

Minutes of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Bradford M. Field Library

November 3, 2022 meeting

Present: Richard Nathhorst, chair, Maureen Ippolito, Silas Ball, Ann Ferguson, Kari Ridge, Van and Kathy Stoddard, Judy Todd, Ann Schuyler

Absent: Andy Vlock, Don and Sara Robinson

Visiting: Pat Duffy

Richard has some good news. The SB has voted to allow us to go out to bid and get a licensed surveyor to do a land survey on the 1 Shutesbury Road property. That is going to include making a single description of the property, a plot plan, a topographic map of it, putting on the DEP wetlands Title 5 boundaries, and installing pins.

Richard: We have two sets of minutes to approve. I think everyone has seen the minutes. Are there any corrections or anything noted?

Ann F—I move that we approve the minutes.

Motion was seconded and approved.

Pat—Richard said that the map of where Mass DEP says the wetlands are would be overlaid with the survey. Pins will be put in. The proper description of the land will be written up. This will bring the land survey up to specifications. It's a good thing. It will take a little while.

Ann F—I have a proposal for future minutes. I think it's great that we are doing recordings, but if there are any questions, can we create a Goggle doc where basically the minutes and then we can share the document and then any recommendations that people have can go into recommendations and we won't have any long discussions. Discussions can be done in the Google doc. Ann wants to move that.

It was seconded and approved.

Maureen—is this ok with Judy?

Judy: I am not real familiar with Google docs, but I've used them at work and I'll figure it out.

Richard—We made the announcement about the survey and there is not much more we can say about it until we get the surveyor out there and working. Now that we know the survey will be done we can move to other business. I know that Ann, you've have been working on some ideas about public forums. I don't know if you are ready to report on that?

Ann F: I can report that after we agreed in the previous meeting for a two series set of forums after we have the facts, that we should reach out to Oran Kaufman who has experience as a mediator to see if he would agree to facilitate these forums. Oran Kaufman has agreed that he would run the forum pro-bono. He wants to attend these meetings. He wants to make clear what the rules are so as to have a civil discussion and to make sure that we solicit public participation. So, my proposal is that we invite Oran to the November 17th to discuss the roles of these two forums. Not their dates, but just how we would like them to go.

Richard—talking about next meeting, I have arranged with the town clerk as far as the official notice of the meeting can now be posted myself and that will get us out of the problems we had with both Margie and Lisa being out of the office and the meeting not getting posted in a timely fashion. He will do this going forward.

Maureen—If Oran is going to come to the next meeting should we discuss now about how we want them to go should we discuss now how it would go so we don't have to discuss while he is there?

Ann F: We can certainly talk about that so we have some agreement before he comes. I think he will be giving us his proposal as to how the meeting should go. I thought we'd already agreed that the first one would be giving the facts of what we have learned. Report on the land survey and the possibility of moving the building. The second meeting would be more of an opinion discussion of what the town would like to see the building used for. Basically, divide the tasks on that and figure out with Oran what is a reasonable ~~what~~ way to do this so as to have a good discussion.

Maureen: So, he's helping us how to figure out how to do the forum?

Ann F.: Yes, he doesn't have an agenda himself. He just wants to get an agreement with us about how they will go and what the rules are. As a committee, as the time gets closer, we need to figure out how we will disseminate the information, set a date, but that is all down the road.

Maureen: OK.

Ann S.: We've talked about the forum. We need to talk about timing and get clarity on what he thinks about the timing in terms where in the process each of these should be.

Kari: Richard do you have any sense of when we might get some of the information, once we send it out to bit, from the surveyor?

Richard: I don't think it will take a long time to do this survey, it's only an acre and a half of land. I'm not expecting that the survey itself will be a time-consuming process. This got passed at the SB meeting on Tuesday after the special town meeting. I talked with Margie via email, unfortunately she is out ill this week. She is not in the office and getting it started this week but

she says this will be a priority when she returns. This isn't a tremendously expensive process. It can be the simplest shortest bit and we should get responses back quickly. I'm hoping we can have the information in early December, if we are lucky. We have to allow them some time to process it and prepare the documents and the deed registered. Do you agree with that Van??

Van: Yes, the next few steps will be fairly crucial. The wetlands agent, ConComm and the BOHA.

Richard: One of the things we can do as soon as we have the survey, we can present it to the BOH and the ConComm for them to give us their opinions to see if we need to do some additional work or not.

Ann F: So, after the survey, we need to get a wetlands agent to look at and have the BOH and the ConComm have meetings on it and we'll have to fit into their meeting schedules.

Richard: I haven't really been able to determine whether they will do something formal on this or whether they will simply look at it and give us an opinion on it. We have to have the survey before we can determine what they will require.

Pat: I was thinking about that too. I just got a notice that the ConComm will be meeting on Monday and they meet once a month. The next meeting will be in December and I think it would be a good idea to just get on their agenda for the December meeting. You can always withdraw. We can talk about the needs of this committee and at least be on there to have this be timely rather than wait for the survey.

Richard: We can do that. One of the things that I don't think we want to start to do is hire a wetlands agent or do anything else until we actually have the survey in hand. It may go in front of ConComm and BOH and they may say 'you can't do this'. We'd be throwing money away to hire another consultant.

Pat: We have a DEP agent employed by our town. We should get them on board with the process. It does take the ConComm to get to these projects. Maybe it's slower in the winter. I'm just suggesting that we get on their agenda.

Van: I would agree with that.

Richard: Yeah, we can do that.

Ann F: Going along with this time discussion. So, assuming that we have the survey and let's assume for the moment, in fact, that the survey indicates that there can be further action on the site, a possible septic and a possible well. What kind of timeframe is it to get that work done?

Van: It's not necessarily a matter of what the project is, often times it's a matter of scheduling and weather. Considering the time of year we are going into.

Richard: I don't think that we can't plan very effectively until we can get the survey in hand. That's why I'm so pleased that we got fast approval from the both CPA and the SB. That is very timely and it's moving along. We are still on track for being able to have this all wrapped up for spring town meeting.

Van: I think that is our goal and I think getting too far ahead of ourselves is just wasted energy at this point. What the contractors are up to or what the winter will show, we are on schedule for what we can do, it's a process.

Richard: I agree with that. That is why I'm happy we are moving as fast as we are right now. I think we are moving about as fast as we can.

Van: I hope that cooperation continues.

Richard: I think it will, I think that everybody is in agreement with what needs to be done here. I think that it's just now a matter of the facts being documented.

Ann F.: I have another question about facts, which is what other facts should we be thinking about researching. For example, should we now be thinking if the survey shows not possibility of a well and septic, should we then be considering the cost of the moving and be looking into those?

Richard: I have actually already started that. I have an estimate from New Hampshire Building Movers on relocating the building a mile up the road. Just for moving the building it's \$40,000. It's a very small building and it seems to be very structurally sound. They consider it to be a very simple move. What additional we can do, and this is something Van and I can work on, is getting an estimate for a foundation. We will need to have a foundation if the building gets moved. There will be some survey work and some other work that will have to be done and we can start putting the preliminaries together. I don't think we should go out and spend any money, but we can get some information lined up.

Silas: I think the first preliminary would be securing a parcel of land.

Richard: We have that.

Silas: We can't assume we can just be plopping this wherever we want that is a town land piece of property.

Richard: I agree with that. As far as securing that, I think we can make some initial inquiries on that. I don't think we can do anything more than inquiries at this point.

Kari: I was wondering, in looking at facts, if we could get a list of the current museum's costs. Heat, lighting, liability insurance. Is liability insurance under the town's insurance? I was wondering about all those aspects. Judy, you may know the answer to those and if you don't, I'm not sure who does.

Ann S: I think that is a great idea. I think that someone else might know the answer to that. Has the Leverett Historical Society been paying the heat? Judy, is that right?

Judy: Actually, my mother was paying the heat for years. I believe that Ann Tweedy's family gave \$5,000 for the next few years of expenses for the museum.

Pat: I think the town is paying the insurance. I remember Margie saying that in one meeting, it's under the umbrella of all town buildings and she would know how much went to that specific building.

Kari: That is what I was wondering. Along with that, if the building were moved would it still fall under the town umbrella of liability insurance.

Richard: As long as the town continues to own it and it's on town property, I would say yes.

Judy: Matt Boucher and his group have done some maintenance on the building. Not very much, but they just worked on the sidewalk. Will Stratford had something to do with it too.

Ann F.: When we were at the site, Richard mentioned that it would need to have a paint job and it could be lead paint. That would be costly.

Richard: The paint will need to be tested. I don't believe anyone has tested the paint. Judy, I don't know if you know anything. What I got from Will is that the town hasn't tested it.

Anne S.: Tested it for what, the lead?

Richard: I think it's pretty likely that the exterior paint is going to contain lead, or at least a layer of lead paint. It was built in 1917. It's almost certain there will be lead paint.

Anne S.: It could be that the underlying layer has lead, but the building was repainted, I want to say in 2007 or 2008.

Richard: I looked at it and there are multiple layers of paint and because there is so much moisture in the building, the paint is failing and is coming off and peeling pretty badly.

Anne S.: I don't think it was ever properly repainted, in terms of stripping it down and starting over again.

Richard: I don't think so either.

Anne S.: I think the history is that coats went over trying to fix the immediate problem. Which I think was the same thing with the Town Hall, was it not?

Richard: Yes.

Maureen: What is the concern about lead paint? For the people who are painting it?

Richard: Certainly for anyone working on the building, scraping it or preparing it to be repainted it is an occupation hazard and it would have to be done. If you are going to have children in there or open it to the public, lead paint is an issue. Certainly, based on the condition of the exterior paint, the paint needs work. It will have to be tested. But, I would suggest that it doesn't get painted where it is. If we think there is a possibility of the building getting moved, you could do some remedial work of scraping and removal of siding to allow for it being moved. Then, move it to the new site and address it there. Do you agree with that Van?

Van: I do. Specifically, because of the wetlands.

Richard: Exactly, we really want to limit our liability in getting involved with any contamination of the wetlands. So, moved to the new site and all set up properly it would be a fairly easy job. It's not a huge building, it's not going to be a huge abatement. We can certainly get the testing done and that would be part of any maintenance the building will need both exterior and interior.

Richard: Does anyone know when the heat gets turned on in the building?

Judy: It's on like 55-60 degrees all the time during the winter.

Van: Is there a chance of getting a dehumidifier installed? It was supposed to be installed years ago, but it apparently never happened. At least when I was there I didn't see one.

Judy: No, there isn't one.

Anne S: There is a tiny one downstairs. I'm not sure if it functions. There was one downstairs, I thought.

Richard: I am actually wondering if we ought to heat it a little more than 55 degrees to try to drive out some of the moisture in it.

Van: I think if you did that, because it's an air system and the ductwork is in the basement and the basement would benefit a lot from it and therefore the structure.

Ann F.: Is this something we can decide as a committee that it should be done. Are we recommending to Judy? Your mother and Ann Tweedy are paying for the heat, right?

Judy: Yes.

Van: That's another issue. Personally, I'm not comfortable with that. It's a town building and the town should be paying for it.

Ann F.: That seems unfair.

Richard: I'm inclined to agree with that also. I think one of the things that everyone is in agreement about is that the town should take a little more responsibility for the building. It's partly what this committee is about and I think that is something we can discuss. I've been working with the SB on the new library heating system and trying to get that in order and maybe we can raise the issue of the Field Building heat with them also. See if we can dry the building out and stabilize it a bit. As Van pointed out, the moisture in the building is not doing it any good at all. In September, when we were touring it, there was condensation of the interior basement windows then.

Van: We've been really lucky this year with the lack of rain and the lower water table. It's New England, we are enjoying a beautiful week right now. We all know that is going to change. We are going to pay for this. We need to get the temperature raised a bit. At least raise the thermostat so that the air system, because it is a drying system, as apposed to a hydronic system it will help to condition the building and I think that would be a really good idea.

Ann F.: So procedure, is this something that Richard can say the committee recommends and ask Margie.

Richard: I'm not going to ask Margie, I'm going to ask Tom Hankinson and the rest of the SB to deal with it. Margie doesn't make those kind of calls.

Pat: I think it's ok to start with Margie, that's what we all do. She will then tell you that it has to go before the SB. I always goes through Margie first. Then Margie puts it on the agenda.

Richard: The only reason that I would go before the chair first is to get a sense of whether it was something that he felt should be brought up. I hate to add work to Margie's backlog of work.

Pat: I find her very receptive to these types of things. There are two other SB members. Not that we talk about it. I can tell that Melissa wants to see the best thing happen. It's a reasonable recommendation that the town paying for the heating. This whole thing is about separating conflicts of interest and taking ownership or responsibility for this building.

Richard: I agree, so then what I will do is talk with Margie about getting it onto the next SB meeting agenda.

Silas: Back to the dehumidifier, I've been suggesting that for years and years. It's not the cost or the power bill that is the problem, it's who is going to dump it? Who is going to go there every day and dump it. There isn't a drain, so you can't fix it with a drain. It has to be put on to someone's responsibility list, like the town's building maintenance person.

Pat: Silas, do you think that during the winter it will be less of a problem? I find that my basement collects less in the winter. I don't even run it.

Silas: Yes, much less. Mid-summer is the more important time.

Pat: Maybe now we can just focus on the heating aspect and see what happens in the future and how we can deal with the water.

Silas: It needs it, bottom line, it needs it.

Pat: Definitely, it definitely does, I agree.

Richard: I think with turning the heat on, because it's forced hot air heat, it's going to do a lot to dry it out and it will take awhile because everything is pretty saturated in there but it will work and it should make it a little more comfortable for people who go in there. I don't know how much activity there is in there.

Judy: There are some UMass students going there to digitize the whole collection. I'm not sure if they are still doing that, but I know they are not done.

Anne S.: We are having some labor issues with their schedules and stuff. They definitely are not done.

Richard: Having a little bit more heat and it a little more dryer will make it more comfortable for them too.

Judy: We turn the heat up when we go there.

Richard: Any other issues we want to discuss tonight? Do we think we want to adjourn and meet again in two weeks?

Ann F.: I will invite Oran to come and have that on the agenda.

Richard: Thank everybody very much for showing up tonight. We had a quorum and we are in great shape. I think we are making some progress. We've got this moving in the right direction.

Meeting ended at 8:15.