

Selectboard Special Meeting
Housatonic Community Center
Tuesday, September 10, 2019
Minutes of Meeting

- A. Meeting called to order at 7:02pm. Present at meeting at 1064 Main Street, Housatonic Community Center, Village of Housatonic, Chairperson S. Bannon, Kate Burke, Edward Abrahams, Leigh Davis, William Cooke, Town Manager, M. Pruhenski, Assistant Town Manager, C. Rembold, Department of Public Works, S. VanDeusen.
- B. Welcome and comments by the Board.
 - 1. Recording permissible. Must receive acknowledgement to speak, from Chairperson. Each citizen has three (3) minutes to talk.
 - 2. A colored handout map of Housatonic school, Housatonic Community Center, included street addresses and surrounding buildings.
- C. Citizens Speak:
 - a. Heidi Rose, Housatonic:
Commented on concern of whatever happened to investigative report done to consolidate elementary schools (Muddy Brook)?
 - b. Karen Clarke, Housatonic,
What is happening to the Housatonic School?
 - 1. Mark Pruhenski, Town Manager; posted meeting to have a Citizens' Meeting, it's been 7-8 years, the Economic Development Committee is preparing a current report.
 - c. Trevor Forbes, Housatonic,
What is the plan for Housatonic? What is a Master Plan?
 - 1. C. Rembold, Assistant Town Manager; Master Plan; as a thriving walkable village with enough services for residents, Zoning is for "mixed use", Arts, cultural, restaurants, industrial use. Would want it to "fit" in with the historical industrial feel of the village.
 - d. Erik Ebrow, Housatonic, would like to see a mixed use of daycare, offices, restaurant(s).
 - e. Mr. Bartoni, Housatonic, wants the building to "come down", make a green space, pavilion, keep park.
 - f. Denise Forbes, Housatonic, building to "come down", green space.
 - g. Michelle Loubert, Housatonic, said to keep the building, mixed use, commercial and housing. Too expensive to tear down.
 - h. Citizen, Housatonic, Housatonic feels that costs to upgrade would be expensive and expensive to upgrade to code. Mentioned the Mass Cultural Council, that there may be resources to turn building into something.
 - 1. C. Rembold, Assistant Town Manager, to upgrade would cost additional money, for elevators, ramps etc. and would add additional time into a potential project. Building would be sold if certain criteria were met.
 - 2. S. Bannon, Chairperson, Great Barrington doesn't "own" the building, there isn't a buyer at present time.
 - i. Citizen of Housatonic wants to see diversity in community and the affordable housing is important and necessary for maintaining diversity. Would like to see mixed use, Senior care, daycare.

h. Jim Stark, Housatonic, feels parking is limited at Community Center. How would it work out for parking??

1. C Rembold: Could share parking spaces with "Hosie Dome", make use in rear of building, and try to strategize with the time of day uses.

j. Heidi Burman, Forest Street, Housatonic, "If building is sold to investors, do citizens have any input or say what happens to the building?"

1. C. Rembold: Zoning would dictate the use of building of potential buyer, would be in the purchase proposal.

k. Ms. Klein, Housatonic, spoke to the instillation of "Breeding Grounds", in use in Netherlands. Breeding Grounds are a collaborative music, artists, workshops, offices, where in arts can live and work at an affordable rate.

Suggested that the Housatonic Association of Artists Collaborative and Multi Cultural Bridge resubmit their applications for use of space in building. That it could be a multi-use space, with public control, use Marijuana monies to fund it.

l. Eric Limon, Housatonic wants to see it used for artists, housing, industrial use.

m. Sarah Binger, Housatonic, "What can we do to get the choices we would want?"

1. C. Rembold; Municipalities can offer tax incentives to make more interesting.

n. Denise Forbes, Housatonic (2), now keep, have a café.

o. Derek Patisky, Housatonic, "Why can't Housatonic decide and develop own building?"

p. Ben Shalis, Housatonic, keep building use for non- profit use.

q. Elizabeth Sermini, Housatonic, use for housing like in Lee.

r. Lisa Kelley, Housatonic/ Great Barrington, mixed use, needs upgrades such as lead removal.

s. Doug Roberts, Housatonic, "Are there any sustainability tests to see if building is worthy to upgrade?"

1. C. Rembold; no study has been done.

t. Dan Bailly, Housatonic, remembers when Housatonic was a thriving town. Wants to bring business back to town. Wants natural gas and internet services.

u. Carol Bosco, Housatonic, wants to keep community vibrant, diverse, use as public space.

v. Sarah Joh, Housatonic, wants to keep the building.

w. Kate Ducky, Housatonic, works at Berkshire South, Department of Education is increasing their need for more educational degrees of teachers and early education teachers, putting strain on quality teachers, lower birth rates, and costs of child care, that a day care may put too much strain on Berkshire South's programming.

x. Citizen of Housatonic, tear down building.

y. Susie Howell, Housatonic, wants vibrancy in village, would like a decision to be made, green space would be good.

z. Citizen of Housatonic, not all buildings in town are for a profit, library, etc.

aa. Tim Geller, Housatonic, mixed use is possible, using commercial and affordable housing monies. Would need to apply for grants and find an administrator who is skillful at balancing the economic development and housing monies, to make the project feasible.

Adjournment: On a motion by Mr. Abrahams, seconded by Mr. Cooke, voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:39 pm and Chair Steve Bannon thanked townspeople for participating in forum.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Minacci
Recording Secretary