

# Housatonic Improvement Committee Meeting

March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023; 6:30pm

Housatonic Community Center (the Housy Dome)  
1064 Main St, Housatonic, MA 01236

## **Members present:**

Angela Lomanto (chair)  
Eric Gabriel  
Louise Goldsmith  
Ben Elliot  
Beverly Nourse

## **Members absent:**

Daniel Bialowas (vice chair)  
Scott Shortt

Angela read the mandatory statement regarding open meetings and Zoom.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm with a roll call vote.

The first item on the agenda was Party in the Park.

Angela said that last year Pulse was going to sell ice cream as a fundraiser, but they don't have staff this year. SoCo has offered sell the ice cream at a discounted price to a group that would like to supply staffing and they can keep the proceeds as a fundraiser. The committee wondered if Housatonic the Beautiful might be interested; two members were present, and noted that they will get back to the Committee within the week. Eric suggested Theresa from the Girl Scouts as a second option; if Housatonic the Beautiful isn't interested, the Committee will offer it to the Girl Scouts. Pat Hollenbeck suggested Extra Special Teas as another option.

Angela asked Bev to report on proposed clowning for the Party in the Park. Bev reported that the typical rate for clowning or facepainting by themselves is \$405 for a four hour block, but if booked together the discounted rate is \$760 for both.

Eric's reported that he spoke with Chief Storti, and Archer the service dog will be present. Eric has a meeting set up with Jim Mead from the Fire Department, as they would also like to be involved. Eric has a meeting with Joe Aberdale on Friday to discuss power for the event, vendors parking in the park, and Housatonic signs.

Regarding food vendors, Eric contacted both Sean from North Plain Farm and SOMA to see if they would like to attend, but he has not yet heard back from either. Eric also messaged Emily Williams for the hot

dog cart. Eric reported that Brian House has another sound guy- Winter Wind Multimedia, which will cost \$400. Eric talked to Huck from Muse- they are on board to be involved in the event, but noted that Turn Park has a festival on the same day that starts after the Party in the Park. Angela noted that attendees of the Turn Park event have to buy a season ticket to attend that event, and that the Party in the Park is very Housatonic focused. Eric will provide contact information for WDM, and check in with to Pleasant and Main.

Angela reported Scott reached out to another food vendor, and that he hasn't heard back. Angela reported that we have the entertainment license and permission from the Parks Department for the Housy Dome use and the park use, so the event is rain or shine.

Ben displayed the website for the event- it's still in progress and does not yet work on mobile. It has directions, vendors, parking, sponsors, and times. Angela requested a "things to do" section. Angela suggested that Ben refers to the Google document for data regarding vendors. Ben requests that the HIC starts its own business page so they can start a Facebook event. Eric will ask the town if that is okay. Ben reported that the rates for a website are \$7.48 for partyinthepark.org per year for the domain name, and \$46.00 to host the site through the event. Ben said that the website is more dynamic than Facebook and can hold more information than Facebook. Angela thinks it's in the budget, and Eric seconded and stated that he thinks it's a great investment. Ben said he would look for photos of the park that are less drab than the current spring state. Everyone will submit photos of the park.

Eric made a motion to approve the budget of \$53.48 for the website. Angela seconded this motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Louise reported that she talked to Jill from BerkCirque, who is hoping that she can located be along Front Street with the fence behind her, and she will bring games in addition. Louise also talked to Ellen Marr who handles PR for the town, who is happy to help with distributing material, amongst other things. Ellen also suggested that some of the flyers be translated to Spanish so Spanish speaking participants can be included. Ben stated he can also help with PR, and that he will reach out to Berkshire School and Hevreh to spread the word. Angela volunteered to be on WSBS to promote the event.

Louise then introduced Richard from T Square Design. Louise thought that the posters and lawn signs from last year were hard to read, so she asked Richard for assistance. Richard would like to offer assistance with promotion and design. In addition, Richard plans to design some merchandise around Housatonic- t shirts, etc. Angela asked if Richard would like a table at the event- he said he will consider it. Angela suggested that the designs are unveiled June 10th with the HIC sporting the merchandise. Angela asked Richard if he would design a yard sign, but also if lawn signs were needed. Louise thought that they were useful for the farmers market, and stated that they seemed like a worthy investment. Ben asked if posters were discussed- Angela said last year that it was rushed and it wasn't in the budget, and that staples was \$.80 each. Eric offered to talk to Kwik Print and hang the posters in coffee shops and other local businesses. Angela said that the sponsors will have to be on the posters. Louise suggested a banner for the fence. Angela will apply to Greylock for more marketing costs. WJ Blueprint was suggested for vinyl banner printing.

The second agenda item was All Things Housatonic.

Patrick Hollenbeck was in attendance on behalf of the Libraries Board of Trustees, seeking support for a grant application. Pat stated that the last time Ramsdell was renovated was in 1928, and that the state has announced a large amount of grant funding for libraries specifically. Ramsdell has ever applied. The application is due April 28<sup>th</sup>, and Pat is requesting a letter of support to submit to the Town Manager to express interest in the application- the application will not start until next year.

Pat stated he would like to see more community events at Ramsdell, and thinks this grant could support that effort. Pat stated that there is a lot of potential for the second floor, where the historical society currently resides. It would need an elevator, but there are grants available. Angela asked if money was earmarked for the ramp. Pat reported that the ramp is separate from this grant.

Angela made a motion to send a letter of support to the Town to get him to sign on to show interest. Eric seconded. The committee voted unanimously to support.

Angela introduced Housatonic the Beautiful as an agenda item to discuss working more closely together, and voiced concern that the two may be duplicating efforts, and introduced two members of the organization that were present; Jim Stark and Kate Hold. Eric noted that Housatonic the Beautiful is a 501C3, while the HIC is a Committee under the town manager for suggestions. Eric thinks it would be good to keep them separate organizations.

Jim stated that Housatonic the Beautiful will be having their cleanup on Earth Day, and requested that the HIC help to promote/cosponsor it. Louise suggests that Housatonic the Beautiful promotes their work, such as the flowers so Housatonic residents are aware of the good work they do, and suggested signage to promote this work to get new members. Angela volunteered to help with a press release regarding the cleanup event for the newsletter. Angela inquired if Housatonic the Beautiful would be interested in sponsoring the Party in the Park, and Jim said they would.

Eric reported that he reached out to Joe Aberdale, and will meet with him on Friday. Eric stated that he will follow up regarding Cook's Garage. Eric reported that he has proposal from Joe regarding the sidewalks, extending them to Oak Street, and that he will share it. The concern Joe stated is that the road is narrow and there is an embankment, and Beacon Hill could be an obstacle. However it is approved to bring it to the next step which is design. Ben asked if there is any discussion about improving the current sidewalk-. Bev asked if there are streets that will be repaved- Eric stated he will check. Bev stated that Hart Street and Linda Lane are both in need of work. Eric offered to invite Joe Aberdale to the next meeting.

Angela requested to have Melissa from Berkshire Compost back to next meeting.

The final agenda item was Citizen Speak.

Jim Stark stated that there is no public river access, requested that the purchase or easement of land be looked into. Angela wondered if CPA funds have to be applied for by a certain group, and offered to talk to Chris about this.

No media was present. Angela stated that all HIC meetings will be held at the Housy Dome unless otherwise noted.

Ben motioned to adjourn the meeting. Angela seconded. The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Gabriel