

**Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
10/18/2016**

In attendance: Committee Members Anderson, Baltera, Belyea, Coughlin, Curley, Hancock, Haskell, Kelley, Kutsch, LaCroix, Sharkansky, Smallwood, Strehle, and Taylor and Town Accountant Nickerson.

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

*Questions from the public on items not on the agenda:* None

*Approval of Minutes*

Members approved the October 4, 2016 minutes with revisions on a 12-0 vote. Strehle was not present for this vote.

*40B Process information gathering and discussion regarding the potential Special Town Meeting*

Assistant Town Administrator Tom Mayo presented additional information on the 40B process including Hingham's current 40B status, pending/potential 40B projects, options, and next steps. Senior Planner Emily Wentworth and Town Real Estate Counsel Susan Murphy assisted in responding to questions.

Under Chapter 40B, if less than 10% of a community's housing is affordable, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is limited in its ability to enforce local regulations. The State and Town disagree about whether Hingham has met the 10% threshold because of a dispute related to counting Linden Ponds' units. Hingham would need to add 105 units by May 2017 to reach the uncontested State number. Development of 2 Beal Street (Selectmen's Parcel) as an approximately 100-unit rental 40B has the potential to reach the target number before the deadline.

With recent approval of 190 affordable units for the Building 19 site, the Town is in a safe harbor until May 17, 2017. During the safe harbor, the ZBA may deny a permit or impose conditions on 40B projects, as consistent with local needs.

AdCom members inquired about creation of a Housing Production Plan (HPP) as an alternative approach for creating affordable housing in a more comprehensive manner while also attaining a safe harbor. The State must approve a community's HPP and the community must permit specified percentages of affordable units before a safe harbor is granted. It seems unlikely Hingham could accomplish all these actions by May 2017. Taylor observed that a HPP may serve the Town in the long run but this approach does not appear to be a viable option for extending the current safe harbor.

If the safe harbor expires without Hingham meeting the uncontested 10%, the ZBA would again be limited in its ability to enforce local regulations. As it has in the past, Hingham could make the policy decision to litigate future 40B projects. Even after a community meets the 10% threshold, any proposed 40B projects in the pipeline (unless precluded by a safe harbor) would proceed under 40B regulations. AdCom members perceived a risk that developers, sensing the Town is close to reaching the 10% target, could propose a number of 40B projects, all of which could continue in the pipeline if the safe haven expires.

AdCom HAHT Subcommittee members Kutsch, Anderson, and Strehle reported on their research into Town service impacts from a 100-unit rental development at 2 Beal Street. These potential impacts can only be conceptual without the details of a specific project.

Any project would negotiate provision of water and sewer services with Aquarion and the Sewer Commission. While both systems are nearing capacity, proponents could receive approval from both providers, perhaps conditioned on some mitigation. The Bare Cove Park Committee has concerns

about environmental impacts but needs project siting specifics.

School officials cannot accurately project likely numbers of students without information on any project's number of bedrooms. However, they estimate a range of 16-20 students from 100 rental units based on recent projects. Fire Department concerns focus on any building's height, construction materials, access around buildings' perimeters, adequate staffing as calls increase, and traffic in the Fort Hill Street area. The Police Department expressed concern about downstream traffic impacts on already congested intersections and Hingham Square. Police respond to more calls in the north and south ends of Town than in the middle.

Sharkansky observed that whatever project happens would affect Town services. Perhaps the Town should choose the project that seems best under the circumstances, rather than taking whatever the 40B process hands the community.

Several audience members speaking in opposition to a 100-unit rental project at 2 Beal Street cited significant traffic concerns, with congestion peaking on the train and boat schedules. They cited inadequate resident notice of the project resulting in limited public discussion. Some speakers objected to what they see as a rushed schedule, leaving the Town insufficient time to adequately vet the project's potential impacts. They also cited the number of challenging developments clustering in this part of Town.

A project advocate underscored the importance of reaching the 10% uncontested number. Rather than have the floodgates of 40B projects open next May, Hingham should seize this opportunity to get control of its development again.

Taylor noted that if the Selectmen call a Special Town Meeting, the Advisory Committee will hear any Warrant Article on November 1, with an AdCom vote tentatively scheduled for November 7.

#### *Presentation from Linda Harper, Library Director*

Library Trustees Chair David Mehegan and Director Harper briefed AdCom on the Library's pursuit of a State grant that could cover up to 50% of eligible construction costs for renovation, expansion, or new construction. The Library's capital improvement needs include Children's Room layout/security, meeting spaces, parking, electrical/internet connections, energy efficiency, septic system, and spaces for both individual and collaborative work.

The State last offered this grant program in 2010. The Trustees felt it important to apply now since there is no indication when the State may offer the grant program again. Successful applicants could receive grants in July 2017 or be wait-listed until additional State funding becomes available.

Using \$74,000 from its endowment, the Library has hired architects experienced with both library design and this grant program to assist with the process. The grant application, due in January 2017, requires a schematic design, cost analysis, site plan, survey, and a statement of need. Opportunities for public input include an October 27 workshop and a January 2017 public project presentation.

The Trustees anticipate seeking 2017 Town Meeting support for the grant application and schematic design. No Town financial commitment is required to apply for this grant. If Hingham's application is successful, the Town would then have up to 6 months to secure Town Meeting approval of local funding to supplement the grant. Depending on the timing of the grant, a Special Town Meeting might be needed to secure timely approval of local funding. If a community chooses not to approve local funding, the grant monies go to the next library on the waitlist.

#### *Review of the 5 Year Financial Forecast*

Taylor reported that Municipal and School departments are developing level services budgets for FY18,

along with an overview of potential impacts on services and resources should it become necessary for the Town to move to level-funded budgets.

The 10/12/2016 Five Year Forecast includes a noteworthy \$1.7 million shortfall. On the revenue side, new growth and State aid are projected to remain relatively flat. Current forecast assumptions include \$500,000 in unused levy capacity and \$2.3 million for capital outlay. While funds for negotiated salary increases appear separately under Articles 4 and 6 for Municipal departments, allowances for School Department salary increases are included in its total budget figure.

Taylor flagged several Article 6 expense items for ongoing AdCom attention. Employee health insurance costs, which rose 14% last year, are forecast to increase 15%. The Town is reviewing several options seeking cost savings that would benefit both Hingham and its employees. Early analysis suggests that costs to fund retirees' health care expenses (OPEB) could double or triple from factors such as people living longer and health care cost increases. Any new contracts providing health care benefits at lower cost for current employees would help address OPEB cost increases as well. He observed that this year's budget consideration could prove challenging.

#### *Liaison Updates*

AdCom Liaisons provided the following updates:

- South Shore Country Club (Belyea) – The golf tournament on 10/17/2016 raised about \$30,000 for Country Club capital improvements.

*Matters not anticipated within 48 hours:* None

#### *Adjournment*

The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Smallwood  
Secretary

#### List of Documents Distributed at this Meeting:

Agenda for AdCom Meeting of 10/18/2016  
Draft Minutes from 10/4/2016 AdCom Meeting  
2 Beal Street Parcel – Key Meeting Dates  
40B Overview and 2 Beal Street 10/18/2016 – slides  
Avalon Shipyard II: School Aged Children  
Hingham Schools Enrollment History  
Massachusetts Public Library – Construction Grant Round  
Beacon Architect Associates (Team experience  
Hingham Public Library – design timeline  
Instructions for FY2018 Budget Development – Alexiades memo 10/14/2016  
Five Year Forecast v.1.0 10/12/16