

Mill Site Study Committee

Meeting minutes - August 26, 2009

Present: **Committee Members:** Stephanie Cronin, Albert Harris, Ronald Karr, Ken Morgan, Matt Nesbit, Sharon Santy, Jeff Sauer, Joseph Sergi, and Stephen Themelis
Members absent: Kurt Amidon, Roger Goscombe, Joan Ladik, and Georgette Rogers
Also present: Selectmen Joe Hallisey, Douglas Landry and Geoffrey Morrison-Logan of VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.), Don Eriksson of Nashoba Publishing

Mr. Sergi called the meeting to order at 7:10pm and introduced Mr. Landry and Mr. Morrison Logan of VHB. Ms. Sharon Santy joined the meeting at 7:49pm. (Since the last meeting, both Michael Landino and Jerrilyn Bozicas have resigned from the Mill Site Study Committee. Sharon Santy and Joan Ladik have been appointed.)

PerryVidex Update: Mr. Sergi noted that PerryVidex has recently hired a consultant, BSC, to assist with understanding the value of the property. BSC did submit a proposal to Pepperell to create the Development Analysis.

VHB Status Report: Mr. Landry re-introduced VHB, the firm selected to create the Development Analysis report, and offered a brief overview of the project. Mr. Landry discussed some of the issues that will need to be addressed as the project moves forward, noting that the contract with the Town was signed within the last week of so and that the project is just getting started.

Mr. Morrison-Logan outlined the schedule for the project, which he suggested would span about 16 weeks. VHB plans to meet with the Mill Site Study Committee a total of five times, with the final meeting occurring around the end of the year and a report being finalized some time early in 2010. At these meetings, VHB will begin to formulate and present three rough options for discussion, later bringing them to the Pepperell citizens through public meetings.

Ms. Cronin asked about VHB's recent Deerfield project.(the former Oxford Foods Factory), comparing that to Pepperell's Mill Site. Mr. Landry stated that initially a developer was proposing a very large housing project, but that the town of Deerfield bought the property, in large part to avoid that outcome, and ordered a study. Similar to the proposal for Pepperell, VHB offered Deerfield a report with three options: for industrial, housing, and mixed use. The current status of the Deerfield project is that the town is using the VHB report to secure a developer, using the report from VHB and focusing on the mixed use option.

Discussion followed about the issues and options for the Pepperell Mill Site. Mr. Sergi noted that Railroad Sq is an important part of Pepperell and its history and that a Mill Site development would ideally tie in with that. Mr. Sergi also noted the new challenge of the vacant Peter Fitzpatrick School and the roll that may have in a large scale development in Pepperell. Mr. Themelis expressed the desire to tie a Mill Site development in with the very successful rail trail across the river. Several members discussed open space, the proposed covered bridge historical site on Groton St., the conservation land that abuts the Mill Site to the north, and the possibility of a foot path along the river connecting all. Several members also discussed the potential traffic issues that a Mill Site development would cause.

Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Mr. Themelis, seconded by Mr. Karr, the minutes from the May 27 and June 10 meetings were approved unanimously as drafted.

Next Meeting: *Tentatively scheduled for September 16, 2009 at 7:00pm.*

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Sauer, Mill Site Study Committee Secretary