

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC)
SPECIAL MEETING**

MINUTES OF MARCH 12, 2008

(As Approved on March 26, 2008)

Present:

Members: Connie Clancy, Bob Gelinas, Martha Johnson, Dale Johnston, Jeremy King, Jeff Labrecque, Dan Luis, Melissa O'Brien, Kurt Schenker (arrived at 8:30), Nathan Therien, Linda Young, Jesse Lytle (Excused: Kate Bedard and Martha Terry)

Staff: Richard Harris, Town Planner

Liaisons: Helen Fantini (Planning Board), Richard Constant (Selectboard)

Public: Wendy Kelliher

Ms. Young called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Approval Agenda

No changes were offered.

2. 7:10 p.m. Guest Speakers: John Bryant, Mount Holyoke College; Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent; and Wayne Doerpholz, SHELD

Ms. Young noted that we had four resource speakers for the meeting:

- Jim Reidy, DPW Superintendent
- Wayne Doerpholz, SHELD Manager
- John Bryant, Mount Holyoke College Director of Facilities
- Rick Bigelow, Mount Holyoke College

She asked each of the committee members and liaisons present to introduce themselves.

Mount Holyoke College – Facilities Development

Mr. Bryant began his discussion of the Mount Holyoke College facilities and plans by reviewing the most recent activities. He noted that the College has been experiencing some building activity over the past 5 years including additions to Arts and Science buildings, construction of a new Residence Hall (the first in 40 years), and redevelopment of the Athletic Fields. The College has been engaged in a lot of planning.

While the College will continue some building and renovation activity, including a modest expansion of Kendall Hall and renovation of various residence halls, enrollment is not expected to change (it will continue to stay in the range of 2,000 to 2,100 students). Development of the new Residence Hall and renovation of the existing facilities is intended to address 3 issues which were highlighted in a 1999 study that the College has updated:

- Residence Halls are a bit overcrowded
- The facilities suffer from deferred maintenance issues
- Living arrangements are not as competitive with the College's peer institutions

Sometime this summer (2008), the College intends to begin construction of a boathouse off Ferry Street along the Connecticut River. This will provide much needed space for the rowing teams and may provide some opportunity for community programs.

Expansion of Kendall Hall will free up some space for the fitness and exercise areas. It will also provide a consolidated area for the dance programs.

Eventually, the College hopes to consolidate all of its faculty and staff from the west side of Route 116 and onto the College "proper".

The College is evaluating its rental housing stock. It may sell off some of the housing. Co-generation is also being explored as a cost-savings measure.

Mr. Bryant provided additional information regarding the College's facilities and lands in response to numerous questions.

Mr. Bryant stated that the students utilize the 5-college bus service significantly. He noted that the colleges have class offerings which permit students to take courses at the different colleges. In terms of the rental properties, the College owns some beautiful old homes, but they are costly to maintain. When the College sells the homes, they seek to encourage their preservation, but the College does not attach conditions to the sales.

The Five College Consortium has had high-speed internet fiber optic installed through South Hadley. Mr. Lytle indicated that the unused capacity is available for the Town to use.

In terms of the College's undeveloped land and its potential disposal, Mr. Bryant stated that he was not aware of any immediate plans to dispose of any of the property. There have been on and off discussions regarding possible sell of a portion of land abutting the Orchards Golf Course that is mostly in Granby, but some is in South Hadley. He stated he will provide the Town with a map (in electronic form) of the unused or surplus properties.

The new boat house will be primarily for the College's programs. While it will not be a general public launch, the College may offer community boating programs.

The College, in cooperation with the DPW and MassHighway, installed the new crosswalks on Route 116. In developing new buildings and parking areas, the College is sensitive to the impact of lighting on the area.

Ms. Young thanked Mr. Bryant and Mr. Bigelow for attending and indicated they were welcome to stay for the rest of the meeting.

South Hadley Electric Light Department

Mr. Doerpholz began his review of SHELLED by noting that the Town Commons project (the Route 116 – College Street and Woodbridge Street) was being completed in cooperation with the DPW and Mount Holyoke College. He reviewed some of the lighting improvements associated with the project.

He pronounced SHELLED to be in pretty good shape. It has an "A" rating and has no long-term debt. They adopted some robust standards 20 years ago which has enabled SHELLED to ensure that new facilities are durable and effective. SHELLED has switched to all electronic metering and eliminated almost all of the mercury vapor lights. The most significant infrastructure project is the rebuilding of the Pine Street "shed" with \$3 million being spent on it this year.

Mr. Doerpholz reviewed the sources of SHELLED's electrical supply. He noted that they have reviewed alternative sources to reduce their use of the "I-cap" market which is high priced and provides 35% of the SHELLED supply.

Recently, SHELLED completed installation of the South Hadley portion of the Five-Colleges Fiber Optic network. The Fiber Optic is now up and running at 1 Federal in Springfield. It is being offered to the schools and they have provided a drop to the Police Department. The Fiber Optic can be run through to the Town Hall.

He reviewed two "unofficial" goals:

- Run underground from the Center to South Hadley Falls (he noted that the phone company does not have to comply except in unique circumstances)
- Reduce light pollution

There was discussion as to the impediment caused by the phone company not having to put their lines underground and efforts to reduce the light pollution. He noted that the Big Y (formerly Foodmart) lights are visible bouncing off the water tank off Alvord Street.

Two impediments exist to replacing the lights in subdivisions with more efficient lights which also reduce light pollution. It requires a public hearing which creates

conflicts between neighbors and there is nothing on the market at a low enough price to merit the switch.

SHELD is looking to build a new building on land it owns off Old Lyman Road. The Commission has decided not to rehab the existing building – it is not cost effective and the logistics of accessing the property with big trucks makes it an impractical location.

SHELD is prepared to do whatever is necessary to meet the needs of its customers. Electrical usage in South Hadley has been growing at an average of 2% per year. The new substation will last 25 years, at that growth rate and 40 years of electrical usage grows at only 1% per year. If the largest electrical customer was lost, then SHELD would grow back into the current level use within 5 years.

Mr. Doerpholz stated that SHELD would like to see more solar use.

Mr. Doerpholz responded to various questions regarding the Falls, the future of energy use and markets, and what the CPAC should be considering and promoting.

Mr. Doerpholz supports South Hadley Falls redevelopment. He has resisted moving out of the Falls area. However, he noted that the site is not large enough or logistically situated to be served by the size of trucks that have to make deliveries. He reviewed the condition of the building and the process whereby the Town acquires the building and can then dispose of it. In terms of what should be in the Falls, he suggested that there are numerous limitations in redeveloping the area: the Haas site is reported to have a stream running under it, test borings have found burning cinders from coal, and flood plain restrictions. There is a need for a nice place to eat and there is a good volume of traffic on Main Street.

The energy markets are changing. The light fixtures in use today will go away as consumers are provided with LED fixtures instead of mercury, energy efficient fixtures. Deregulation of the energy market led to regulation of the energy market without any public oversight. Distributed generation is the way to go in the future.

He suggested that Building Codes need to require that fiber optic be installed in all new homes. Dark sky-based regulations should be adopted and enforced. Noise needs to be more closely regulated. Siting of solar photovoltaics and wind generation need to be provided for in community planning and regulations.

Mr. Doerpholz reviewed the Big Y development plans on Willimansett Street. He noted that a portion of the property was developed with the capability for electrical service. However, there are some limitations on the properties south of the Big Y development which are also zoned for commercial use. Electrical service will have to be provided off Old Lyman Road.

He noted that the Town cannot compel the phone company to place their wires underground. They are exempt unless there is a compelling public necessity.

Department of Public Works

Jim Reidy began by noting that the DPW is responsible for roads, sewer, drainage, sidewalks, and trash services. He began by discussing the sewer system.

South Hadley has a 4.2 Million Gallons Daily (MGD) treatment plant located in Chicopee just south of the Town Hall. Other major aspects of the sewer system include 5 pump stations, 1,500 manholes, and 82 miles of sewer line.

While the treatment plant is going through a \$4 Million upgrade, this work is not expanding the plants capacity. There is not a capacity issue at this time or in the foreseeable future. The plant has an average daily volume of 2.5 million gallons. Thus, it has 1.7 million gallons of excess capacity on average.

Two major concerns regarding the sewer system:

- The age of the system (pipes and joints settling, deterioration, etc.)
- Infiltration/Inflow (I/I) from groundwater and illegal connections, respectively

These problems are related. The infiltration issue in particular results in the treatment plant having to handle more flow than it is designed or permitted to handle. As an example, he noted that in the last major rain storm, the plant handled 14.0 million gallons – far in excess of its permitted capacity. He reviewed why that is a problem.

The Town completed its last Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) project on December 31, 2007 to comply with Federal mandates and to help clean up the Connecticut River.

He reviewed the efforts to eliminate the inflows. These have arisen from previous practices of connecting roof drains and other private drainage into the Town's sewer system.

Mr. Reidy continued his discussion of the Town's infrastructure by discussing roadways.

South Hadley is responsible for 86 miles of roadways. The additional 20 miles of roadways in the town are primarily the responsibility of the State although some roadways are privately owned and maintained.

The DPW maintains a road inventory which includes a grading of the roadways. At present, approximately 37% are graded as good or excellent. However, 63% are considered to be fair or poor. With an annual allotment of \$380,000 in Chapter 90 funds from the State, the Town could do an 1-1/2 inch overlay of 2.7 miles of roadway annually. That means it would take approximately 20 years to overlay the

54.4 miles of fair/poor roadways in town and 32 years to overlay all of the Town roadways. (Some of the roadways also require drainage and more substantial work; thus, the Town cannot do 2.7 miles per year.)

He noted that the DPW has a 5-year plan for roadway improvements. With the necessary drainage and sidewalk upgrades/repairs, the Chapter 90 funds are stretched thin.

Ms. Young noted that the DPW has a substantial amount of work and the topics that the CPAC needs to explore with Mr. Reidy require more time than this one meeting will allow. She inquired if Mr. Reidy would be open to scheduling another meeting to meet with the CPAC to complete review/discussion of the DPW infrastructure issues. He indicated that he would do so. Mr. Yem Lip, the Town Engineer will also be within him for the next meeting.

Ms. Young thanked Mr. Reidy and the other presenters for their taking the time to meet and for the information provided.

Mr. Harris requested that each of them provide their respective 5/10 year plans as several noted they have prepared. All indicated they would do so.

3. Discussion of Community Gathering and Surveys

Ms. Young asked each member to comment on their perception of the Community Gathering. Accordingly, each member present commented on what they heard and/or learned at the Gathering. It was noted that participants were active and energetically involved in the discussions. Attendance was not as high as some had hoped or expected. However, the event was organized and conducted.

Mr. Harris provided members with:

- A tabulation of the 63 survey responses received (Tabulated by the length of the respondent's tenure in South Hadley: 0-9 years, 10-29 years, 30 or more years, and no tenure response)
- Copy of the 63 survey responses which were received
- Copies of 14-15 of the 430 +/- survey responses received from students at the High School
- Copy of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis conducted at the March 5, 2008 Community Gathering
- Copy of the CPAC members responses to the Immersion Day Questionnaire

4. Minutes of December 19, 2007, January 30, 2008, and February 27, 2008 meetings

Motion – Ms. Clancy moved and Mr. King seconded the motion to approve the December 19, 2007 and January 30, 2008 minutes as presented. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

5. Schedule of Meetings for March and April

Mr. Harris inquired if the members wanted to meet more frequently in April. He noted that the regular meeting is not scheduled until April 30th. Therefore, there are 5 Wednesdays in April on which to meet. The consensus of the members present was to schedule meetings for April 2, 16, and 30. This would provide more opportunities to have people present on issues/topics that the CPAC members need to learn about as they proceed in developing the Master Plan.

A question was asked about use of emails. Mr. Harris advised members not to undertake email exchanges, as that could be a violation of the Open Meetings Law.

6. Adjournment

Motion – Ms. O’Brien moved and Mr. Schenker seconded the motion to adjourn. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Harris, Recorder