

SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF NATICK

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Conducted in the Edward H. Dlott
Meeting Room and via Zoom

February 11, 2023

8:00 AM

PRESENT: Paul R. Joseph, Chair; Michael J. Hickey, Jr., Vice-Chair; Bruce T. Evans, Clerk; Kathryn M. Coughlin; Richard Sidney

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator, James Errickson

ABSENT: None.

Chair Joseph called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM.

The Chair announced that this meeting is currently being recorded by Natick Pegasus for future viewing.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a Moment of Silence was observed for all those that serve.

PUBLIC SPEAK

Ms. Linda Valentin was present and addressed the Board under “public speak”. Ms. Valentin is scheduled to interview for the 5 Auburn Street RFP at 9:15 this morning representing Grace Gable Manoirs, LLC. She noted that she is still battling an illness which she had notified Administration of toward the end of the week. Chair Joseph noted that Town Administration had offered Ms. Valentin several alternative times for interviews when the Town was notified, however, the Board does need to adhere to the Open Meeting Law and needs 48 hours’ notice to reschedule. Chair Joseph stated that he did recall that there was availability on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, and Wednesday, February 22, 2023, to reschedule the interview. Ms. Valentin acknowledged the Chair’s statements and stated that she would contact the office of the Town Administrator on Monday, February 13, 2023, to confirm a new date.

1. DISCUSSION AND DECISION

A. 5 Auburn Street RFP (Request for Proposal) Interviews with Select Board

Chair Joseph stated that due to the cancellation of the second interview, the Board would only be interview M. Trask Inc. this morning.

1. 8:15 - 9:00 am - Interview with M. Trask, Inc.

Ben Stevens, President of Trask Development (hereinafter “Trask”), introduced himself and his son, Matt Stevens, Director of Sales and Marketing. For the purpose of these Minutes, Ben Stevens will hereinafter be referred to as “Mr. Stevens”. Mr. Stevens stated that Trask has been in business since 1994. The company has built over 100 homes and over a dozen sub-divisions. Trask does their own permitting, land acquisitions, have their own site crews, exclusive sub-contractors, and work exclusively in the Metro-West area.

Mr. Stevens stated that when Trask had looked at 5 Auburn Street and the existing zoning, Trask's plan would be to divide the property and create three parcels recognizing that we are in the historical district. The new construction would need to flow through the Historic District Commission.

Mr. Stevens stated that the center parcel, which is the historic building, has been looked at by the company. Mr. Stevens noted that the building is a beautiful building but it will be an expensive building to maintain. Looking ahead, it would be important to provide garages and parking for this project. He noted that most people who are looking to live in this area do not want to park their cars outside. At this point, Trask does not have a lot of designs on the two duplex parcels (lots) but in looking at size, they would assume that the units in the duplex parcels would be approximately 2,500 square feet, on two levels. These units would also have two-car garages. Trask would like to have conversations with the Historic District Commission prior to making those designs. As far as the existing building which would be the main building, Trask would plan to make three vertical units. They would then be able to leave the windows alone in those units. The gym would be a good opportunity for a first-floor handicap adaptable or handicap accessible unit.

With regard to marketing and finances, Mr. Stevens stated that "this would not be a very big project dollar-wise for our company." Trask, at this time, does not see any problems getting this project financed or built. Middlesex Savings Bank was the first bank that Trask used in 1996 and they continue to use them almost exclusively. They would also be able to do the project for cash.

Mr. Stevens stated that critical highlights are:

1. Working through existing zoning;
2. permitting;
3. there would be no conditions of sale as Trask would buy "as is"

Mr. Evans questioned Mr. Stevens as to how many historic renovations Trask has done. Mr. Stevens stated that they had not done many except for in Watertown, MA, where they have performed renovations of two-family homes. He also stated that the "product availability" to work with historic homes and buildings has never been better.

Mr. Sidney asked if Trask could do road narrowing on Auburn St.. Mr. Stevens stated that if the Planning Board thought that this was a requirement, Trask would be able to do it.

Mr. Hickey asked about the "no contingencies" statement and wanted to inquire again about that statement. Mr. Stevens stated that other than needing to do the research on the Deed (title) this would likely be a six-month process in order to go through permitting as well as going before the Planning Board and Historic District Commission. He added that there would likely be a period of about nine months where the major construction of the framing, roadways, etc. would be done, and another four to five months of inside work.

Mr. Hickey clarified that "assuming that the Town were to move forward in the Spring, you would be off to the races possibly this calendar year and inside this time next year." Mr. Stevens said "yes".

February 11, 2023

Mr. Sidney inquired about his concern for how structurally sound the historic building may be and if that could pose problems moving forward. Mr. Stevens stated that he toured the building and visited every part of it including the basement. Given his experience, he believes the building to be structurally sound and may only need "Band-Aid structural repair".

Members of the public who made comments during the meeting:

Brad Coyman, Rose Coyman and Roger Scott thanked Trask for their presentation and stated that they would like to see the Town move forward with this developer.

Ed Shagory inquired as to whether or not there was asbestos in the historic building and asked Trask if they were firm in the number of units they would be building. Mr. Stevens stated that Trask has no problem limiting the units to nine or ten in the development agreement. The duplex lots are set at two units. The main building could technically be more than five, but Mr. Stevens stated that he did not see that as being marketable. As far as asbestos is concerned, Mr. Stevens stated that in Natick alone, if he has torn down seventy houses in the past decade, at least sixty of those houses had asbestos.

2. 9:15 - 10:00 am – Interview with Grace Gable Manoirs, LLC

Postponed to a date yet to be determined.

On a motion by Mr. Sidney, seconded by Mr. Evans, the Board, adjourned the meeting at 9:00 AM.


Richard Sidney, Clerk

February 11, 2023, Select Board Meeting Minutes Approved by the Select Board on July 12, 2023.

All documents used at this Select Board meeting are available at:

<https://naticktown.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/MeetingView.aspx?MeetingID=1128&MinutesMeetingID=-1&doctype=Agend>