Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee
Thursday, September 3, 2020
Joint Meeting with Planning & Zoning and Economic Development Commission (EDC)
Special Meeting Minutes - Draft

Members in attendance: Cameron Beard, Mike Callahan, Maryjane Malavasi, (arr. 7:28) Jackie Nowell, Patty Stricker.

Members absent: Don Donner.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chairman Beard.

2. Attendance: Members from each of the committees were identified.

3. Discussion Regarding the Goodspeed Airport Property:

   A. Mr. Casner, EDC Chair, gave background on where this issue stands with their committee.
   B. Mr. Beard spoke on behalf of the Airport Committee. He gave a history of our group, reviewed its charge, and reviewed the draft report that was sent to each of the committees.
   C. Members of Planning & Zoning commented on the purchase of the property.
   D. A summary of the meeting is attached as part of the minutes.
   E. Planning & Zoning and EDC will submit letters to the Board of Selectmen and the Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee outlining where they stand on the issue and providing information that our committee can use in its final report.
   F. It was the consensus of all in attendance that a report from our committee should be completed as soon as possible.

4. Adjournment: Motion made by Ms. Stricker and seconded by Mr. Callahan to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryjane Malavasi
Secretary

Overview

- At 9-3-20 meeting, GAEC was urged by almost all in attendance to move as quickly as possible.
- Various factors, including the need for rapid action, suggest that it may make most sense to issue a short report to the Board of Selectmen in the near future, rather than taking the time required to prepare a lengthy final recommendation.

Feedback from Town Commissions/Committees

- Overwhelming consensus of members of ECD and P&Z that purchase options should be pursued, and that the property owner should be contacted.
- Agreed that contacting the property owner is not within GAEC mandate.
- Contact, if any, to be made by others, with prior approval of Board of Selectmen.
- ECD and P&Z see no purpose in continuing aviation activity at the Goodspeed site, and see significant advantages to the town in making the property publicly accessible, both for town residents for purposes of recreation, for nearby businesses which would benefit from additional income, and for the town's development generally.
- Income possible from moorings in the river, event ticket sales, small boat rentals and the like.
- Also potential for increased tax income from development of area surrounding the airport property.
- Inland Wetlands had minimal input at this time, suggesting that its role should be limited to assessing concrete questions that may come before it in the future with respect to matters falling within its jurisdiction.
- EHVRC has not commented to date.

Additional Facts to Consider from meeting with EDC and P&Z

- Only governmental or charitable buyers could use the property for the recreational purposes outlined in the easements.
- A third party buyer could use the property only as an airport
- A third party buyer could, however, extend the length of the runway, resulting in larger aircraft visiting the airport and more aviation activity generally
- If the airport were purchased by the town, P&Z confirms that the road to the residences at the far end of the property could be moved to allow for a proposed boardwalk.
- EDC intimated that net tax revenue would be higher rather than lower if the property were publicly owned.

Outstanding Issues that have not been addressed or cannot be addressed by GAEC

- Not clear if the property is or will be offered to the town or it what price.
- No offering price on the table for purposes of assessing its reasonableness
- Environmental status of property is unknown
- Unable to assess fair market value without access to the site
- Unable to determine an appropriate metric for determining fair market value
- Unknown whether town is permitted to pay more than fair market value
- While current appraised value of the property for tax purposes is known, it is unclear what that the appraised or assessed values might be in the future, and such values would presumably factor into fair market value.
- EDC suggests that DEEP may have appraisals for the Goodspeed property. Those appraisals might be available through a FOIA request, but such a request could take GAEC beyond its 90-day mandate period. Q: Should seeking those appraisals be left to others, or should GAEC see if they can be obtained on short notice without a FOIA request?

- EDC suggests involving a tax attorney to analyze how to make a sale to the town attractive to the seller. Engaging an attorney could take GAEC beyond its 90-day mandate period, and presumably would require prior authorization and budget approval by the Board of Selectmen and might or might not be a defensible step in a situation where the property is not actually for sale. Should the hiring of an attorney be left for others to do at a later date?
- The method of financing a purchase has not been examined by GAEC, but EDC suggested a bond issue.
- GAEC has not examined the costs of a bond issue, and such costs would of course vary with, among other things, the price of the property.
- GAEC has not examined whether a referendum would be required prior to acquisition of the property.