

Community Center Land Advisory Committee – July 15, 2019

Posted July 9, 2019 at 4 p.m. at the Town of Russell Garage, Town Clerk’s Office and Town website. Notice sent to the Ashland Daily Press.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman, Town Supervisor Mark Bugher at 10:08 a.m. at the Town of Russell Garage. Roll call was taken as follows; present committee members Mike Cariveau, Mirka Nelson, Annalisa Bermel and Clerk/Treasurer David L. Good. Committee member Jeff Benton was excused.

No electors and/or members of the public was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of the agenda – A motion was made by Cariveau and seconded by Bermel to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

Public Input – No one present.

Approval of minutes of June 3, 2019 – Cariveau offered the following corrections; change “BRBO” to “VRBO”. Discussion followed regarding the items numbered 4. and 8. Change “Discussion to develop strategies for this property” to “Brain storming session to develop proposed strategies for this property”, Discussion followed about the rescinded Town Comprehensive Plan and elimination of the Town Plan Commission. A motion was made by Benton and seconded by Nelson to approve the minutes. A motion was made by Cariveau and seconded by Mirka to approve the minutes as amended during discussions. The motion carried.

Review Town of Russell Comprehensive Plan (Plan is not adopted by the Town Board) – The Plan was discussed. Potential assets in the Town were discussed in the context to determine current “needs” within the Town. It was agreed that the Plan was used as background information for the committee.

Bugher stated that several members of the Board did not have an interest in developing the property for residential use and/or the Town acting as the developer. Use of this property for camping and/or public park along with improving the Shooting Range.

Discussion followed about what is the “sense of place” for the Town. Use this property for something that adds value to everyone in the Town and is beneficial to the Town. Ideas were wilderness camping and recreational use on a seasonal use. Discussion of the need for a revenue stream from this property was discussed. How to do development for this property needs to be done with a RFP.

The big picture questions needed to be addressed are:

1. Should the Town sell the property?
2. If sold, to whom for what?
3. Do nothing with the property?

It was agreed that the Committee is to address this parcel of property only. Cariveau felt the Town should hold this land at the current time and spend no funds on this property. Discussion was held regarding the land sold to the Tribe at Big Sand Bay and the disposition of these funds. He was concerned that the Town seek financial stability without reliance on sale of land funds.

What to do with the 60+% of land held by Federal/State/County or Tribal governments was discussed. We need to encourage development of these properties. Bermel felt we are constrained by the Town Board to look at a specific parcel verses the view of the Town from 30,000 foot view. We need to develop the brand for the Town. Nelson felt we should not sell this land at this time.

A motion was made by Nelson and seconded by Bermel that the Committee recommend that the Town not sell the land at this time and take more time to discuss options for this land. Discussion followed. Should we recommend holding the land and initiate strategies for increasing Town revenues and land values. It was felt the recommendation should be made in two motions. Discussion followed and the motion modified as follows: A motion was made by Nelson and seconded by Bermel to recommend that the Town hold and not sell this property and preserve it as it is at this time. The motion carried.

The committee is willing to take a broader look at how to grow the value of lands within the Town and create a sustainable revenue stream for the Town if the Town Board is interested.

Bugher agreed to report our findings and recommendation to the Board at their August Meeting.

The committee will wait to hear the recommendations of the Town Board before anything further is pursued. Committee members are encouraged to attend the Town Board Meeting. If a committee member can not attend, they may submit a written comment for the Board's consideration.

A motion was made by Cariveau and seconded by Nelson to adjourn at 11:18 a.m. The motion carried.

The minutes respectfully submitted by:

David L. Good – Clerk/Treasurer