

March 8, 2021

Special committee meeting

Present: Robert, Scott, Nathalie, Kathy ED, Kathy Newton, Tim Angevine, Elizabeth; online: Josh Tanner

Regrets: none; all present

Agenda item: proposal from BoS to change mission of committee

Called to order at 7:06 by Robert

Statement from Rob: this is to gain clarity on statements made at the Board of Selectmen (BoS) meeting, request questions and responses, as well as to listen to audio of the BoS meetings when proposal put forward

(audio played by Colleen): Tim: form a committee for the Wasley farm, town purchased the property some time ago, it's been two years since anyone was up there (at the time of the meeting this recording is from), would like to form a committee to research and communicate with the town, gathering information and input on possible uses for the property from the town. Primary consideration of BoS to consider a tenant to caretake for the house, and would be good to have a committee to listen to ways to continue to use the property. There is currently a farmer haying the property, but uses should be discussed in a larger consideration, open to other farmers to bid on other uses of the farm. Sought suggestions from other selectmen to make a committee, Craig wanted to include Rob, mentioned that renting the house needs to be considered potentially by town vote, must check ordinance. Tim indicated having looked that up (renting ordinance), but returning to committee formation, moved to create a committee to gather info regarding uses of and to make recommendations to BoS for uses of Wasley farm. Craig seconded, all three voted to approve: Alex asked if timeline for formation etc makes sense: Tim suggested formation could be undertaken within a month, suggested each selectmen suggest members and open to further suggestions; Tim indicated willingness to hear more, suggested at least 6 people for committee; no further discussion, unanimous approval with no abstentions

May 5: Tim nominates Kathy Newton and Nathalie Broadhead for committee to make suggestions for uses; Craig seeking to add Scott Parkhouse, Rob Delayo, Elizabeth Chandler, and Josh Tanner; Alex had no additional nominations; Tim also mentioned Kathy Engle-Dulac as potential if comfortable with an additional member; Craig comfortable with committee of seven (and moved such); Alex seconded; Alex mentions use of committee as advisory group and that number of members can shift as needed; any recommendations would have to go back to BoS anyway as committee has no decision making power. Unanimous for all seven members for committee.

Robert: committee is intended to research, communicate to BoS a study; this is an advisory group with no decision-making authorities. (Read mission statement) motion from 4/16 BoS: (read in total from agenda: "that the committee make a comprehensive list of the Town assets, the pros and cons of keeping or selling the Wasley property and then a questionnaire for the Town residents to add and give their say. This information is to be returned to the Board of Selectmen for review and that not a dime be spent on any letters, postcards or other material until this has been completed and the Board of Selectmen table this matter until this work has been completed by the Wasley Committee")

Robert's questions:

1. Have you reviewed the content of the survey prepared by committee: Alex and Craig: yes
2. Does this motion mean nonapproval of this survey: Alex yes but while survey describes property and history and nothing needs taken out, could add to it to avoid steering respondents as it fails to address options raised in the past; Craig says towns folks may not know about existence of property; he has concerns regarding a failure to inform new residents of what exists; failing to mention other options like solar farms, etc but need to include what is in town already

Elizabeth: agrees with some of the concerns raised about residents knowing what town has however, the scope of what is being described tonight far exceeds what is being asked of the committee at this point; as a member of the committee, what is being requested is very big; if this committee is being charged with conducting a needs assessment of the whole town, should this be a subcommittee of the P&Z (which is currently looking at implementation of the Plan of Conservation and Development {PC&D})? we have looked at what assets exist at the property, and while these are things town residents want, we have not had the expectation of conducting a needs assessment in the scope of this committee. Should we be looking for a property use consultant to get recommendations? Knows that Craig knows Jocelyn really well from NWCROG; what is being asked of us merits that level of expertise and advice

Craig: Jocelyn got grants for housing and pop up hubs, so hiring someone to do this would cost; believes that people who've been here for a while could make a list within a half an hour.

Kathy ED: uses discussed at town meeting when the property was transferred; basis of survey in town responses at meeting when property was transferred, includes need to consider the Wasleys' intention in selling the property to the town

Alex: this is a volunteer committee with no established intention to hire a consultant; gathering an assessment list; seeking nothing more than a surface-level list of assets in town

Kathy Newton: surprised to find that BoS does not have an idea of what assets of the town are. Also raises concern regarding what Wasleys saw as potential uses for that land: buying that property does look to the future of what this town has and can use. Sold property for 800k rather than the 1.3 mil it was assessed at. We have been working on this since May, and this is the

first we have heard from Craig and Alex, and to hear about potential sales of this property at this time raises concerns about transparency of process for this property and how decisions are made in town. Survey is intended to be an initial effort to get conversation open, and is fairly open-ended to encourage conversation. States: “we did not vote ten years ago to purchase the property, watch the value increase, and then sell it.”

Tim: the town owns several properties and there has never been a town survey to ask if we should sell any of them.

Craig: the decision is not going to be made by the BoS or the committee, but town vote. The BoS will develop a list of assets and give it to the committee

Nathalie: people don't know about Wasley property: there isn't even a sign, so it seems hidden, almost intentionally, and it is up to selectmen to make newcomers aware of these things! The survey contains options viable for the property, town residents have indicated that they want the property to be kept for town resident use in a previous vote and options from POC&D. Option for alternative uses of the property can and should come from residents.

Alex: If BoS provides a list of assets it can at least start the conversation; would the committee then pass this list on to town residents?

Kathy ED: What defines an asset? Options on the survey come from the POC&D from 2019, which came from town residents, AND Scott raised the article from the town vote at time of purchase for the basis of survey responses.

Round table: do we have enough info to get our next meeting under way on Thursday?

Elizabeth: are we supposed to just do what the BoS tells us to do?

Kathy Newton: we aren't on the same page, we have developed a survey that contains the original purpose as well as items from the POC&D, and this was always intended to be a first approach, so getting the survey out is initiating the education Craig is seeking. Leaving it open at the end allows for further conversation, while options were included from established sources (vote and PCO&D)

Nathalie: we need to get moving, and get the ideas in from the town residents. If the committee makes modifications will BoS consider approving it?

Scott: passes back to Tim

Tim: committee seems comfortable and confident in the survey, suggests that the BoS compromise to allow survey out to town; add BoS information to second round of communication; moves that Wasley farm committee be permitted to continue with their existing survey and, once approved by committee and then to be presented to BoS, presented it to the town for information collecting. Seconded by Alex, concerns re: level of respect for the committee and does not want to present her approach to this as disrespectful. Made motion to

move to question, second by Alex; unanimous approval; motion on floor for vote; approved by Tim and Alex, nay from Craig. Alex asks the committee to consider making modifications to clarify that this is a first attempt at collecting information.

Kathy Newton moves to adjourn, Elizabeth seconds, adjourned at 8:26, unanimous approval

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