



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
READING, MA.
2023 MAY 31 AM 7:49

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Symonds Way Exploratory Committee

Date: 2023-03-29

Time: 6:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Carlo Bacci, Vice Chair Chuck Robinson, Angela Binda, Heather Clish (remote 7:34 pm), Andrew Dribin (remote), Karen Janowski, Nancy Twomey

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Business Administrator Jayne Wellman, John Halsey, Carl McFadden, Ed Ross, Judith Coltman, Michael Coltman, Eric Boemer (remote)

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jacquelyn LaVerde

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting was held in-person in the Select Board Meeting Room of Town Hall, and remotely via Zoom.

Chair Carlo Bacci called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Angela Binda noted that the Committee needs to identify the next steps, determine what the deliverable is, and how the Committee should go about it. If the Committee is going to talk about the property adjacent to the parcel specified in the charge, the Select Board will need to revise the charge. She explained that she had a recent conversation with a resident who presented her with a rendering of pickleball courts in an area of land that is currently leased by the Burbank Ice Arena, and expressed concern that the rendering, done by the architect, was not shared with the SWEC, but was shared with the public.

Presentation from Jayne Wellman on Town Wide Community Survey, including a discussion on results and next steps:

Business Administrator Jayne Wellman presented the results of the Symonds Way Community Survey based on 1,588 responses. There were some additional responses following the report, with a total of 1,601 responses at the time of the meeting.

The top priorities for improving quality of life in Reading were recreation and open space. The top rankings in the proposed project list were outdoor athletic fields, a recreation center, and conservation land/parks/green spaces. A majority of respondents found it somewhat to very important to develop the land.

There was a general agreement across top choices across all age groups. Recreation and open space were the top priorities across all age groups, with a recreation center high among younger age groups, and a community center higher among older residents.

Open responses emphasized a desire for an additional ice rink and pickleball.

Presentation and Discussion on Architect's Feedback on Additional Options for Symonds Way:

Town Manager Fidel Maltez reviewed various drawings of outdoor recreation spaces prepared by Weston & Sampson. Features of the different scenarios include: playgrounds, multi-use courts, shuffleboard, pickleball, basketball courts, space for fitness equipment, skate park, youth lacrosse field, splash park, dog park, and various parking options. There were no cost estimates associated with the drawings, just possible uses of the space.

The Committee discussed at length issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to gauge interest and possibilities for the site, establishing criteria to evaluate projects, and recharging the charge of the Committee to include surrounding land.

John Halsey of Beaver Road stated that the Town owns adjacent acreage and suggested that the Committee expand the scope and consider the area holistically.

Eric Boemer of 276 Woburn Street stated that his daughter is on the High School swim team, and there were issues this past fall with pool time at the Burbank YMCA. He advocated for a public-private partnership to develop a center with a pool with dedicated swim team pool time.

Carl McFadden, representative from the Burbank Ice Arena, stated that no one will bid on the land because it is unknown if it is contaminated, and suggested that the uses of the space generate money, such as field and court rentals.

On a motion by Chuck Robinson, seconded by Karen Janowski, the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee voted 6-0-0 to instruct the Town Manager to prepare a Request for Information (RFI) for the Symonds Way property.

Roll call vote: Andrew Dribin – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Angela Binda – Yes, Karen Janowski – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes.

Review SWEC charge from Select Board & Future Agenda Items:

Heather Clish joined the meeting at 7:34 pm.

The Committee discussed identifying what types of grants might be available for development of the land, unknown costs of cleaning up the land, and conducting an environmental assessment and wetland analysis of the surrounding town-owned land. The consensus of the Committee was to reassess the charge of the Committee to include the other town-owned parcels on Symonds Way.

On a motion by Chuck Robinson, seconded by Karen Janowski, the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee voted 6-1-0 to instruct the Chair to revisit the charge of SWEC with the Select Board to expand the scope of the land area.

Roll call vote: Andrew Dribin – Yes, Heather Clish – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Angela Binda – No, Karen Janowski – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes.

Approval of Past Minutes:

On a motion by Chuck Robinson, and seconded by Angela Binda, the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee voted 6-0-1 to approve the January 18, 2023 meeting minutes.

Roll call vote: Andrew Dribin – Yes, Heather Clish – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Angela Binda – Yes, Karen Janowski – Abstain, Carlo Bacci – Yes.

On a motion by Chuck Robinson, and seconded by Karen Janowski, the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee voted 7-0-0 to approve the February 15, 2023 meeting minutes.

Roll call vote: Andrew Dribin – Yes, Heather Clish – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Angela Binda – Yes, Karen Janowski – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes.

On a motion by Angela Binda, and seconded by Chuck Robinson, the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee voted 7-0-0 to adjourn at 7:51 pm.

Roll call vote: Andrew Dribin – Yes, Heather Clish – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Angela Binda – Yes, Karen Janowski – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes.