

BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES OF MEETING – DECEMBER 4, 2007

Present: Ch. Gordon D. Bailey, Frank A. Consolati, Patricia D. Carlino, Board of Selectmen.  
Robert L. Nason, Town Administrator  
Ch. Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**1. Approval of Minutes:** November 20, 2007

- 2. Public Hearings:** 7:00 PM – Mass. Dept. of Housing and Community Development Action Grant – Ch. Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read into the record the public hearing notice published in local newspapers – Richard Vinette, Executive Director, Lee Community Development Corp., came before the Board and explained that the town was invited to submit the grant application after a Notice of Intent was filed. He stated the public hearing is to provide the most up-to-date information available and to provide notification that the town intends to submit the grant application. Mr. Vinette made copies of a fact sheet (attached) to all persons present at the public hearing. Also present was Dale Allen, consultant, Cecil Group, who Mr. Vinette has worked with for over nine months to create the latest plan showing the parking configuration which he said was by no means a final plan. The purpose of the design is to unlock the economic potential of 40-50 Main Street which is on the east side of Main Street. Mr. Vinette told the Board there are two goals with this project. The first is to save a significant architectural asset and the second to encourage sustainable development in the downtown, create jobs and increase the town's tax base. Mr. Vinette then introduced Dale Allen to go over the discussions with land owners and explain the design of the plan. Mr. Allen explained that existing downtown parking has been studied, and referred to a Berkshire Regional Planning Commission draft parking study. Mr. Allen explained that the process for considering a parking lot project on the east side of Main Street began with the CDC and the Cecil Group looking at a plan that was created in the 1980's called the "McIntosh" plan. That plan is very similar to the one being presented. Mr. Allen said that there were months of meetings with the four property owners who would potentially be affected by this project: Verizon, Dr. Peter Cerruti, St. George's Episcopal Church, and the First Congregational Church. It was noted that on October 30, Mr. Allen attended a community meeting held by the Lee CDC at Lee Senior Center Board to present information about the parking project and the various conceptual layouts that had been discussed. The latest concept as presented at the present public hearing reflects the input by the affected property owners to date. The plan showed a 54 space parking area that would be located behind the Bookless Block and would be on the property of St. George's Episcopal Church that would involve the relocation or demolition of a house on their property which the church has agreed to. No other properties would be affected at this time, although it was noted that the CDC, the town, and the Cecil Group were working toward an attempt to come to a consensus on a final conceptual design which may or may not involve property of other landowners beside St. George's.

At the suggestion of Ch. Bailey, Mr. Allen then turned the plan to the audience and briefly went over the design again. Ch. Bailey then read a petition in opposition of the project and a letter of support from Marilyn Kelly, owner of the Sullivan Station restaurant. Ch. Bailey then opened the meeting for public discussion. Opinions were voiced by district representatives, a member of the Planning Board and Board of Assessors, the pastor of the First Congregational Church, business owners and residents of Lee. There was much discussion regarding developing more parking spaces on the west side of Main Street. A question was asked just what activities this grant will be available for. Mr. Vinette said that it was principally for construction and final engineering and that other portions of the project, including design and property acquisition would be allocated to other grant applications. He also stated that a requirement of the grant is a private investment in the project. The funding would disappear if a potential developer could not be found that could match the funding 2.5:1. That is critical.

A member of the Episcopal Church spoke regarding the process they went through to finally approve the parking lot on their property only. Final approval came from the Diocese in Springfield. Question on why negotiations with the other property owners was necessary if all the parking was going to be on church property. Mr. Allen stated that he wanted the other property owners to be satisfied with the design and also perhaps convince them that if any other property is used, it would certainly be more desirable to a potential developer. Discussion on ingress/egress of the proposed lot. Mr. Allen said that every possible combination was looked at but with the use of only the Episcopal church's property, it would have to be one means coming out to Franklin Street. Discussion on whether or not any town money would be going into this project. The fact sheet was referred to which indicates that there may be requests to the town either in the form of a request for appropriation or a match via other grants. Ch. Bailey closed the public comment portion of the public hearing. Selectman Consolati stated he felt the town should not pass up the opportunity to enhance Main Street by having the Bookless Block fully occupied. Selectman Consolati made a motion for the Lee CDC to go forward with the grant application on behalf of the town. Selectman Carlino seconded the motion. Selectman Carlino agreed with Selectman Consolati that the town should go forward with the application. She also agreed that serious consideration should be given to the west side of Main Street regarding economic development. Selectman Carlino stated that this is the first time in over 30 years that anyone has considered renovating the (40-50 Main Street) building and she felt an obligation to vote in favor of the grant application.

Ch. Bailey agreed that the grant application needs to be moved forward. He also felt that serious consideration should be given to the west side of Main Street as an important part of the town's economic development strategy. Ch. Bailey stated that there are many options the town needs to look at as far as growth is concerned and the Board needs to continue to seek out ways to make that growth happen. The Board voted, unanimously, to approve the submission of the grant application. Mr. Vinette thanked everyone for their cooperation in this project. Ch. Bailey closed the public hearing at 9:15 PM.

**3. General Business:**

The Board next addressed Wastewater Treatment Plant project Change Order #5. DPW Supt. and Project Manager, Chris Pompei came before the Board to discuss this matter. There were five items on the Change Order, one was to extend platforms over the tanks to make them more user friendly. He then explained the other four items. The total amount of the Change Order is \$132,831.42. The project is still under 2% on the Change Orders. At the recommendation of the Project Manager and the Wastewater Treatment Plant Oversight Committee, the Board voted, unanimously, to approve Change Order #5.

The Board next reviewed an agreement to replace a heater at the DPW highway garage. Mr. Pompei stated the existing heater is unsafe and needs to be replaced. The Board voted, unanimously, to sign an agreement in the amount of \$7,600.00 with LePrevost Plumbing to replace the heater at the DPW highway garage.

The next item was a Standard State Contract for state reimbursement for the October 2005 floods recovery assistance. Ch. Bailey recused himself from this item as he is a state employee in the public safety division. The reimbursement is in the amount of \$3,202.01. The Board voted to accept the reimbursement and sign the contract.

The Board received a letter from Police Chief Ronald Glidden asking them to approve the sale of a 2004 surplus police cruiser. The Chief recommended Grace Quality Used Cars, Inc., as the highest bidder, at \$2,748.00. The Board voted, unanimously, to approve the sale.

The Board received a letter of resignation from Christopher McDermott, Recycling Committee member. The Board accepted the letter of resignation, with regret. Ch. Bailey addressed the listening audience asking if anyone is interested in volunteering their time, there are a number of vacancies on the town's boards and committees and they should contact the Selectmen's office.

The Board tabled their vote to renew various licenses for 2008 until their next meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**4. Pending Business:**

Ch. Bailey announced that the town will hold an auction for the disposition of property at 25 School Street on Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM in the Town Hall courtroom.

Selectman Carlino stated that the town has received an additional \$1.8 million dollars from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development to complete the renovation of the former Central School into low income elderly housing. This will mean an additional 13 to 16 units of housing. Selectman Carlino said the town is grateful to Elder Services of Berkshire County and HUD for the time and effort they put in to make this housing possible and preserving a town landmark.

**5. Town Administrator:**

The Town Administrator reported that State Department of Revenue (DOR) approval of the proposed property and personal tax assessments for FY08 had been delayed because of a backlog of proposed assessments pending DOR review. After approval and advertising, the public will have an opportunity to look at the valuations and it will be on the town's website. At that time, there will be a tax classification hearing at a Selectmen's meeting with the Board of Assessors to determine how to allocate the tax levy among the four different classifications of property. He is hoping this will happen no later than the Selectmen's next meeting on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>.

**6. Public Comments:** Deidre Consolati came before the Board and asked if other than the Selectmen and the School Committee, if other board/committee meetings could be televised on the local cable access television station, CTSB, specifically, the Board of Public Work and the Planning Board. She felt there was a need for better communication between these boards and the citizens of Lee. Ch. Bailey agreed with the suggestion and the Board will look what the agreement with CTSB says about what meetings they have agreed to televise.

Selectman Carlino said that she would like to extend the Board's sympathy to the family of Jim Nolan. He was a longtime town representative and a watchdog for the citizens of Lee.

**7. Motion to adjourn:**

The next regular meeting will be Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2007 at 7 PM. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne M. Alderman, Selectmen's Secretary

cc:	Board of Selectmen	Principal Assessor	Dept. of Public Works
	Town Administrator	Board of Health	Town Treasurer
	Town Clerk	Conservation Commission	Town Reps. District Chairmen
	Town Collector	Police Chief	Superintendent of Schools
	Planning Board	Building Inspector	Town Accountant