

EASTHAMPTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RE-USE COMMITTEE
50 Payson Avenue, Easthampton, MA 01027



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Chair: Joe McCoy (JM)

Board Members:

X	LJ Clark (LC)	X	Pamela Means (PM)	X	Chris Korczak (CK)
X	Brad Riley (BR)		Patrick Brough		Tracey Harris

Absent: JM, TH, PB

Recording Clerk: Zoe Ingram

City Planner: Jeff Bagg (JB)

Consultant: Emily Innes (EI)

Guests: *Attendance taken through live Zoom meeting.*

- None.

1. Call to Order: 6:00pm
2. Minutes

- None.

3. Welcome & Introductions

LJ Clark

- Resident of Easthampton for several years.
- Has a background in marketing and enjoys consuming the culture in town.

Pamela Means

- Lives in Easthampton, she is currently a renter. Involved with Luthier's Coop.
- She had interest in serving on a committee.

Chris Korczak

- Has worked on Downtown Strategic Planning and has been in town for about 8 years. Has served on other city committees as well.

Brad Riley

- Resident of Easthampton for 10 years and has seen economic/cultural growth.
- Serves on Affordable and Fair Housing Partnership in town.

Mayor Nicole LaChapelle

- Gives overview of how she chose this group, and it was based on range of experience. Points out that most of the group thinks about housing and affordability.
- RFP recommendation will be presented to City Council.

JB gives brief introduction of absent members.

- PB served on both the Council on Aging and the School Building Committee.
- JM was formerly Easthampton's City Council president.
- TH serves on the Historical Commission.

4. Introductory presentation/information on role of Committee

- EI shares an introductory presentation.
 - One charge of the group is to fulfill objectives of Downtown Strategic Plan.
 - The group will be looking at redevelopment options for the three elementary schools.
 - Public Input weighed into this process, conversations on what the public wanted to see.
 - Group will need to look at what uses could go where, which uses to prioritize.
 - Committee goal is to develop the Request for Proposals.
 - Get to decide if it should be for all three schools or the schools individually.
- EI goes over homework materials for the next meeting on October 13th.
 - Members should review Chapter 5 of the Downtown Strategic Plan
 - Board members should also review the draft white paper on precedents which includes a review of process
 - Board members should also look at pages 57-63 of Strategic plan and the criteria on pages 7-13 of the white paper
 - October 13th the Board will begin discussing this initial criterion.
 - The board will also look at if the weightings still make sense. Board will review if there are any changes following the completion of the Strategic Plan.

5. Review of One Stop for Growth grant

- JB shares information on the One Stop for Growth grant application. The state asks cities to look at zoning and gather community support/opinion for plans.
 - Due diligence is also required by the state for the application.
 - Environmental assessment of the buildings will take place over the next few months to identify possible hazardous materials such as asbestos. This grant would help the city pay for this assessment.
 - Architectural assessments - Maple has been done, but they do not know Center and Pepin's status. Assessments will provide baseline information.

- Survey of properties, what are the boundaries? Where are the buildings/playgrounds?
- Developers will need all this information.

6. Review of Valley CDC technical assistance

- CPA funds used to evaluate what tax credits would be available to developers.
- Valley CDC will help run numbers based on building size and site size.
- All information will be on the city website for City Council and the public to review, as well as future developers.

Questions/Comments from Committee Members:

- LC shares initial thoughts that affordable housing is important and did not realize it was such a huge portion.
 - EI mentioned how the city Procurement Officer, Michael Owens, will help with the technical aspects of the RFP.
- BR has done RFP for an outside organization to do work on behalf of the story. This one seems more complex than one he has worked on in the past, so he would like resources to better understand the process.
 - EI will look for additional resources and talk to other communities. The white paper sent to members does include recent RFPs for the disposition of schools. The City Attorney will also look it over.
- JB clarifies the white paper from EI is helpful as the disposition of schools is a fairly common practice.

7. Public Speak

- JB clarifies this will come at the end of meetings in case members of the public want to ask questions.
- Information will be put out in the future, but the meetings will be a lot of work sessions.
- A product will be reviewed at City Council meeting in the future during at least 2 meetings.
- CK clarifies that data has been collected from the public at previous meetings.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 6:00 pm