

**Medway Middle School
25 Holliston Street
Medway, MA 02053**

January 29, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Members: Andy Rodenhiser, Paul Yorkis, Ken Bancewicz, Hugh Mckinnon and Alyssa Parlee, Tina Chemini.

Also Present:

Ralph Hubbard, Consultant Economic Development Committee
Board of Selectmen Chairman Glenn Trindade
Town Administrator Suzanne Kennedy

Member Rodenhiser called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The members of the committee were introduced.

Oak Grove Project:

Consultant Hubbard provided the members a copy of his scope of services so they could understand his mission for the town. He was hired at the beginning of December. The focus of services includes assisting the town with moving the Oak Grove project forward.

Selectmen Trindade provided a brief overview to the members about the history of the Oak Grove parcels. He explained that the town received a grant and there was a recommendation to go forward with the Redevelopment Authority which will assist with the development of the Oak Grove project.

The Oak Grove parcel has a total of 44 acres and 1000 parcels. Town Counsel is doing title work on some of the parcels. The town owns 1/3 of the lots; another 1/3 belongs to Mr. Williams and the other 1/3 the ownership is scattered. Some of the owners are unknown. There is some title work which needs to be completed. There needs to be completed a restricted use appraisal. If the implementation is to go with the redevelopment authority; an Urban Renewal Plan would need to be put in place. Initially, there could be completion of a

limited use appraisal on all lots not owned by the Town. There will be a cost estimate associated with this. Until the title work and appraisal is done, there will not be an exact cost number. The value of the appraisal is based on the highest and best use. The existing plan covers the entire 44 acres. The limited area could be west of Trotter Drive. The delta would be the cost of the appraisal. The appraisals could be used for use in an eminent domain taking if the town decides to go that route.

Once the renewal plan is in place, the town can then acquire the land through conveyance. One way to clear title is to do a friendly taking. There was a question if the redevelopment can do a friendly taking from the town. There would be legal fees to do such. With properties which the owners are not known, we could clear from eminent domain taking. This will be a relatively low cost. There is another strategy which could be utilized called land pooling, but if the redevelopment development authority can get site control, they can share the proceeds. In land pooling, anyone who wants to opt into the proposal can, this is an option for those owners. There should be a limited amount of people at the table. The town should set aside money for the heirs unknown. Town Counsel will need to weigh in on this.

BSC made an estimate of what the projected tax revenue on this land would be. It was conservative. The study indicated a hotel would be good economic value for the town. The town could make as much as \$300,000 a year in occupancy tax revenue over and above property taxes. This information needs to be communicated to the general public. The Finance Committee should also be informed about the potential gain.

Consultant Hubbard explained that the room tax is more palpable. It needs to be expressed early on and it is not recommended a meal tax only lodging. He did not look at neighboring communities.

In order to move forward, a decision needs to be made with recommendations about preparing the urban renewal plan. The implementation of these needs to focus on a certain area which the EDC thinks can succeed. The plan will need to be approved and then it needs to be assembled. The urban renewal plan would need to be paid for. The Consultant Hubbard estimated the cost at \$80,000. This did not include legal.

Consultant Hubbard indicated that he can put together an RFQ for bids to prepare the plan. This should only take him 30 days.

It was also discussed that not all of the Board of Selectmen have bought into the plan for Oak Grove. Selectmen Trindade believes this is a wise investment. The numbers presented by BSC group were conservative, but even with conservative numbers; the town could still make money. The town is currently allowing the property to go untaxed. The town has spent a lot of money on the sewer upgrades in this area and we could bring in a development which could make use of the sewer system.

One step that needs to be taken is to get the renewal agency appointed. These members will need to be appointed and then elected. There will need to be a ballot question since this was how the warrant article was written. The plan needs to get budgeted this year. The Board of Selectmen appoints four members and the last member is appointed by the governor. Mr. Hubbard will develop a list of skill sets for people who would be good representatives to serve on the committee.

Selectmen Trindade noted that he has candidates in mind, but the difficult part will be to see if these people are going to be willing to go through the election process.

The Committee discussed that any land near a highway and exit is valuable. This will be developed if not now, but in the future. The initial investment will pay off. As a redevelopment authority we have control, but as a private owner, the Town has no control.

Consultant Hubbard further explained that the next step would be to have the redevelopment authority put out the RFQ for a consultant firm to prepare the Urban Renewal Plan. It will take the consulting firm about nine months to write the plan. The Planning Board will need to make a formal vote on what property is blighted.

The Committee discussed creating a timeline of actions so that all are on the same page.

There were some questions about the funding for this. There will need to be some money appropriated. The board of selectmen can maintain control over the funds. The board of selectmen does maintain a lot of the control initially through the appropriation process.

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Consultant Hubbard indicated that he can put together the numbers, but the big unknown is the appraisal cost for the unknown parcels and unknown legal fees. This is impossible to judge. He can put together an estimate cost of plan, including the cost of limited restricted appraisal and administrative cost. Also included in this estimate would be a cost for money which needs to be put in for heirs unknown. The court will make the decision on these parcels. He also communicated that the BSC report included \$150,000 for an estimated education cost. Based on all numbers presented, this number could go down at least 30%. The school is currently bringing in children for school choice with no problem. The school numbers are going down.

The Town Administrator suggested having someone call a town such as Mansfield to see if there is an increase of municipal staff to handle industrial development.

The BSC did indicate that the water and sewer capacity may be an issue. The town has aging pipes in this area. The town has been investigating and repairing certain pipes in this section. The sewer capacity is the biggest issue. There needs to be enough capacity if a hotel were to have the potential to be built in that area. It was suggested to have the DPS director make a presentation regarding capacity.

Budget:

The discussion next moved to the budget. It was communicated by the Town Administrator that there is money in budget for economic development but the amount of money will depend on what Judy Barrett comes forth with in relation to recommendations. Currently, the amount is the same as last year.

Selectmen Trindade explained that there is a plan for a part-time person. If Judy comes back with a recommendation for full-time person, then he is willing to discuss that possibility.

Tasks:

Consultant Hubbard will provide the requested information to the Committee prior to February 7, 2014. He will email the information to the members.

The Committee also discussed having a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen. A date will need to be determined.

Office Facilities:

The Committee discussed the lack of office space for land planning. The Town Administrator is looking into the possibility of using the fire house behind the town hall.

Selectmen Trindade responded that we need to have quality space for our employees and if we cannot provide it with the property we have, he is willing to look into what space we could rent.

Light Trotter Drive:

The town received a letter from MAPC acknowledging and advocating for the traffic light. The boards of selectmen also support the advocating for this light.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Sutherland
Recording Secretary