



# Housatonic Improvement Committee Meeting

June 15, 2023; 6:30pm

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

## **Members present:**

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

## **Members absent:**

Daniel Bialowas (vice chair)  
Scott Shortt

The Committee made several attempts over the course of 15 minutes to connect to Zoom to the best of their abilities. Due to technical and connection difficulties, they were not able to connect, and the Committee had to move forward with the in-person only meeting.

Angela read statement MGL. c. 30A sec. 20 (f) regarding recordings and agenda items, as well as the statement about Zoom recordings, as this meeting was originally planned to be recorded.

Eric made a motion to open the meeting. Ben seconded. The roll-call vote was unanimous. The meeting was called to order at 6:42PM.

## **The first agenda item was talking with David Carver from WDM Properties.**

David displayed and discussed the building plans for the school. He stated that he hopes that they will be able to finalize plans by the fall and work on the building through the winter. He also stated that they are applying for historic tax credits so they can best preserve the building, both inside and out. He stated that they plan to offer eight identical two bedroom apartments. The building is planned to not rely on fossil fuels with all electric heating and cooling, and they will be removing the oil tank to make room for this plan.

Angela asked why they chose to build eight instead of ten. David stated that the condition of the floor in the basement didn't allow the addition of additional two, and that doing so could overdevelop the property. This plan would also allow for storage for each apartment in the basement, as storage has been voiced as an issue that comes with apartment living. David also stated that they intend to preserve the bathrooms. Ben asked what the bathrooms will be used for- David said that they will not be open,



but preserved in time. David requested that a letter of support to accompany their application for historic status.

Eric made a motion that the Committee sign a letter of support to utilize the underutilized buildings. Ben seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed. David reported that his company plans to keep the windows and have the windows repaired, and also provide storm windows to make sure the building is well insulated. Eric asked about the basement windows, and David said that they will do the same. Louise asked if elevators would be installed, and David said that buildings under 11 units don't require them.

David discussed the parking, and said that he intends to have two spots per unit. Angela suggested that any possible lawn areas be planted with something that doesn't need to be mowed but remains green. Angela asked if any trees will be planted, and David said he couldn't think of any areas that that would be applicable for trees. Eric said that the sledding hill and the apartment views should be kept in mind when considering planting trees. Angela stated that she would like to see a few trees planted to keep the apartments cool. Angela asked about utilities- David said that heating and cooling will be included in the rent, but personal electronic use will not. David talked about the electrical plan, which includes installing an underground service. Dave requested that the Committee send their ideas as soon as possible so they can be considered in the planning portion.

#### **The second agenda item was recapping Party in the Park.**

Angela thanked the Committee for their hard work. She estimated that 1000 people attended, and said that Berkshire Mountain Spring Water gave out 600 bottles of water. Angela said that next year, the event should have two face painters. Ben said that he heard requests for more food vendors, as all of the vendors ran out of food. Eric stated that it exceeded his expectations, and it was a great community event. Eric said that the Committee has accomplished a lot between the party and the plans for the school moving forward. Ben thinks that next year it will be easier to attract vendors. Ben noted avoiding putting the food vendors next to the basketball court if people were going to be playing. Louise requested support from the Committee to support the Parks Commission in getting trees in the park. Louise said she heard requests for more of this event, and also to shut down Pleasant Street. Another attendee requested a town wide tag sale, and Louise noted that this could be a fall event to raise money for the Party in the Park. Angela suggested coordinating a village wide tag sale where people have sales at their homes. Another attendee suggested having it on a Sunday next year as to not compete with the farmers market. Another attendee requested dog water bowls, and possibly a pet parade. Louise said that the village should have a dog park, and Eric said that people often didn't want this near their house. Louise suggested putting this near the solar fields. Angela said she would ask who owns Rising Field. Louise requested that the Committee submit a photo of the entire Committee, as Bev is missing from the published one. Louise asked about merging Housatonic the Beautiful with HIC, and Eric stated that it's not a possibility because of their fundraising capabilities. Eric said that the group is very important, and the Committee should encourage people to join. Ben suggested that a local paper interview them to help gain interest. Eric mentioned interest in a bandstand where the baseball diamond is currently.



Louise expressed interest in having more workout equipment installed, and Eric suggested talking to Tom Norton. Angela stated that she plans to write an op-ed thanking all participants and sponsors.

**The third agenda item was next steps.**

Eric suggested that the Committee takes a break and doesn't meet again until August. Eric also wanted to discuss meeting with Joe Aberdale regarding sidewalks and Cooks Garage. Angela wants to prioritize the bike path mentioned in the Town Master Plan. Ben stated that the town not having a Memorial Day Parade was a loss to the community, and he mentioned prioritizing Halloween as a next event, with the possibility of a parade. The Committee decided that the next meeting will be on Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.

**The final agenda item was Citizen Speak.**

Nobody from the media was present.

Angela made a motion to adjourn, Eric seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted, Eric Gabriel