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Town of Yarmouth

MEETING MINUTES OF THE DRIVE-IN SITE UTILIZATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF
April 2, 2018

The Yarmouth Drive-In Site Utilization Committee (DISUC) held a Business Meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 2, 2018 in the Ball Room of the Yarmouth Senior Center located at 528 Forest Road, South Yarmouth, MA.

Committee Members Present: Jim Saben, David Reid, Peter Slovak, Rich Bilski, Tom Roche, and Jack McCormack

Committee Members Absent: None

Committee Alternates Present: Dave Helberg and Bud Nugent

Staff: Karen Greene, Director of Community Development; Kathy Williams, Town Planner; Kelly Grant, Conservation Administrator; Michael Barry, Community Development Department; Karl vonHone, Director of Natural Resources, Kelly Carr of BETA; Joseph Freeman of BETA; and Blake Peters of GEI Consultants.

Other Attendees: Please see the attached attendance list for members of the public who were in attendance.

Chairman Jim Saben opened the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

1. **Drive In Site Update:** Karen Greene, Director of Community Development, started a slideshow presentation on the history of the Drive In Site and the options for use or development of the site considered over the years.

Kelly Carr, consultant from BETA, introduced colleagues Blake Peters and Joseph Freeman and reviewed the scope of the current project that includes the Riverwalk and Boardwalk options. She reviewed 3 designs considered for the Riverwalk project and three Boardwalk options, expanding on options for landscaping and park amenities. She noted that the trail loop through the woods was included with the Riverwalk Park cost estimate and is not part of the boardwalk estimate.

Mr. Freeman discussed permitting requirements for the Riverwalk project and the Boardwalk options.

Kathy Williams, Town Planner, discussed the applicability of Article 97 to the drive-in site, noting the long-term implications regarding use and ownership of the site. Ms. Williams also described possible sources of funding including Community Preservation Act and Tourism funds, along with possible grant funding opportunities from outside the town. She gave an overview of the estimated annual maintenance costs for the Riverwalk Park along with possible revenue sources.

Ms. Greene addressed possible interim uses of the site, including concerts, fairs, and farmers markets as well as the potential need for physical improvements to the property for these uses. The Town will be seeking cost estimates in the near future.

Ms. Carr provided detail on the 3 Boardwalk options, showing design drawings of the layout of each option. Mr. Peters addressed the construction cost estimates of each option, comparing the cost of using Brazilian hard wood versus southern yellow pine. While hardwood would cost more initially, it lasts roughly 20 years; whereas pine lasts roughly 10 years. He also reviewed annual routine maintenance costs for the Boardwalk options.

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2. **Public Comment:** After the conclusion of the slideshow presentation, Chairman Saben invited questions and comments from the Committee and members of the public.
- a. Committee Member Tom Roche asked about the expected lifespan of Brazilian hardwood versus southern yellow pine, to which he was informed that the Brazilian hardwood had a life expectancy of 20 years vs. 10 years for the pine for normal wear and tear, not including catastrophic weather events.
 - b. Committee Chairman Saben asked about the possible cost savings from not including the bridge over the entrance to Lewis Pond and was told that the bridge cost is \$240,000-295,000.
 - c. Rick Pomroy of Barkentine Circle asked about the project's timeline, goals, and next steps noting there is concern amongst the Gateway Isles community that there is something going before the Annual Town Meeting regarding the project. Ms. Greene responded that the Committee will next meet on April 11th to prepare their report/recommendation to the Board of Selectmen (BOS). The BOS will consider the report, which could take some time and the outcome is uncertain. Any request for money must come before residents for a town meeting vote. With the exception of the article petitioned by the Gateway Isles Association, there is no vote scheduled on this project at the upcoming May 5, 2018 Town Meeting. Interim uses for the site can move ahead through requests for use of town land and required permitting. Mr. Pomroy noted that better information on the depth of the peat and thus the depth of pilings for the boardwalk were needed to better assess costs.
 - d. Susan Brita of West Yarmouth suggested the need for a better defined budget for the project. She also asked how does the project fit into the Town's plans for Route 28 development and a potential bike spur to the site, suggesting a need for a slower approach that would incorporate the Drive-In Site with overall development of the Town. She also suggested that maintenance could be funded through a voluntary donation by motel visitors as is done in New York City for the High-line Park
 - e. Paul Deignon of Baldwin Lane noted that he was pleased to see progress on developing the site for public use. He thought the plans offered a nice venue for the public, would make the Town more competitive from a tourism perspective, and especially liked the educational dimension of the plans.
 - f. Mary Vilbon, a local resident and Director of the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce and member of the Community and Economic Development Committee, noted that the Chamber sees the current plans for the Drive-In Site as a great investment for the Town and envisions the eventual creation of a downtown area in this locale. She noted that she is proud the Yarmouth is investing in its own property.
 - g. David Helberg, of the neighboring Gateway Isles Association, noted that the association wants something done to the site but also wants to be sure that the site's fragile environment is protected and preserved and that the site does not invite greater crime and drugs in the area. He expressed concern at the cost of the project at a time when the town has other competing costs including clean water and school infrastructure and operating costs. Mr. Helberg further noted that no one is NOT in favor of doing something with the Drive in Site. Rather, the Boardwalk was a "bone of contention" from both an environmental and financial point of view. In response, Mr. Saben noted that the Committee shares the neighborhood concerns and that the Committee has worked to address these concerns, further noting that funding sources that have been identified are not eligible to be used for other purposes such as clean water or schools.
 - h. Lee Britton of Highland Ave in South Yarmouth asked questions about the Packet Landing project as a possible parallel to the Drive-In Site project. He asked what funding went into Packet Landing and was told that Community Preservation Act and Tourism funds were the main sources of funding. He also asked why it took so long for

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Packet Landing to be completed and was provided a history of the various project options proposed and the fact that some were rejected, which led to time delays. It was also explained that once a final design was approved, construction went fairly quickly and now Yarmouth has a high-quality gateway from Dennis into Yarmouth.

- i. Paul Huggins of Squirrel Run expressed confidence that Town residents would not vote for a project that the Town could not afford. He asked if the property could be sold for commercial use and was told that this is not a possibility without pursuing Article 97 Disposition to change the Recreation Restriction on the property, which would take a town meeting vote and a 2/3 vote of the State Legislature. He suggested that the Town move to clean up the property for interim uses.
- j. Brian Koebel of Swordfish Drive and President of the Gateway Isles Association asked for a recounting of how the Town took the property in 1985 for Recreational Purposes vs. Recreation and Conservation Purposes as shown in the Town Meeting Warrant of that year. Ms. Greene provided a response confirming that the Town Meeting vote was to instruct the BOS to take the property for Recreation and/or Conservation Purposes, but that when the BOS filed the Taking, it did so for Recreation Purposes only.
- k. Yarmouth Police Chief Frank Fredrickson noted that he has been on the police force since 1977 and has seen the Drive-In Site sit idle since 1985. He described the site as a "gem" for the Town and that he'd like to see the boardwalk go across the marsh to Seagull Beach. Chief Frederickson further noted that the project had the potential to create a "special destination" like the boardwalk at Bass Hole in Yarmouth Port.
- l. Tom Nickinello, President of the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce, noted that the Drive-In Site could be a great destination for the Town. He noted that the recent Yarmouth Irish Festival that used the site brought thousands to Yarmouth. He would like to see the Town come up with some site cleanup cost estimates soon so that more interim uses can occur. He encourages the site to be used noting that the people who are in Yarmouth need to be entertained.
- m. Tom Somadelis of Gulls Cove Road in West Yarmouth thought the idea of a Riverwalk sounded good but had misgivings about a boardwalk because of the high potential for trash in the marsh and harm to the marsh. Mr. Huggins noted that trash is not the issue and that there is always trash at this time of year.
- n. Rick Pomroy expressed concern about a bridge over the entrance to Lewis Pond as a potential danger to boaters given the fast tidal flows. He also noted that there are not a lot of people in opposition to the Park noting that opposition is to the Boardwalk. Mr. Pomroy also noted that of the Boardwalk options, the spurred option is most viable and that opposition is focused on crossing of the marsh and the inlet to Lewis Pond
- o. Mr. Saben thanked all the speakers for their comments and invited written comments from the public to be emailed to Karen Greene, Director of Community Development, noting that comments received by Friday, 6 April 2018 would be included with previously received comments for the record.

3. Upcoming Schedule:

The Committee will meet next on Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 5pm either in Room A or the Hearing Room at Town Hall. This will be a working meeting and no more public comment will be taken at the April 11th meeting.

The Committee plans to deliver their recommendations on use of the Drive-In Site to the Board of Selectmen on April 24, 2018.

4. Minutes:

VOTE: On a motion by Tom Roche, seconded by Peter Slovak, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the minutes as presented for the meeting on February 13, 2018.

On 4/11/18, on a motion by Jack McCormack, seconded by Tom Roche, the committee voted 5-0 to approve the minutes.

VOTE: On a motion by Jack McCormack, seconded by Tom Roche, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the amended minutes as presented for the meeting on January 24, 2018

6. Adjournment: VOTE: On a motion by Tom Roche, seconded by David Reid, the Committee voted unanimously (6-0) to adjourn at 7:30 PM.

ATTACHMENTS:

- February 13, 2018 Agenda
- Paper copies of April 2, 2018 Power Point Presentation.