lane

Mr. Kilpatrick opened the meeting by informing all in attendance that, although this is not a public hearing and there would not typically be an opportunity for the public to speak the Committee will allow the public an opportunity to discuss their concerns. Mr. Kilpatrick also talked about the mission of the Committee and the funding that has been allocated. Mr. Kilpatrick also stated that the presentation related to 220 Bobby Lane given at the meeting will be the first time that the Committee has reviewed or had discussion about the property.

Mr. Shiel reiterated the procedures of the meeting and also stated that the Town does not have any current plans or designs related to the property at 220 Bobby Lane. Any design ideas presented or discussed have come from other sources.

Bill and Linda Lehmann-Taylor, the property owners and Kevin Rockoff, the realtor for the property owners, were invited to discuss the property and their desire to sell it. They stated that they had an interest in selling the land to the Town of Manchester and they thought that it might be a useful property for access to the Case Mountain Recreational area.

Discussion was opened to the public for discussion.

Rosemarie and Jack Papa noted that the road is too narrow to accommodate an increase in traffic while also continuing to be a safe place for pedestrians to walk. They also said that the proposed usage of the lot as an access point would disrupt the neighborhood feel of the cul-de-sac.

Tom Cwikla said that he did not want the neighborhood feeling to be disrupted. He also said that he is concerned about increased traffic, pollution, and decreased safety.

Jackie Somberg said that this is not the place to display history, the asking price for the property is too high, and the people of the neighborhood don't want people driving up the street into the late evening.

Neil Somberg said that this is a nice neighborhood and that the police don't have the resources to enforce the no-drinking rules on Case Mountain. Drunk people don't make good drivers and there are safety concerns.

James Artman said that this is a remote residential neighborhood. Because there are no trails nearby people can park somewhere else. He is also concerned about safety and said that the price for the property was too high.

Barnaby and Jenny Forbes said that they are worried about safety. They also said that the motivation for the sale is probably well intended but the potential use could have unintended consequences.

Martin Edwards said that he echoed all other comments and that he enjoys the cul-de-sac life. He said that he would be more in favor of seeing a house built on the property than a public access point.

Peter Meggers said that the property has been for sale for a long time. He recognized that the existing parking areas for Case Mountain are limited and often at capacity. A parking lot in this location would be very disruptive.

Doug Roth said that there are many other access points for Case Mountain – this one is not needed. He also said that people don't respect parking time limitations.

Matthew Morelli said that he did not understand why the Town was considering this purchase. He said the Town should spend money where there is more of a benefit. He said that he thought that, because the owner couldn't sell the property on the open market, they are trying to get the Town to buy it. He said this property has no benefit to the Town.

Mary Ann and Ron Coleman were concerned about increased traffic, decreased safety, cars parking in the street, excess lighting, litter, impacts to wildlife, and loss in tax revenue to the Town. They also said that they would rather see a house in this location than a parking lot.

Mike Hiza said that he had traffic concerns related to emergency vehicle and trash pick-up access. He also said that there are only sidewalks on one side of the road and that he had concerns about safety.

Upon conclusion of the public comment portion of the meeting Mr. Kennedy reminded all in attendance that the Committee is just hearing a proposal. There are no current plans and no proposed projects for the property.

Mr. Janenda said that this property had not been previously identified by the Committee and that the proposed sale was initiated by the property owner.

Mr. Rockoff said that the seller never mentioned the creation of a parking lot, they are just selling the property as open space.

Mr. Prause said that, even though this is not a target property, it is good to have this discussion. He said that this is probably not an asset to the Town as open space. He said that the rocks on site would probably make the construction of a parking lot difficult and that there are other properties that would be a higher priority for the Town.

Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Prior said that they thought the vote on this property should be tabled to a future meeting. Mr. Prior made a motion to table the decision to the next meeting. Mr. Janenda seconded the motion. All voted in favor to table the decision.

At this point the Committee decided to move on to general committee discussion and the public was requested to leave the meeting.

General Committee Discussion

The Committee continued the conversation about 220 Bobby Lane. Mr. Kilpatrick said that the sale price presented to the Committee did not seem commensurate to the appraised value of the property. Mr. Kennedy said that the asking price is too high and that there are plenty of other access points to Case Mountain. Mr. Clancy said that this could be too obtrusive to the neighborhood.

Mr. Kilpatrick said that, if the Town were to acquire the property at a price significantly higher than appraised, it would potentially incentivize other property owners to make similar offers to the Town. Mr. Prause suggested that there should be more discussion at the next meeting about other properties that are associated with Case Mountain.

Mr. Shiel asked the committee to clarify the points of discussion for the next meeting. It was decided that the next meeting would be the final discussion regarding 220 Bobby Lane and additional discussion regarding other potential properties adjacent to Case Mountain.

Adoption of Minutes – February 26th, 2020 and September 24th, 2020

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

Mr. Kilpatrick scheduled the next meeting for April 22, 2021.

Mr. Kennedy made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Janenda seconded and all members voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.