

Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2023

Hingham Town Hall, Third Floor, South Hearing Room/Hybrid Meeting

In Attendance: Chairperson; George Danis, Tina Sherwood, Kathy Curley, Davalene Cooper, Caitlyn Kirk, Lyndsey Kruser, Brenda Black, Alan MacDonald, Brian Stack

Participating via Zoom: Joe Griffin, Carol Tully, Andy McElaney, Sarah Melia

Absent: Nancy MacDonald, Jason Price

Call Meeting to Order: Chairperson Danis called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and read the following statement:

“This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the Chairman at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.”

Comments from the Public on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments from the public.

Discussion and Possible Vote on Warrant Article 27: Purchase of 30 Summer Street

The Town has been presented with the opportunity to purchase the property at 30 Summer Street. Since the end of February, there has been due diligence on this property. There is some fuel contamination in the soil, from the previous owner which was a gas station. However, there does not seem to be any seepage to the adjacent lot. If the Town goes forward with this purchase, either there will need to be a reduction in the purchase price for the mitigation for this contamination, or the current owner would need to take care of cleaning this.

There are two ideas: reserve funds or mortgaging the property that would be paid over 30 years. If it were borrowed to pay for the property, it would be within the Town’s regular debt service and not require a debt exclusion.

It is unclear that this property includes the seawall and the water frontage. This does not affect the valuation because it was not considered in the assessment. This wall is sloped between 11.1 and 11.7 feet in height, which is the base height we were hoping to bring the harbor up to meet. These are the safest walls around the harbor and would be worked on in the last phase of the project. Eventually, it is the goal to raise this with modularity up to 13.5 feet.

The potential value to the Town is enhanced by having access to this seawall and that would need to be determined before we make the purchase. DCR believes that the seawall is municipally owned, and we are hoping the ownership would default to ownership to the municipality. Preliminary indications are that the entirety of the wall is municipally owned.

AdCom began discussion on the Article.

Do we have an extent of the contamination? Is it a small amount? If so, shouldn't we say that more directly? Had a conversation with Tetrotech and they have not issued their formal report yet.

Technically 4 of the 6 boring holes and water monitoring wells showed some levels of contamination. 3 of the 4 had more than the fourth. The three that had heavier contamination were about 10 feet down and were relatively contained around the test pits. They were all located exactly where the gas tanks were. The good news is, it doesn't look like it is seeping into neighboring properties. The outer borings didn't show any petroleum contamination on the line either. It looks like if there was seepage, it was contained around where the gas tanks had been located. It is unclear if the seepage went under the building. If the Town allows us to pursue this, we would do another boring hole through the slab of the building and do a vapor test to check for contamination under the building.

When the tanks were removed, didn't the contractor have some responsibility for mitigating any seepage? The current owner has owned the property since 1975.

Are there any concerns about the contamination getting into the ocean? No, it does not look like that is a problem.

Has there been any interaction with Mass Development with the Brownfields program. This was to incentivize entities to purchase old gas stations or drycleaners to provide the ability to offer grants for assessments and a low-cost program for loans and to assess that contamination has been cleared. TA Tom Mayo will follow-up.

If those properties don't own the wall, how do they have docks into the ocean? It looks like the marina (26 Summer St) has access out the back, towards the main part of the harbor.

Explaining the finance in more detail would be helpful. A general obligation bond or using money from our unassigned fund balance would be the most likely options.

This is a questionable time to make this purchase. We have evaluated this year to have a lot of needs. This feels like a want, and not a need, or a "nice to have." Could the Town negotiate a right of first refusal? The owner seems committed to getting rid of the property.

Could this be a potential revenue generating property? The timing of this and getting the answers are challenging and vests this decision with the Select Board. It is very difficult to build on harbor front properties, given the regulations.

Acquiring property on Hingham Harbor is quintessential good government and is what the Town wants to do. The opportunity to do this comes up very rarely.

A motion was made and seconded that the Town authorize, but not require, the Select Board to require, purchase of the property located at 30 Summer Street, and to authorize, but not require, the Select Board to grant and accept all easements necessary to develop the property, and appropriate an amount

not to exceed \$1,550,000 to be used by the Select Board to acquire the property and take necessary actions to complete the purchase. The motion was made, seconded and passed 11-1 by roll-call vote.

Review and Approval of FY 23 Reserve Fund Transfers

Sue Nickerson, Town Accountant, relayed that this Reserve Fund Transfer is to transfer money from Unassigned Fund Balance to the reserve balance. Fire, Legal, Workers Comp, Town Meetings, Unemployment and Contingency are going to be in deficit. The year was started at \$709,291, and voted favorably on two reserve fund transfer. Ms. Nickerson shared that the total pending amount is \$1,000,485, taking away the previously voted number, the Reserve Fund Transfer totals \$749,194. There was discussion on the costs of Town Meeting. It was said that these total anywhere from \$50,000 to \$70,000 per meeting, with the audio-visual services being the bulk of these costs. A motion was made and seconded to approve the transfer from Fund Balance to the Reserve Fund of \$749,194. The motion passed 11-0 by roll-call vote.

Discussion of Town Meeting Process:

- a. Warrant Article Speaking Assignments**
The committee worked on being prepared for upcoming discussion at Town Meeting.
- b. Article 6 Speaking Assignments**
The committee worked on being prepared for upcoming discussion at Town Meeting.

Discussion of Advisory Committee Housekeeping Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes: March 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 2023**
A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 2, 2023 Adcom Meeting. The motion passed 11-0 by roll-call vote.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 7, 2023 Adcom Meeting. The motion passed 10-0 by roll-call vote.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2023 Adcom Meeting with minor edits. The motion passed 12-0 by roll-call vote.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 14, 2023 Adcom Meeting, with two minor edits. The motion passed 12-0 by roll-call vote.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 16, 2023 Adcom Meeting. The motion passed 10-0 by roll-call vote.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2023 Adcom Meeting. The motion passed 11-0 by roll-call vote.
- b. Next Meeting: Sunday, April 23, 2023: Moderator’s Meeting at 2:00 pm Followed by a Brief AdCom Meeting**

Chair Danis confirmed the upcoming meeting on April 23, 2023.

c. Monday April 24, 2023: HHS room 138 at 6:00 pm.

Chair Danis confirmed the upcoming meeting on April 24, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m. by roll call vote 12-0.

Documents Distributed for This Meeting:

AdCom April 20, 2023 Meeting Agenda

Article 6 Override Breakdown

WA Assignments

Respectfully Submitted,

Alicia Anthony

Recording Clerk