

Minutes of the second meeting of the Schell Bridge Advisory Committee of the Town of Northfield, MA, held on March 8th, 2017 at 7p.m. in the Community Room of the Dickinson Memorial Library.

Present at this meeting were: Craig Johnson; Jerry Wagener; Mary Bowen (representing Tim Bowen); Susan Ross; Barbara Richardson; Jon McGowen; Judy Wagner; Laura Lashway-Chapman; Steve Stoia; and Recorder Reporter for Northfield, Shelby Ashline.

Chair Judy Wagner convened the meeting at 7p.m., asking for introductions all around again and particularly for Shelby's benefit. During intros Craig pointed out that there is a new short video on You Tube about the Schell Bridge.

Moving on, Chair Judy asked for a brainstorm on agenda items starting with a 1) review and vote on the February 22nd meeting minutes; followed by 2) a report by Jerry Wagener on the park proposal for either side of the new Schell Bridge; then 3) a discussion of meeting process; and 4) Representation of this Committee at the NES PTO's "State Of Our Town" Spaghetti Dinner Saturday April 8th 5) Changes to the Committee contact sheet; and 6) Next Meeting Date.

Judy then asked for review and correction of the February 22nd minutes, and Sue suggested that we replace the words "tear down" with "MASS DOT would replace with a new bridge..... Barbara Richardson suggested that we in principal not try to improve on what was actually said at a meeting as it would be counter to what 'taking minutes' is meant to do. Other changes to the minutes were spellings of names on the Contact Sheet that had begun to circulate, eliminating agenda item 5. Jon McGowan's name was corrected from the mistaken printed spelling "John". And Jerry's last name Wagener was corrected from "Wagoner". The minutes for the February 22nd meeting were then approved unanimously by the members.

Judy then asked Jerry to make his presentation on the parks proposed for both sides of the soon to be designed and built Schell Bridge. At this point Jerry suggested concern to the Committee about the sensitive nature of the negotiation information surrounding his contacts with landowners . Specifically, Jerry was concerned that details of these negotiations with landowners might be published in The Recorder, and negatively impact his negotiations. Judy suggested that sensitive details of the dealings with the landowners might be deleted from his presentation for the sake of moving forward. Shelby, The Recorder reporter suggested that our committee might go into executive session to hear more sensitive material to hear details without her present. Jerry suggested that the Committee talk with Dan Campbell, Town Clerk for guidance about these kinds of situations.

Jerry agreed to make his presentation "general", and described himself as a "sort of consultant" for the Parks Committee, and in that capacity has talked to landowners whose land is adjacent to the existing Schell Bridge. A parcel of 10 acres along East Northfield Road is the land that is of interest to the Community Parks Committee. The owner of that land is the National Christian Foundation, and Jerry has been discussing the disposition of that land with Foundation representatives. He has found those

representatives willing to talk, but not ready to make a decision, as the proposed Moody center may need it. Jerry has suggested a compromise of a few acres right at the end of the bridge and a little into the woods. This smaller parcel might serve as a community park for recreation and a site for commemorative historical elements of the Schell Bridge. The National Christian Foundation has asked Jerry to identify an exact parcel, and Jerry has honored that request with some data and GPS points of detail. Jerry believes NCF is receptive to working with us to make a Park.

Sue Ross reminded Committee members that the recent Master Plan process revealed that Town citizens who participated had a high interest in more recreation areas. In addition, the Open Space Committee in their 7 year plan also cited this interest on the part of citizens. Sue pointed out that the above groups, plus the Friends of the Schell saw the need for parks and that the Schell replacement could be the impetus for parks. Sue pointed out that on the South side of the road to the bridge, park enhancing features like "some landscaping" and a number of cedar trees exist.

Jerry was asked what would happen if NCF won't sell us any land. He responded by saying that since his first letter to the Foundation last June, he has met with NCF representatives several times. Jerry says we are just in the very early stages of discussion, but it (a park) is not high on their priority list to discuss as they may not be able to divert time from their need to establish the Moody Center on the campus. They may need and want money for the land to help with their fundraising for the Center.

Barbara again asked what if they do not sell us the land. Jerry responded with "We still have First Light on the West Side, but he still thinks that NCF may want to work with the community. Laura reminded the committee that First Light has a right of way across her family's land on the West side. Jerry told the committee that NCF is reasonable, but may want some money for the land.

This Secretary/Clerk suggested that NCF might include park land in negotiations for a PILOT. Barbara suggested that a coalition of interested committees like the ones mentioned above could make a request to NCF for land or again in a PILOT. Barbara also stated that the Town's Recreation Commission could be included in this effort.

Jerry reflecting on the financing for this park or parks, stated that money could come from Town funds, and he informed the committee that he has already requested capital funds, and another source could be the Community Preservation Act.

Judy stated that the Advisory Committee might be part of the coalition of groups pushing for parks at the ends of the new Schell Bridge, but reminded us that this goal was not part of our central mission.

In closing, Jerry said that he intends to bring Paul Bouchelle, the new Town Administrator up to speed on his negotiations. Further, he stated that NCF might consider a joint ownership as part of a settlement. At any rate, Jerry sees the NCF cooperation as a win/win scenario for the Town and for future generations.

Judy thanked Jerry for his presentation and moved on to the MASS DOT letter, recommended by Maureen Mullaney, Transportation and GIS Program Manager for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Judy told the committee that she had drafted a letter for the Selectboard to District 2 DOT's Patrick Paul, that introduces our committee's members, and invites him to meet with us. The letter also pledges to bring the general public into the discussion. Judy will e-mail her draft to all committee members for suggestions, amendments, etc. Do not send your suggested changes to any other member of the committee, but to our Chair Judy only, as a general e-mail would violate the Open Meeting Law.

Judy next moved to her agenda item "Meeting Process". Judy stated that with true consensus, one person can bring the meeting to a complete stop. What Judy suggests is a modified process, with an up or down vote called for when pressure or challenges build up that can slow progress. Judy researched Roberts Rules of Order and found that was not required of us. The Committee agreed on Judy's modified consensus process model.

This Secretary asked about the point in the meeting when the public would be allowed to provide input. Jerry answered this with the statement that the public is welcomed to attend, but there is no freedom to speak unless recognized by the Chair, and at the beginning of the meeting usually.

Judy then moved to the April 8th "State of our Town" Spaghetti Dinner produced and hosted by the NES PTO on April 8th at Northfield Elementary School, where organizations in Town will have an opportunity to explain their missions. Judy asked the Committee who will represent the group. Since some of our membership will be out of town and still others may be representing other organizations, Judy, Barbara and Laura volunteered to attend the dinner and speak for the committee. Barbara stated that a possible hand out for the April supper will be the "Schell Memorial Bridge – A Strategic Plan". Judy will gather materials for the April 8th presentation.

Judy asked the committee to focus on the last agenda item –scheduling the next meeting. Barbara suggested that we should have something to meet about, and that the meeting topic should be the engineering consultants coming in the Spring. Sue Ross asked whether we (The Advisory Committee) would be the people speaking directly to the MASS DOT for the Town. Barbara answered that it was her understanding, but that she would get clarification. At any rate, she said that we should always keep the select board informed. Jerry stated that he understood that we were to serve as the interface with the community.

Judy agreed that the Select board must be informed on all the activities of the "Advisory" committee. She then went on to suggest April 12th at 7p.m. at the Library (TBD). While a poll revealed that all the members could not attend- April 12th we will still have a majority of members to conduct business.

Judy adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Steve Stoia, Secretary/Clerk