

The Board of Selectmen held a VCI Bolton Center Study meeting on August 20, 2013 at the Bolton Town Hall. Present were: First Selectman Robert Morra; Selectmen Robert Neil, Leslie Shea and Robert Lessard; John Butrymovich, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor; Lance Dimock, Highway Supervisor; Jim Rupert, Building Official; Sandy Hastings, Bolton Education Foundation; John Toomey, Bolton Historical Society; Ross Lally, Bolton Congregational Church; Gwen Marrion, Bolton Land Trust; Hans DePold, Municipal Historian; Richard Treat, Friends of Rose Farm; Sandra Pierog, Heritage Farm Commission and Amy Bahre, Bolton resident.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Morra called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. REVIEW OF COMMENTS ON DRAFT PLAN

Mr. Lessard spoke offering his opinion that the report should be framed differently with a concise summary and the conclusions of the Committee at the beginning of the report as a short executive session. The conclusions should be listed in priority order if feasible and the balance of the report could continue with the supporting documentation and information.

The group began to review the comment sheet in order from top to bottom. Mr. DePold expressed his opinion regarding the importance of dating the house at the farm. He indicated that the results of the boring samples would be conclusive evidence that the structure was either a priceless part of history or just an old farmhouse that could be put to other use. The Committee discussed the findings of the previous report and expressed varying opinions regarding the importance of dating the structure. Ms. Hasting summed up the discussion by stating that the idea of dating the structure should be in the plan but how that would be carried out should happen outside of the committee. Mr. Lally wanted to make it clear that the process should be clear prior to beginning. He stated that the process should not just continue until someone gets the answer they want. Mr. DePold stated that the Foley study would be conclusive. Ms. Marrion felt that the discussion should take place when deciding how to deal with the house and the funding questions should be brought to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Morra spoke regarding the idea in the report of removing the addition from Town Hall. He felt that a better use would be to make changes to that part of the structure to help it blend in with the older portion but to make use of it without removing it. This idea was generally accepted by the Committee members present.

A brief discussion went on regarding the spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors found in the report. It was decided that that portion of the comment summary would be forwarded without edits.

Ms. Shea began a discussion about the one room school house on School Road. She felt that it was a priority to preserve and that idea was understated in the report. She had hoped that the experts would have more strongly expressed the need to preserve it and help define a plan as to where it could be moved to and fit into the landscape in the Town Center. The group generally discussed this and it was also brought up that the experts found the structure was not in danger where it was and concluded in the report that it was not necessary to move it. The majority of the Committee did feel that the structure should be relocated to a Town owned and controlled property and be restored. Leslie expressed that she felt that it was of at least equal historical value as the farmhouse.

Ms. Marrion spoke regarding the need to preserve the historical character in the center of Town. She felt that the exterior of structures was important to creating a cohesive view of that character in the center of Town.

Mr. Treat explained the issue with the page index.

Ms. Marrion expressed that a strong statement was needed to preserve natural resources as part of the plan. The vernal pools and cranberry bog on the farm were cited as examples of the types of resources that needed to be preserved. Mr. Morra felt that such a statement was not necessary since it is consistent with the Town Regulations such as the Wetlands Regulations.

Mr. Morra brought up the subject of storage at the barn. He expressed that the vision of the Committee was more grandiose. There was some general discussion and overall agreement.

Ms. Marrion questioned the moving of the stones at the Tavern stating she felt they were an important part of the landscape. A brief discussion ensued and the decision was that the stones should not be moved but the Buildings and Grounds staff would monitor to make certain that they presented no negative impact on the structure.

A discussion began regarding sidewalks and connectivity in the Town Center. The Committee agreed regarding the importance of that connectivity. The discussion then revolved around the materials that might be used to build the sidewalks. Overall it is the idea to use pervious materials that are suited for accessibility and maintenance. The Committee would like any ideas the experts might offer in this area.

Ms. Shea expressed her disappointment in the lack of specific recommendations by the professionals. She felt that they did not convey some of the issues strongly enough and withheld their expert opinions focusing on facilitating the organization of the groups ideas instead. Their opinions are understated.

Others felt that to some extent it was cookie cutter that they used examples that they had used in prior exercises and did not look outside of what they already knew and were comfortable with. Ms. Pierog was disappointed that more of the public did not participate. Mr. Treat expressed that they gave a great overview of the Committees ideas but the Committee could make mistakes and they could have offered more options to work with. Mr. Dimock expressed that too much time was spent on little things that this should have been more focused on the big picture. Overall the group was satisfied with the process but felt it would be better if the experts had looked beyond Connecticut into other vibrant communities and had more strongly expressed their professional opinions.

Mr. Morra expressed his appreciation for the efforts put into the process by the members of the Committee.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert R. Morra,
First Selectman

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.