

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES  
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM  
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2013**

*Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons Mark Fairbrother, Chris Boutwell, Patricia Allen; Town; Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio; Selectmen's Secretary Wendy Bogusz; Town Planner Walter Ramsey; EDIC Chair Lynn Reynolds; Jeanne Golrick; John Reynolds; David Brule*

Meeting being Taped

**Ms. Allen is participation via remote participation due to geographical location.**

**Minutes**

The minutes of January 7, 14, 22, 28 and February 4 and 11, 2013 are not available.

**Town Planner Walter Ramsey**

**Montague EDIC regarding the Town of Montague holding a Conservation Restriction (easement) on the lawn areas of 38 Avenue A.**

- The EDIC is continuing talks with Montague Community Cable Inc. (MCCI) about the transfer of ownership of 38 Avenue A from the EDIC to MCCI. The current talks have MCCI developing the existing building with the exterior compatible and consistent with the Discovery Center and the goals of the site which are cultural tourism.
- There will be a public interior space with a visitor's center, exhibit space and public restrooms in addition to the proposed television studio.
- In the concept proposed by the EDIC, the town would hold development rights on the exterior lawn area.
- The responsibility for maintenance and public improvements are negotiable.
- The land between 38 Avenue A and the Discovery Center is an area owned by the EDIC, but part of the 512 agreement requires the EDIC to transfer the conservation restriction to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).
- The town would be holding a conservation restriction on 38 Avenue A which would maintain it for open space and public access, mainly the farmers' market.

**FERC Information Request for the Turners Falls Historic-Industrial District Historic Properties Management Plan.**

- FERC stand for Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and relates to the relicensing of First Light, due for 2018.
- Mr. Ramsey is recommending that the Selectboard to support the request for a study. The study requests are due at the end of the month. The study that Mr. Ramsey is recommending is a Turners Falls Historic-Industrial District Historic Properties Management Plan. This whole area is in the Turners Falls Historic District, including two of the bridges that cross the canal as well as the canal itself.
- The goal of the study is to evaluate the project, operations, and maintenance effects of the First Light hydroelectric project, specifically the effects on cultural and historic resources. The objectives include:
  - Identification and review documentation of the historic property, structures and bridges on the property
  - Looking at the change in value in investment to the historic mill properties in the study due to a lack of access and pedestrian, vehicle and utility access over the bridges that are owned by First Light
  - Evaluating the feasibility of re-establishing or improving public, pedestrian, and or vehicular connections over the canal to the former mill sites
  - Identifying the need for a management plan for the historic bridges owned by First Light Power.
- We're making the case that these structures are listed as federally recognized as historic assets to the town.
- The pedestrian bridge to the Strathmore has fallen into disrepair over the last several years due to the lack of maintenance by the owner, which is First Light Power Resources. We're working with them to maintain this critical access point to the mill complex.
- We're asking First Light to take inventory and have a management plan for these historic properties that they own.

*Mr. Fairbrother moved that the board support this request and authorize the chair and or Walter Ramsey to sign anything that needs to be signed and to proceed with it. Seconded by Ms. Allen. Approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye*

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**Planning Board Petition for Zoning Change**

On January 22, 2013, the Planning Board passed a motion to initiate a zoning amendment for Section 5.4.7 of the Montague Zoning Bylaw.

- This is the bylaw for minimum square footage for dwelling units.
- The board is considering striking the text of Section 5.4.7 in its entirety but they are also considering amending the language to allow, on special permit, dwelling units with less than 700 square feet of living space.
- The town's bylaws currently require a minimum of 700 square feet of floor area for each dwelling unit.
- There are several compelling reasons for the board to revise this. The primary reason is that the wording is partially illegal because you can't regulate a minimum dwelling unit size specifically for single family.
- Recent cases before the zoning board indicate a demand for apartments of less than 700 square feet. Demographic changes and economic reasons are behind the desire for smaller dwellings.
- Mr. Reynolds asked that the Zoning Board be included in the discussion. Mr. Ramsey encourages the ZBA to attend the public hearings, which begin tomorrow evening.

*Mr. Fairbrother moved that the board send this proposal bylaw change back to the Planning Board. Seconded by Ms. Allen. Approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye*

**Appoint liaison for Battlefield Mapping Grant**

One of the conditions of the grant is to set up an advisory group. David Brule has offered to assist the town as liaison and to organize this group. We won't know until July whether the town has received the \$40,000 grant.

*Mr. Fairbrother moved that the board appoint David Brule as Montague's liaison to the advisory committee for the Battlefield Mapping Grant process. Seconded by Ms. Allen. Approved majority. Allen – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother - Nay*

**Executive Sessions**

Ms. Golrick has asked for the procedures around executive sessions as there have been at least 2 dozen executive sessions in the last few years whose minutes have not been released. As a town meeting member who is being asked to approve more money for the legal budget, she would like to know what is causing the legal costs. Ms. Golrick submitted a request to release past executive session minutes.

**Town Administrator's Report**

**FERC Information Request for Native American Cultural Park Study and Property Management Plan**

This study request asks the utility to evaluate the long term impact of their project on the cultural resources within the project area, specifically looking at the Native American historic and cultural resources. The ultimate purpose is to create a Native American Cultural Park that would include interpretive exhibits recognizing the importance of the Great Falls both as a battle and massacre site and the gathering place of tribes for over 12,000 years as well as trails and a satellite fishing village in Cabot Woods in the vicinity of the rock dam. The most important thing is that we hope to use this process to secure a commitment from the utility to assist in the development of the facilities and programs that support this Native American Cultural Park.

Mr. Fairbrother asked why we aren't advocating for a fish lift and bank erosion control along the river. Those issues are being addressed by requests from other agencies. Mr. Fairbrother asked that the board submit a letter of support to other projects requesting a fish lift and bank erosion control along the river. Mr. Fairbrother also asked about changes that have been requested in the dead section of the river where there are endangered species in areas that have no fresh moving water. Mr. Abbondanzio said other groups are more prepared to articulate requests of that sort.

*Mr. Fairbrother moved that the board approve and submit the Information Request for Native American Cultural Park Study and Property Management Plan and authorize the chair to sign the document. Seconded by Ms. Allen. Approved majority. Allen – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother – Nay*

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*Mr. Fairbrother moved that the board submit a letter of support to other projects requesting a fish lift, bank stabilization and remediation of the dead stretch of river and authorize the chair to sign the document. Seconded by Ms. Allen. Approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye.*

**Items Not Anticipated Within the 48 Hour Posting Period -**

Mr. Abbondanzio updated the board on the Greenfield Road project. A lot of work is being done to address permanent and temporary easement issues. There will be a public meeting in June. Construction is tentatively scheduled for May or June of 2014. An appropriation for the legal costs and other cost regarding easements will be on the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Mr. Boutwell asked Mr. Abbondanzio to ask the state what the status is of the Gill-Montague bridge and when it might be finished. Mr. Abbondanzio heard in the fall that they were on schedule and expecting to be done by April of 2014 with a soft opening sometime in November 2013.

**Upcoming Meetings**

The next regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen's meeting is next week, Monday, March 4, 2013 at 7 PM in the upstairs meeting room of the Town Hall at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA.

There is a Special Town Meeting on Thursday, February 28, 2013 at 6:30 PM in the Turners Falls High School cafeteria.

*Mr. Fairbrother moved that the board adjourn at 8:07 PM. Seconded by Ms. Allen. Approved unanimously. Allen – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye.*