

Housatonic Improvement Committee Meeting

March 9th, 2023; 6:30pm

Great Barrington Fire Department Training Room
37 State Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Members present:

Angela Lomanto (chair)
Daniel Bialowas (vice chair)
Eric Gabriel
Louise Goldsmith
Beverly Nourse
Scott Shortt

Absent: Ben Elliot

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm with a roll call vote of 6-0, one member absent.

Angela read statement MGL. c. 30A sec. 20 (f) regarding recordings and agenda items.

The previous meeting minutes were approved with a vote of 6-0 in favor.

The first agenda item was Party in the Park.

Angela reported that the Committee's application for an entertainment license was approved by the Selectboard. The group discussed sponsorship for the event, and the contributing community members remained the same as last year. Signs were purchased last year, which can be reused this year.

The group went on to discuss possible options and the budget for entertainment for the event, which is scheduled to take place Saturday, June 10th. The final proposed lineup included Bowie the Clown, a face painter, Brian House for music, Berkcirque, Pulse to lead two dances, and a food vendors yet to be decided. The Committee took into account the \$200 expense for the portable bathrooms. The group also discussed expected attendance- they estimated between 250-500 people.

The second item on the agenda was All Things Housatonic.

Eric has reached out to the town regarding "Welcome to Housatonic" signs, and is awaiting a reply.

An update was requested on Cook's Garage and the possibility of reuse of the building.

An update was requested on the traffic study on Pleasant Street- it was discussed at two recent Selectboard meetings. It was also stated that Joe Aberdale will assess the request regarding the sidewalk extension of Front Street up to Oak Street, though it may be challenging with the narrow road.

The Committee discussed lighting in the center of town and around the school. Eric stated that WDM is willing to run a conduit from the school to the pine tree for lights with an extension for lights for the winter.

The Committee requested an update regarding installation of a handicap ramp for Ramsdell Library- one is scheduled to be installed this spring.

The third agenda item was Citizen Speak.

Barbara Bailey suggested that a committee member reach out to Seward on East Street regarding food for the Party in the Park. Eric stated he would do so.

Melissa Higgins stated that she was there to speak to the Committee on behalf of Berkshire Compost, the business she owns and operates that offers takeaway compost service in Southern Berkshire County. Melissa is a micro-hauler that picks up compost at homes and businesses and brings it to the Stanton Home where it is turned into finished compost for gardens. Melissa would love to see more composting in the community, whether it be through her service or home compost setups.

Louise suggested that Melissa be invited to table at Party in the Park to get residents interested in composting. Melissa offered to park a truck somewhere in town and have residents bring their compost for a week to demonstrate how much food waste could be diverted from the landfill in a given week. The Committee supported this effort and offered to put information in the newsletter to educate residents about the available services. Melissa also offered to look at possible grant funding to support a town wide composting effort.

The Committee then set its next meeting dates, which will be:

- Tuesday, March 28th at 6:30pm
- Tuesday, April 11th at 6:30pm
- Tuesday, May 2th at 6:30pm
- Tuesday, June 6th at 6:30pm

The Committee also plans to have a meeting toward the end of May to discuss Party in the Park.

Location for meetings is TBD. Melissa plans to attend the next meeting, and Carolyn from Habitat for Humanity will be present to discuss the affordable housing project on North Plain Road.

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:41pm, which was approved by a vote 6-0.

Respectfully submitted, Eric Gabriel