

Chairman Frank Lombardi called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

**Members Present:** Frank Lombardi-Chairman, Vice-Chairman Donald LaPlante, Edith Worcester, Marsha Lombardi, Lisa Courcy, David Chase, and acting Secretary Tina Wright.

**Members Absent:** Marcia Hammon

**Public Present:** Peter Corey, Patrick Ryan, Elise Lawson

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Donald Laplante to accept the minutes as is from the January 12, 2022 meeting. Seconded by Marsha Lombardi. No further discussion, all in favor, motion carries. **APPROVED.**

**Proposed Acquisition of King Square Easements:**

Peter Corey, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen joined the meeting to share information about the King Square easements. Peter thanked the Conservation Commission for allowing him to join and doing this on such short notice. We were just notified this must be done.

What we have to do before we acquire the easement is to approach both the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission for their recommendation on the acquisition of the easement.

This has been worked on for a number of years. It involves the parking lot directly behind Cumberland Farms, adjacent to the common. It is currently a dirt parking lot and undeveloped. There was an effort back in 2019 to develop it with paving, striping, landscaping and lighting. The dotted line you see pretty much delineates what is an easement which prevents the Town from developing the lot. It was discovered because of this easement we were unable to have full site control and everything came to a screeching halt. The Town has been working since 2019 when this has become an issue to acquire this easement.

We are looking for the approval from you to acquire this 40' easement and then the Town would have full control of the parking lot.

Frank asked if there were plans for this parking lot.

Peter shared his screen of the plans for the parking lot. It was a preliminary design from Horizons Engineering. Showing parking spaces, handicap parking and space for electric charging stations. And the way things are going there is a potential for more of that. Lighting, landscaping, installing drainage making it an attractive space for the development of the

community as we move forward. Ammonoosuc Community Health Services is getting ready to renovate their space as well as the Allard Block.

It's an investment in the community. Make the downtown look better and have easier parking. Edith asked who owns this land.

Peter said the easement is owned by Patrick Ryan and Robert Loiacono.

Edith asked if they were going to sell it to the town.

Peter said the town entered into negotiations with the owners a few years ago and were unable to come to an agreement and the Town is now going through the eminent domain process.

Edith asked would these be meter spaces or will the town assume the expense. She said she thought a lot of people downtown, like landlords, use that lot. She asked how you would make that into a public parking lot.

Peter said what you say is correct, in fact next week's selectboard meeting we'll be introducing an example of a parking permit policy which the Selectboard going forward could consider with this lot and others. For potential permits going forward. That's a whole separate issue.

Don said this property originally or part of it at least was a gas station. Were the tanks ever taken out of the ground?

Peter said yes they were removed before the Town took possession.

Don said I'm going to assume that the lot as it's proposed is an asphalt lot. Is the Town open to making it a permeable service, crushed rock or pea stone. Not a big heat sink in the middle of Town and would have better run off.

Peter said he did not know. That would be a good conversation to have with the board, he cannot speak for the board.

Frank said he had always heard in the past that the design was for it being paved. He said he thinks this is a poor design from the Conservation Commission perspective. This is a half an acre lot. It drops 20 feet in a 120 foot distance. There would be major run off coming off of this. There are a lot of vehicles that park there with oil that drips out that will run down through there. My understanding is that those tanks are still in the ground. Going back to the 2014 Town Meeting when the community center building was proposed and was shot down because the tanks were still in the ground. I would not feel comfortable recommending this type of project especially if that is what is still in the ground.

Peter said the issue right now is just the taking of the easement. The final design, how much green space, all of that will come later. Right now the town has this parcel that only half of it is usable to the community and it should have been addressed at the original time that the lot was taken and obviously when the community does start the project it will be subject to State and Federal laws. I do not feel those tanks are still in the ground. The issue is not the design or layout tonight. Does the Conservation Commission agree with the acquisition of the easement? This is just a weird circumstance that an easement is on a parcel of land that we already own. We already own this lot with all the good and bad with it we're just looking to essentially eliminate the easement so we have control of the entire space.

Patrick Ryan said the town acquired the land because Bob Stiles owned it and they went to Superior Court. I owned 50% of this parking lot, about 4500 square feet. We went back and forth to court and bills were running high. I finally proposed an agreement to make it a 40' ROW. The tanks are still there. Mr. Jordan Sr sold the property to Kelly Nelson and it says in the deed that the tanks were in the ground. Kelly Nelson or Bob Stiles never pulled a permit to pull those

tanks. Everything should be disclosed. We just don't know what is there but it should get a clean bill of health before we go any further.

Peter said we're not asking for permission to approve the plan. Just your approval for this easement. Right now we don't have the ability to do anything because of this easement. Any grants that are applied for to go further will need to go through the environment assessment. All of that is the second part. The first part is this easement.

Frank said in reality this is our chance to have a voice. Once you get the easement we won't be invited back to have a voice. We've got concerns that the planning board won't address. We really have to think about the situation here.

Peter said any grant that is used to do this work and there will definitely be grants, any grant requires a public hearing. So everyone would be able to comment and there's nothing that stops you from going to the Selectboard with your concerns. We have a town owned parcel of land that has this problem that we're trying to resolve and it's been four years.

Frank asked about the electric car supply, will there be a solar array? Peter said it didn't go that far. Frank said the one that is in this picture is this using the Town's electricity or solar? Peter said it's just a concept.

Frank went over a sustainable green document making suggestions for the parking lot.

Donald said he is in favor of the Town acquiring the easement. It's an eyesore. In order to get it developed obviously the issue under the ground would need to be taken care of. Don said he offers his support of acquiring the easement as long as the Conservation Commission is involved with the planning of the parking lot. The town can certainly use more parking.

Patrick asked, is it going to be done clean and correctly?

Frank said Don makes a good point. He thinks the residents should have some of the parking lot back. He asked Dave and Lisa if they had any comments. Lisa agreed with what Don was saying. If you're just asking for our approval for the easement that's one thing.

Peter said all we're asking is for the Conservation Commissions approval to acquire the easement. The Conservation Commission can certainly have a seat at the table when making the decisions. All we're asking is just the easement. Do you support the Town's acquisition of the easement?

Patrick asked if they were willing to go all in if you find out there's more. Maybe everyone should do more homework and put it on hold.

Peter said I can tell you there will be no money spent. The Town is not going to waste anymore money on that. This is an obstacle that was identified four years ago. It's a formality in the State law because an easement is considered real property. If we don't acquire that, the lot is going to stay in the present state for god knows how long.

Patrick said maybe that's the best thing.

Peter said but we already own the problem. There is so much grant work for municipalities.

David said he agrees with what has been said.

Edith said she wasn't sure. She would feel better if we knew we could put in a green parking lot.

Lisa asked, so our options for this proposal is to either approve or disapprove?

Don said we're asked to provide feedback, not necessarily an approval.

Frank said we'll draft a letter for you so you can bring it to the board. You need it by March 6th.

This way everyone on the board can add their piece to it.

Don said he will start working on something and share with everyone.

**Elise J. Lawson-Update on Natural Resources Inventory:**

No questions for Elise. No new site areas for her to look at.

Frank showed a map of areas in red that were picked out previously. She's been working on the data collection.

Elise said there's no updates. The main stuff I've been working with is digitizing the natural resources features. Basically a lot of GIS work. Also just finished up the wetlands. I look at the national wetlands inventory.

Frank said our next step in the spring time will be to get the letters to the property owners.

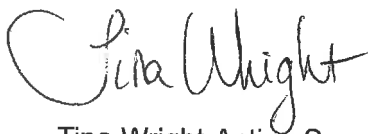
Elise said yes, that will be the biggest step for you guys to do. She asked the Commission what are your most important features in the report?

Frank said the Johns Rivers is an important one and brought her up to speed on the proposed acquisition of the king square easement.

**Next meeting will be Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 4:30 pm**

**Adjournment: A motion was made by Donald LaPlante to adjourn at 5:47 p.m., seconded by Edith Worcester. All in favor, meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted By:



Tina Wright-Acting Secretary;



Frank Lombardi-Chairman