

**AMHERST REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MINUTES
February 14, 2019**

LOCATION: Second Floor Conference Room/Library, Town Hall
MEMBERS PRESENT: James Turner, Jeff Lee and Paige Wilder
ABSENT: Aaron Hayden and Pamela Rooney
OTHERS PRESENT: None
STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director, Christine Brestrup

The meeting was called to order at approximately 4:55 p.m.

Announcements

None.

Minutes

Mr. Lee MOVED to approve the Minutes of December 13, 2018. Ms. Wilder seconded. The vote was 3-0 to approve the Minutes.

The ARA members decided by consensus to delay action on the Minutes of January 24, 2019 until Ms. Rooney could attend.

Reports

Mr. Turner reported about the Town Manager's report to Town Council that the initial plan from Kuhn-Riddle for the North Amherst Library was available to the public. There were three scenarios proposed in the report:

1. Minimal changes with an elevator, a bathroom and a heater
2. Medium amount of changes with an elevator, a bathroom, a heater and community space
3. Larger changes with an elevator, a bathroom, a heater, community space and more stacks for books.

Each scenario had a cost estimate attached.

Mr. Lee stated that the North Amherst Library is a town-owned building. He asked whose responsibility it is to renovate and maintain it.

There was discussion about staffing and maintenance for all three library branches.

Ms. Brestrup noted that Town Meeting had voted for money for a feasibility study for the North Amherst Library, but had not voted for money to renovate or expand it.

Matrix

The ARA members discussed the Matrix of possible projects and potential uses prepared by Mr. Lee, which had been previously reviewed and edited by the ARA members.

The ARA members discussed adding the North Amherst Library to the matrix.

There was discussion about where to find information on the town website.

Mr. Turner noted that the ARA had done some work on finding sites before 2010, before the Gateway Project. He had found some of the plans from before 2010 and he presented them to the members.

Ms. Wilder asked for clarification about the term “Economic Development”

Mr. Lee stated that Economic Development includes things like commercial uses, jobs, restaurants, bookstores, etc.

The ARA discussed focusing the ARA’s efforts on North Amherst, and finding a partner and a source of financing/funding for a project.

Mr. Turner would like a project that involves community engagement. The ARA members began to brainstorm ideas and recommended looking for partners with energy and purpose. The following potential partners were listed:

- Valley Community Development Corporation (Valley CDC)
- Amherst Community Land Trust
- Amherst Community Connections
- Amherst Coop
- Grow Food Amherst

Economic development was discussed, including UMass spin-offs and creating work-space

There was discussion about the rents that are being charged in Amherst, both for affordable housing and market rate housing. Ms. Brestrup presented information about the rents proposed to be charged for units at North Square at the Mill District (the Beacon Communities project).

Tiny houses

There was discussion about tiny houses and ARA members noted that tiny houses could be developed as part of a PURD (Planned Unit Residential Development) or an OSCP (Open Space Community Development). Projects elsewhere in the country that were discussed included a trailer park, a development of tiny houses in Olympia, Washington which is run by a 501 (c) 3 non-profit, and other examples of developments of tiny houses.

ARA members discussed inviting experts on low-income housing to a future meeting to hear about their work.

Next Meeting

ARA members plan to brainstorm about who might be partners for each category on the matrix.

ARA members would like to get an answer from Paul Bockelman on how ARA members are appointed under the new Charter.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 14, at 4:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.