



Town of Abington

500 GLINIEWICZ WAY
ABINGTON, MA 02351

BOARD OF SELECTMEN 781-982-2100

Minutes
Board of Selectmen
December 15, 2014
Cotter Room
6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Ken Coyle, Andy Burbine, Tom Dion, Mike Franey

Meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was held to hear input from members of the community regarding possible future use of the property at 326 Plymouth Street, commonly known as Griffin's Dairy.

K/Coyle gave brief overview of when Griffin's was purchased and early recommendations from first Griffin's Dairy Committee, which were never acted upon. Outlined activities that have taken place there. Latest activities have been the very successful community gardens and farmer's market.

R/LaFond - contract has been awarded for demo of barn and house. Asbestos remediation has begun. Original committee recommendations given as handout, as well as town meeting vote to purchase property. There was an article in newspaper recently about National Grid establishing solar project in Abington; there has been no permitting or application so far. OCPC will be working on a Master Plan on best use of the property and what the needs of the community are.

Speakers:

Carolyn Bates, , 41 Oakland Circle, Griffin's Dairy Advisory Committee - made recommendations to BOS and Town Manager for agricultural use to include a farm and community garden, with consideration to Park & Rec for two practice fields, also consideration for a solar field. M/Franey - is there any actual interest for farming? C/Bates - they haven't proceeded with farm option as yet. Could be leased under the guidelines of state environmental regs. There have been farmers that have talked to the Committee, but that's all. Last contact re farming was June 2013, for growth. Wetlands are expanding.

Bill Weaver, 331 and 335 Plymouth Street - why was dog park ruled out? If it was used for cattle, it wouldn't be compatible with dogs. K/Coyle - if town went into lease agreement beyond 3 years, would it would require town meeting vote? Yes.

Chris Walsh, Abington Youth Soccer - provided handout to BOS and Town Manager. They need fields as a result of high school being constructed. Fields will be ripped up next September which will effect hundreds of kids. It would have impact if fields are split up for usage. Fields at Griffin's would be temporary towards Pattison Street side, not building structures. Would be used two days a week. Any work to be done would be done by sports teams, not town funds. T/Dion - how many fields are behind the high school? There are four. Two synthetic fields will be up and running August 2016. Two more would be on side and front of building. Are they looking at other options? They have looked at any open space. M/Franey - would have to be aware of wetlands on Pattison Street side, question on

parking, would have to work with Conservation Commission. K/Coyle - that's a lot of money for temporary fields. C/Walsh - he's hoping for a lot of volunteer help on the fields, and there is money in their treasury. A/Burbine - their 2015 season is okay. M/Franey - do they have a plan B? Plan B would not help the programs at all.

Suzanne Djusberg, 188 Central Street, Director, Lacrosse - it would be dangerous if there are other kids near the field due to fast balls. They need to be on their own turf. They start March 1 and go to June.

Paul Chase, 254 Plymouth Street - land is very wet. It will be difficult job and expensive to control water. The donor of the land put down what he wanted to see the land become; is the town ignoring that? K/Coyle - land wasn't given to the town, it was purchased. It was going to be sold to a developer in town for condos, and the town had the first option to buy.

Chris Walsh - if it's an issue as far as water and they can't use it, they can't use it.

Richard Hammer - when the fields are built there, who will control it? Park & Rec. Where will parking be? They will have problems that they don't envision. Can be a dangerous situation. They can't take grass out of there till next year for hay. Felt there would be traffic situation. Doesn't think it will be safe.

Jim Dombrowski, 28 Temple Street, Save Griffin's Farm member - advocate for wetlands on Griffin's Farm, for agriculture and neighbors who abut property. Property was purchased in 1998, Article 32. There is grant money available. They contested ANRAD in 2005. Reviewed study done by National Resource Conservation Service on soil types. Brought up streams on the property. The streams on Griffins Dairy are a protectable resource. Doesn't feel the plan shown represents all the wetlands. They will have to file NOI. French's stream slopes from front to back. All the streams on site, the bordering vegetated wetlands all have land subject to flooding. Wants it to remain farming. Wouldn't impact traffic. John Hornstra had been interested in bringing in a young herd. Interested in maybe 20 cows (1 cow per acre). They had a tour of his farm in June 2013. They can get grant money if it's agricultural land.

M/Franey - will work with Mr. Walsh, but doesn't know if it's possible at this location. If Mr. Hornstra is interested, BOS would like to know. This meeting is to get ideas out, not argue about them, and to give ideas to OCPC. J/Dombrowski - Mr. Hornstra expressed interest to lease long term. Grant money is for agricultural use. Hornstra has flourishing business which is why he wants to expand. K/Coyle - this is something that would have to go out to bid. R/LaFond - there would have to be some sort of procurement process.

Ed Gorman, Abington Youth Soccer - they would like to lease property long term for the kids. How does town benefit with agricultural use, leasing it to someone, when the town itself could use it?

Resident, Mulberry Drive - re wetlands, sports teams are willing to take on that cost. If there are wetlands issues, wouldn't that apply to agricultural also? Would town have to pay for wetlands work? J/Dombrowski - you can farm in wetlands, for recreation you would have to supply replication.

Robert Taylor, Charles Street -in support of soccer fields. Supplied handout from annual town meeting on May 4, 1998. There are under-utilized fields in the town. Brought up Open Space Plan. There is a usable soccer field at Southfield. There is a problem with traffic and flooding in Pattison Street area.

Sewer bed would be suitable place for fields, but there would be traffic. Parking would be an issue. Everyone needs to work together to solve this. Has spent a lot of time on this. Abutters deal with water problems. Suzanne Djusberg - they are looking for six fields. R/Taylor - Griffin's Dairy is not suitable for athletic fields. In favor of soccer fields, but not there, would like to have farm there, remain agricultural.

Lurane Ryerson, SAGE, Griffins Dairy Committee, COA - submitted handout . Reviewed community gardens, which are organically managed. Concerned with commercial fertilizers re recreational field usage. It is getting wetter out there. Requested the BOS to protect it. They are expanding gardens for next year. They haven 't had parking complaints, but there is a problem with parking for farmers market. R/LaFond - when buildings come down, it would provide more parking. L/Ryerson - wouldn't be against recreation. Chris Walsh - suggested Pattison Street side to stay away from community gardens, and not infringe.

Nadine Hill, 292 Plymouth Street - would like to see cows out there.

Ann Reilly - 252 Adams Street - she would like to see it used for fields, recreation, and still keep community gardens. In favor of OCPC doing plan to utilize the property.

Susan Weaver, 335 Plymouth Street - take Griffins and make loop trails out there. Would probably require a bridge crossing drainage ditch/stream.

K/Coyle - reviewed recommendations from first Griffin's Dairy Committee, which were not acted upon.

Sue Brennan, 197 Orchard Lane - asked if anyone had had a conversation with Rockland about that portion. K/Coyle - it's owned by the Town of Abington. R/LaFond - no one has talked to Rockland officially, but it is owned by the Town of Abington. J/Dombrowski - portion in Rockland is all forested wetlands.

Nadine Hill, 292 Plymouth Street - suggested they go in thru Charles Street for fields.

Resident, Abington Youth Soccer - can the BOS overturn the town meeting vote that purchased property and turn down their request for recreation? A/Burbine - any expenditure by the town would require town vote, but there are a lot of public uses, not just playing fields.

Bob Manning, 34 Orange Street, Board of Health, Boy Scouts - scouts are always looking for projects and willing to help in any way they can. Park would be good for their activities, place for sleepovers.

Kate Casey, Assoc. Athletic Director, Abington High School - students would benefit from additional practice fields.

Suzanne Djusberg, 188 Central Street - question on OCPC - what is the time frame for their report? R/LaFond - not sure how long it would take to form a plan.

Jean, Mary Griffin's daughter, 342 Plymouth Street - concerned with wetlands and mosquitoes. Would like to see wetlands decreased to go back to level they were in 1998. Can they slow the development of the wetlands?

J/Dombrowski - re wetlands, you would have to go through Conservation Commission as well as Army Corps of Engineers to get a permit. Anything altering those streams may require a permit through the Corps. It could be done. Would have to go through USDA to work on agricultural plan for Griffin's Farm. Forty-four acres of playing fields are listed in the Open Space Plan. There is land out there for fields, but doesn't think Griffin's is the right site. Referred to process to purchase SVGC, which is 50 acres of recreational land. There is also land owned by the Schools on Brockton Avenue and High Street that could be used for fields.

Joe Murray, 499 Randolph Street - would like both uses. Town needs to act quickly re fields and wants farm. It should be multi-use recreational. Town missed the boat letting the barn go.

M/Franey - supports agricultural use. Is Mr. Hornstra interested and what money are we talking. As far as fields, it would require drainage, bathrooms, parking. Doesn't think it could be done overnight. There are no bad ideas, just whether they are feasible.

Chris Walsh, AS - could OCPC be paid to get report done faster? R/LaFond - there is no funding appropriation for that. Planning process is lengthy.

T/Dion - there is a water problem there; they need Plan B.

A/Burbine - does OCPC get recommendations from BOS? R/LaFond - if board is supportive of ideas brought up tonight, that's sufficient, unless there is something they are opposed to. Should be on an agenda for determination.

M/Franey - would like to see mixed use and see what is possible.

A/Burbine - was purchased for entire town to use, not just for agricultural.

K/Coyle - read town counsel's opinion on usage, that the property was not restricted to agricultural purposes.

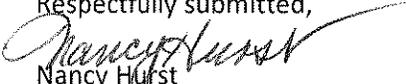
M/Franey - to present to OCPC the information expressed tonight, for mixed use, including all possibilities, agricultural and active and passive recreation, and plausible renewable energy component.

S/Dion

Voted: 4-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Nancy Hurst