

Mill Site Study Committee

Meeting minutes - June 25, 2008

Present: **Committee Members:** Kurtis Amidon, Jerrilyn Bozicas, Stephanie Cronin, Roger Goscombe, Albert Harris, Michael Landino, Matt Nesbit, Jeff Sauer, Joseph Sergi, and Stephen Themelis.
Members absent: Jeffrey Chabot, Gary Giguere, and Ronald Karr
Also present: Robert Hanson (Pepperell Town Administrator) and Jay Donovan (Assistant Director, NMCOG)

The meeting began at approximately 7:05 PM with Mr. Hanson welcoming the newly appointed members and asking each to introduce himself/herself, noting particular interests and expertise. Mr. Donovan introduced himself and the role NMCOG might play in assisting the Town with planning for the Mill Site, citing previous NMCOG projects in the area.

Election of Officers: Mr. Hanson encouraged the Committee to nominate and elect a Secretary to record minutes, a Chair, and, if desired, a Vice-Chair. Mr. Sauer offered to act as Secretary and was elected unanimously. Mr. Sergi and Mr. Themelis were both nominated as Chair. Mr. Sergi was elected Chair by a vote of 7-3. Mr. Themelis was then unanimously elected Vice-Chair.

At this time Mr. Hanson turned the meeting over to the new Chair, Mr. Sergi, and left the meeting.

Committee Framework and Objective: Mr. Sergi described the Committee's role to explore alternatives for the Mill Site and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Two warrant articles passed at the recent Annual Town Meeting, the Economic Target Area (ETA) linking the Mill Site to the Devens ETA and 43D expedited permitting, should assist the Committee in both creating a master plan for the Mill Site and forming a partnership with a developer. Mr. Donovan cited the potential availability of up to \$100,000 in ETA grant funding to be used for evaluation and planning purposes. Mr. Themelis asked about the owner's receptiveness to 43D. Mr. Sergi noted that the owner had accepted the Town's intent to use 43D and had offered \$25,000 to be used for a market study of the Mill Site. Mr. Themelis also noted the potential availability of \$7,000 from the Mass. Department of Housing and Community Development. Mr. Donovan described other possible sources of funding and expertise that could become available after the Committee had finished a master plan for the Mill Site.

Mr. Goscombe noted a rumor that the Mill Site owner, Perry Videx, LLC, already has a potential buyer for the site. Mr. Sergi acknowledged the rumor, but noted that the Committee's planning activities would assist the process regardless of who the ultimate developer would be and when that developer would begin work.

Ms. Cronin asked about environmental testing. Mr. Sergi cited previous testing from 1995 that showed the site was not contaminated and noted that the recent potential developer, Freedom Development had done testing, but that those results were not public.

Ms. Cronin asked about the status of the ETA. Mr. Sergi said that it was now in the hands of the Mass. State Legislature. Mr. Landino asked how many other ETAs and 43D sites were currently active in the State. Mr. Donovan said that there were about 40 ETAs and 30-35 43D sites.

There was a discussion about other mill sites in the area and Mr. Donovan offered some of NMCOG's experiences. Mr. Sauer asked if the Pepperell mill site wasn't different because very few of the existing structures will be saved. Mr. Donovan agreed there were similarities and differences, noting that this offered both a challenge and an opportunity.

Casual discussion followed about what members might envision for the site and what types of businesses might be have success at such a location. Mr. Sergi noted that there was great interest around town and that the Committee

should consider forming sub-committees to take advantage of this available expertise. Ms. Cronin suggested using the Town website to elicit input.

Action Items:

Item #1 – Site Visit: Mr. Sergi will asked the owner about a possible site visit.

Item #2 – Email list and webpage: Mr. Sauer will establish an email list and a page on the Town website.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 30, 2008.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Sauer, Mill Site Study Committee Secretary