

Board: Board of Selectmen/ Water Commissioner's Meeting
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2020
Location: Online Video/Audio Conference Pursuant to Governor Baker's Executive Order in Response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency

Selectmen Present: William Bembury, Peter Sanders, Jacob Smith
Also, Present: Bryan Smith, Mariah Kurtz, Erika Zekos, Barbara Friedman, BettyLou Mallet, Breta Yvars-Petraccia, Jacquelyn Boyden, Debra Smith, Charles Zilinski, Eva Zilinski, Joseph Krupczynski, Linda Downs-Bembury, Elizabeth Donald, Marcia Bernard, Michael Shaffer, Paula Betters, Philip Johnson, Maureen Black, Sarah Vega-Liros, Abigail Fowler, Alexandra Vona, Alyssa DiCenzo, Henry Francis, Kelly Gershkoff, Nicole Ahrens, Ryan Lehane, Victoria Capaldo, Brendan Baitch
Press: Katherine Nolan, Montague Reporter; Max Marcus, Greenfield Recorder

At 6:34 PM **Chairman Smith** called the meeting to order.

Chairman Smith explained that the meeting is being recorded and provided an overview of the functions of the video/audio conferencing platform.

Discussion Regarding the Town Response to COVID-19

Chairman Smith explained that Governor Baker has extended the end of the stay-at-home order and essential worker orders related to COVID-19 from May 4, 2020 to May 18, 2020. **Chairman Smith** asked the Board members if there was a desire by the Board to extend the Town's restrictions for public buildings and staffing until May 18, 2020. The Board members expressed agreement. **Selectman Sanders** made a motion to follow the restrictions issued by the State and to extend the Town orders through May 18, 2020. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Erving Center Visioning Project Presentation- UMass Student Presentation

Chairman Smith opened the discussion with a brief overview of the Town's project to assess planning options for Erving Center. **Chairman Smith** explained that the project was being overseen by Mariah Kurtz, Assistant Town Planner, and a team of students from the University of Massachusetts Architecture Program that are led by Professor Erika Zekos. Erika provided an introduction about the course and the overview of the project approach used by the student teams to conduct the planning project.

The students presented the Erving Center Vision Plan that was produced through the Architecture Design VI course for Spring 2020. In addition to discussing design suggestions and considerations, the presenters discussed the work they engage in to interview Erving residents and business owners, conduct working groups at Erving Elementary School and the Erving Senior & Community Center, collect survey data, and to review available information that included Zoning, maps, and traffic data. Students worked in research groups that focused on the following topic areas:

- Traffic and Pedestrian Safety: identifying interventions to increase pedestrian, cyclist, and driver safety
- Existing Buildings and Historic Character: elevating the historic and rural character of Erving Center through signage and plantings
- Green Spaces and Recreation: identifying potential green spaces along the Route 2 corridor and connections from Erving Center businesses and residences to Riverfront Park

- Social and Physical Infrastructures: recognizing opportunities to connect residents and visitors to Erving Center through community events

At the conclusion of the presentation, **Chairman Smith** expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board of Selectman for the work performed by the student teams on the planning project for Erving Center. The Board members expressed agreement. **Chairman Smith** opened the meeting to questions and comments from members of the public.

Public Questions & Comments

Marcia Bernard expressed positive feedback for the presentation from the UMass students. Sarah Vega-Liros expressed positive feedback for the presentation and highlighted the proposed reuse of the former Usher Mill building as a green house and the potential to host farmers markets. Jacquelyn Boyden, Planning Board Chair, expressed positive feedback for the presentation and discussed particular support for the suggested way-finding signage as well as the suggested solutions for the bus stops along Route 2. Jacquelyn expressed concerns about the suggestion of a bicycle path along Route 2, noting the traffic concerns and the State control of Route 2. Bryan Smith, Town Administrator, discussed the need to work with MassDOT to ensure that residents have multimodal connections between the three (3) village areas of the Town. Erika discussed the concept of introducing multi-modal transportation in Erving Center. Barbara Friedman, Library Director, expressed positive feedback for the designs included in the presentation and asked if the former Usher Mill site had been considered for a future location of Town Hall. Mariah explained that as the Town assesses options to renovate and/or expand the existing Town Hall to meet current needs, other Town-owned buildings and lots will be considered for potential locations. Mariah noted the existing challenges with building at the former Usher Mill site.

BettyLou and Peter Mallet expressed positive feedback for the presentation. Peter asked about the possibility of pursuing grant funding to support some of the suggested improvements. Bryan explained that the Town can certainly apply for grant funding for projects identified by the citizens as priorities. Bryan noted that the new ideas presented by the students will hopefully spur the Town's creativity as we approach the challenges in Erving Center. Mariah explained efforts to monitor grant opportunities from public and private sources that may help fund these initiatives. BettyLou thanked the students for their work. BettyLou discussed the many changes that have been observed over the thirty-three (33) years they have lived in Erving Center. BettyLou discussed appreciation for the focus on Route 2 and noted the changes with transportation. BettyLou raised the concern about only having the presentation available electronically and asked for printed copies to be available for residents. Mariah discussed ways to make the information available to the public in both printed and electronic formats. Mariah encouraged community members to provide feedback about the suggestions incorporated into the project. Breta Yvars-Petraccia, Recreation Assistant, expressed positive feedback for the presentation and congratulated the students on their work. Breta highlighted the focus on creating public spaces on the street view with specific appreciation for emphasis on pedestrian connections between parks, businesses, and Town offices. Linda Downs-Bembury discussed appreciation for the suggested solutions regarding vehicular traffic and pedestrian safety, noting the dangerous challenges faced by residents crossing Route 2 to enter Riverfront Park and the Wendell State Forest. Barbara discussed the possibility of presenting the Erving Center Vision Plan at the Library when the facility reopens to the public. **Chairman Smith** discussed wanting printed copies of the proposal available for public review at the Library and at the Senior & Community Center.

Joseph Krupczynski, Director of Civic Engagement & Service Learning for UMass, expressed appreciation to the students for their work on the project. Joseph asked the students to discuss their experience

working within the community and engaging stakeholders. The students shared their experience working with community members to engage in the planning process.

Selectman Bembury explained that he was impressed with the project presentation and expressed his appreciation for the work done by the students. **Selectman Bembury** discussed the importance of receiving community input in the planning process. **Selectman Bembury** discussed support for identifying funding to begin work on some of the suggested improvements. **Selectman Bembury** discussed the importance of partnering with MassDOT on the improvements necessary for Route 2. **Selectman Sanders** congratulated the students for their work on the project and expressed support for many of the ideas that were presented. **Chairman Smith** expressed his appreciation for the work that the students put into the project on behalf of the Town. **Chairman Smith** expressed support for several of the ideas that were presented and explained that he hopes that the vision serves as inspiration for the next five (5) to ten (10) years of progress in Erving Center. **Chairman Smith** highlighted the importance of focusing on the pedestrian and transportation safety efforts. **Chairman Smith** also highlighted the importance of maintaining the Town's industrial heritage and improving access to green spaces. Additionally, **Chairman Smith** discussed particular support for the proposed signage and branding package. Mariah discussed her positive experience working on the project with Erika, the UMass students, and community members. Bryan thanked Mariah, Erika, and the students for all of their work on the project. **Chairman Smith** discussed support for working with student teams again in the future, noting the benefits to the Town and the students.

Adjournment

At 7:49 PM **Selectman Bembury** made a motion to adjourn. **Selectman Sanders** seconded. **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Bryan Smith
Town Administrator