Selectmen Minutes

Selectmen’s Meeting
91 Sohier Street-Willcutt Commons
Cohasset, MA

Selectmen Present: Kevin McCarthy
Paul Schubert
Diane Kennedy
Keri Thompson
Jack Creighton

Others Present: Christopher Senior, Town Manager
Miriam Johnson, Director of Human Resources

Chairman McCarthy called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll Call Vote: Diane Kennedy-Present, Paul Schubert-Present, Kevin McCarthy-Present, Keri Thompson-Present.

Pledge-Recited.

Public Comment-Greg Hoffman 12 Lamberts Lane stated he happened to be in the area, so he decided to come the meeting. He is interested in being on the Affordable Housing Trust. Mr. Senior advised him to contact the office for information.

FY20 Goals & Objectives-Mid-Year Update-Goal #1-Chairman McCarthy read aloud the goal: Create a plan to achieve & exceed 10%+ affordable housing on an ongoing and sustainable basis consistent with the character of Cohasset. Miriam Johnson reviewed the status of the Housing Production Plan (HPP). Director of Planning Lauren Lind and the Affordable Housing Steering Committee have been working with Alexis Smith of Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). A public forum was held on 10/7/19. The first draft of the HPP was reviewed by the Affordable Housing Steering Committee (AHSC) on 12/10/19, revisions were sent to MAPC the following week. The next steps are for MAPC to make revisions, provide subsequent draft of HPP & create an executive summary. Lauren Lind & a representative from AHSC will attend the Selectmen’s meeting on 1/14/2020 for a status update. In January they will provide a status update to the Planning Board. In February there will be a formal presentation to the Planning Board and Selectmen for approval. It will then be submitted to the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) for approval. The Affordable Housing Trust has five members and have held 5 meetings. Special Town Meeting approved $175,000 to be transferred into the trust. The next steps are to work with counsel to draft a Declaration of Trust. There will be a joint meeting of AHT and AHSC in early 2020 to discuss opportunities to collaborate on HPP goals and strategies. The MAPC has kicked off a new group “South Shore Housing Options Working Group consisting of representatives from Cohasset, Scituate, Duxbury, Norwell & Hingham. They will be exploring housing typologies including townhouses, mixed-use, co-housing, cottage-style development and accessory dwelling units. They will reconvene in early 2020. The Board had a brief discussion.

Goal #2-Chairman McCarthy read aloud the goal. Present a final plan for the renovation and restoration of town hall to town meeting. Mr. Senior stated the Town Hall Building Committee has some new members. They have toured and reviewed the building assessments. The Committee has reviewed updated space assessments including alternative layouts to maximize the first floor, use of the auditorium as a regular meeting venue and clean-up of paper records to minimize long-term storage needs. They have prioritized the records clean-up as an action to be taken immediately. They have reviewed space options for staff/programs during renovation/reconstruction. They have narrowed down the Owners
Project Manager (OPM) and are negotiating with two finalists. The next steps are to work with the OPM to complete review of cost/benefit analysis of renovation of the annex vs. reconstruction. They need to retain a professional design team and engage residents for input on the plans/process. They will assess options for staff relocation. They will meet with community organizers for auditorium use. They will then present to the Selectmen for recommendations on next steps. Chairman McCarthy stated it doesn’t seem as if they process is moving quickly enough. The Board had a brief discussion. Chairman McCarthy advised Mr. Senior he would like to see the following: On February 25, 2020 at the Selectmen’s meeting-The Town Hall Committee and OPM should give the Board a recommendation on the renovation/reconstruction decision and a first cut of the financials including the cost/benefit analysis.

Goal #3-Chairman McCarthy read aloud the goal. Recognize the public health crisis of addiction and substance abuse; the Town will take steps to create and support policies and practices that respond to these issues. Miriam Johnson reviewed things they are currently doing; the police have developed and implemented policies, programs and partnerships, Safe Harbor has developed and implemented multiple programs and events and partnerships, The Board of Health has ongoing programs and responsibilities that are designed to support this goal. They are also working to coordinate efforts with those of the School Department. Mrs. Johnson reviewed the following that has been done or is being done without any additional money; design a program to help seniors remove & discard old or unneeded prescription drugs, design a program to work with real estate professionals to remove prescription drugs before open houses and offer Narcan training and resources for distribution twice a year, open dialogue with the School Committee to integrate programs for the Town and School, offer Mental Health 1st Aid Training to employees and community at large, create a program showing the risks of allowing underage drinking by video taping a forum of professionals to speak to the consequences, develop plan for funding community educational programs, explore ways to develop positive role modeling to change the culture that supports alcohol at events and identify costs of both addiction and programs to address it and develop a plan for a Teen Center to submit to the Selectmen. There is no known space in Town available for a Teen Center. They are currently putting together a plan for assessment by a third party. Mrs. Johnson stated they would like to sustain Safe Harbor beyond its five years of grant funding, establish a Teen Center by 2022, solicit support from pharmacies to assist with the disposal of sharps and continue all programs and events currently offered. Chairman McCarthy stated he’d like to see more of a plan for a teen center. This is a crisis for the Town, and they must have a structure for teens to go to. He doesn’t want to wait for a third-party assessment or wait until 2022. He would like to have this on the 2/18 agenda. He agrees that Safe Harbor should be in the budget going forward. Mr. Senior stated the recreation building near the Red Lion Inn is being used for some programs however, they have also looked at it for Facilities Department. The Board had a lengthy discussion. Mr. Senior will have an update on the Teen Center for the board at the meeting on 2/18/2020.

Goal #4-Chairman McCarthy read aloud the goal: Address implementation of the Harbor Plan, The Open Space & Recreation Plan and Master Plan. Mr. Senior advised the Board the charge was approve by the Selectmen in September. Official appointments are ongoing with the hope to schedule a kick-off meeting this month. They will identify “low hanging fruits” and top priority goals, meet with each identified responsible party to discuss goal/strategy/action and create a new matrix to track progress of goals. The Municipal Harbor Plan draft was completed in November. Coastal Zone Management (CZM) & Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) gave preliminary feedback on Chapter 91 section. Town Counsel Paul DeRensis provided comments on the November draft, excluding Chapter 91 section. Once the feedback is received from the State agencies, he plans to provide further comment. The next steps are approvals from the Harbor Committee, Planning Board and Board of Selectmen. Once that is complete, it is submitted to DEP/CZM for state approval process. The Open Space and Recreation Plan
received conditional approval pending eight items that needed additional information. Town staff and OSRP Committee members have been actively working to gather information necessary to address items. The information will be sent to consultant Beal & Thomas for inclusion in the final revised plan.

Motion by Selectman Schubert to adjourn, seconded by Selectman Kennedy and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin McCarthy, Chairman