

Weston Town Committee for the Oversight of the Lachat Property

MINUTES

September 27, 2012

Present: Committee Members: Ellen McCormick, , Amy Kalafa, Sheila Koehler, Paul Deysenroth and First Selectman, Gayle Weinstein

Consultants: Robert Hatch, AIA Architect

Absent: Nick Bell, Carol Baldwin, Judy Saffan

Presided By: Ellen McCormick

Meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m.

- A. The minutes for the last three meetings were moved for approval to the end of the meeting to accommodate Gayle Weinstein's schedule and did not get approved for lack of time. The approval of the minutes will be the first item on the agenda for the next meeting.
- B. Schedule: Gayle Weinstein attended the meeting as requested during our last meeting. It was unclear at the prior meeting as to whether the preparation of the construction drawings could begin prior to the presentation and acceptance of the Master Plan. Gayle clarified that we can finish and submit the final drawings to the Board of Selectman (BOS). The final drawings will be prepared by Robert Hatch and the issue of approval of those drawings will be addressed on October 2nd.

Gayle also mentioned we will need to provide a financial plan to indicate how the property can be self-sustaining in all it's components including agriculture (CSA), community gardens, educational programs, art programs, etc.

Gayle has offered to meet with Sylvia Erskine at one of our meetings to discuss the landscaping phases of the farmhouse which is part of the planning grant. This needs to be done soon to comply with the grant.

The structural engineer component of the planning grant will be dealt with by Robert Hatch in the coming weeks.

- C. Next Meeting: We will discuss the issues of the final drawing approvals for the BOS, preparation for the P&Z approvals, a public hearing and the finalization of the uses of the farmhouse will be addressed.
- D. Farmhouse Design: Amy Kalafa made a motion to accept the new drawings with the addition of the new entrance to the attic which was seconded by Shelia Kohler. The motion carried unanimously.
- E. Farmhouse Use: Further discussions were held with regard to the use of the house, in order to provide Mr. Hatch with enough information to discuss the future use with the Town

Code Official, so that the Committee can understand whether the proposed uses would require alterations to the house for the purpose of separating the uses, such as fire doors, additional sheet rocking, and/or sprinklers. Potential uses that were discussed include tours, art display space, small workshops, and small meetings. No auditorium-style seating would be used and the total number of visitors would be limited by building codes. This information will also be important to allow the structural engineer and architect to determine if additional reinforcement of the first floor must be made to meet live load code requirements. The final decisions on this issue will be made at the next meeting.

- F. Foundation Restoration: The bidding process is still under discussion with the Town and the architect. No decisions have been made yet.
- G. Fundraising: The Farm-to-Table fundraising event has been changed to a smaller family friendly event with walks through the property and a program of fun things to do from 3-5 in the afternoon. It was decided there isn't enough time to do a larger Farm-to-Table dinner by the date set for the event. The Friends of Lachat has set a date of October 21, 2012 for the event.
- H. Master Plan: The discussion of Carol's excel spreadsheet with items for the Master Plan will continue at the next meeting.

It was noted that as part of the Master Plan development, our mission should be stated and should be dovetailed with the planned uses of the site.

A continued discussion of potential placement for community and production gardens was held. The community gardens may be raised bed gardens which might allow them to be placed in areas that do not have the best soil on the site, but access and water accessibility are issues that must be addressed. It was also noted that the meadow has the best soil on the site, but some people may not be pleased if it is not left as a meadow.

ACTION ITEMS: Ellen will email the spreadsheet to the Committee members for review before the next meeting. Ellen will bring the property model to the meeting to facilitate the Master Plan discussions. Amy will bring a large property map. Sheila will bring trace paper.

- I. Heating house for this winter: The town was contacted about the heating situation at the farmhouse. Tom Landry directed Ellen to Steve Patton, from the Nature Conservancy who stated that the furnace is unfixable and there hasn't been any heat in the house for about 5 years. It was decided we would not heat the house again this winter and continue to investigate new heating systems. Hydro-air has been suggested as the best solution but additional research will continue.
- J. Roof repairs: Ellen reported that the repairs to the roof have been made. The first attempt at re-tarring the chimney and the dormer joint were not totally successful so a tarp has been placed on the roof to protect the house from additional leaks. That seems to be working at present. The committee will continue to watch for any additional repairs that are needed.

There have also been several windows in the machine shop replaced and more windows in the barn, etc. will be replaced in the coming weeks.

K. Site maintenance: Maintenance issues were not discussed at this meeting but will be at the next meeting.

Calls have been placed to Joe Lametta about mowing the fields for the upcoming event and for fall maintenance of the field.

Follow up with the Master Gardeners and garden clubs is in the works for identifying plants, etc. that need to be saved and perhaps transplanted before too much is mowed down.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:27pm.

THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE OCTOBER 2ND AT THE WESTON LIBRARY AT 7:30 PM.

(Minutes submitted by Ellen McCormick)