

TMMA Executive Committee Minutes: November 16, 2005

Attendance:

TMMA Officers:

Gloria Bloom – (Chair Pct 4)
David Horton – (Vice Chair Pct 8)
Andy Friedlich – (Treasurer Pct 5)
David Kaufman – (Communication Officer Pct 6)
Darwin Adams – (Clerk Pct 3)

Precinct Officers:

Pct 9: Francine Stieglitz
Pct 8: Marge Battin (Moderator)
Pct 7: Marsha Baker
Pct 6: Alan Lazarus, Sheldon Spector, Jane Pagett
Pct 5: Eph Weiss, Sam Silverman
Pct 4: Steve Turner, Ellen McDonald
Pct 3: Reid Zurlo (Pct Chair)
Pct 1: Joel Adler, Jon Cole

Presenters:

Bob Bicknell (CPA Act)
Betsy Weiss (CPA Act)
Richard Canale (Scenic Byways)

Agenda:

Gloria called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm in the Legion room of Cary Hall.

Scenic Byways Presentation:

Richard Canale presented 3 topics related to Scenic Byways.

1. The Massachusetts Area Planning Council “MAPC” (Jeanne Krieger is also a representative on this body) would like to have a section of the Battle Road designated as a scenic byway. They would like to have each of the 4 adjoining towns pass a resolution supporting this designation. Passage will help obtain the necessary State and Federal support. Once the resolutions have passed, they will present a petition to the Massachusetts legislature. The website for the MAPC is www.mapc.org.
2. There will be a Historic Roads Conference next April 27-30, 2006 in Boston. Richard encouraged participation of interested parties.
3. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is working on a Heritage Land Inventory. The “Freedom’s Way” extends from Medford through Lexington all the way out to Wachusett Mountain. The DCR will help Lexington apply for a grant to fund our contribution to the Inventory.

Sheldon Spector asked if there will be any improvements on the Battle Road if it gets a scenic byway designation. Richard said that the designation does not encumber the land in any way and that all such improvements would need to be made through our normal Town Meeting processes.

Personal Thanks:

Gloria extended a warm thanks to the people who helped with the recent TMMA Informational Meeting (for the Special Town Meeting). Special thanks was given to Andy Friedlich and Alan Lazarus for their help in arranging for the chairs and the sound system.

Community Preservation Act Presentation:

A ballot question committee has been formed for the CPA vote due next March. Betsy Weiss is the Chairman of this committee and Bob Bicknell is the Treasurer. Betsy and Bob presented a slide show about the CPA, what its benefits and costs might be. The committee has created a website www.cpaforlexington.org, which contains most of the information presented in the slide show. There will be a ballot question on the March 2006 election to decide if the Town will adopt the CPA. It is important that everyone understand the CPA prior to that vote.

Andy Friedlich asked if CPA funds could be spent without approval of Town Meeting. Betsy said that all CPA funds must be allocated just like any other funds in town, and that Town Meeting would vote all expenditures.

Sam Silverman wanted to know the sources of funding for the CPA. Betsy explained that Town funds come from a surcharge of 3% on the tax levy. State matching funds are collected from fees on Real Estate transactions such as mortgage loans and closings.

There was much discussion about possible conflicts between CPA and potential operating and debt-exclusion overrides. People were concerned that a “yes” vote for the CPA in March might result in a “no” vote on an operating override in June. Bob Bicknell presented an analysis of this potential conflict from other towns that had already adopted the CPA.

Gloria suggested that the committee show how taxes would have been different in Lexington if we had adopted the CPA 2 or 3 years ago.

David Kaufman asked about tax exemptions for lower income people in the Town. He wanted to know what standards apply for eligibility and how IRS deductions affect the income level used in those standards.

Sheldon Spector wondered what issues might be important to people who oppose the CPA. A short discussion ensued and issues such as limited choices for how the funds are spent and a concern that funds might be spent on projects that are not really needed were suggested. Reid Zurlo suggested that some might consider the CPA as an “end run” around Proposition 2 1/2.

The Next Executive Committee Meeting:

Gloria announced that the next meeting would be on December 14th. Andy suggested that it would be a good opportunity to meet the new Town Manager and School Superintendent. Sheldon thought we might want to wait until after the holidays and do this at our January meeting. David Kaufman worried that meeting both the Town Manager and the Superintendent might be too much for one meeting.

Gloria outlined a plan for the December meeting which included meeting with the Town Manager (and not the Superintendent) and a presentation by the Communications Working Group. Eph Weiss expressed a desire to talk about a new Town committee to oversee energy conservation issues in the Town.

Alan Lazarus asked if we should write a letter to Lexington Community TV expressing our gratitude for a “job well done” at the Special Town Meeting.

Eph Weiss took a few minutes to explain why he feels the town should have an Energy Committee with roles and responsibilities equal to other major committees such as the Appropriation Committee. While the Board of Selectmen have an energy committee, they have not been very active and do not have the authority that a regular Town committee would have.

Sam Silverman noted that this would require a change to the Town bylaws.

Burlington Sand and Gravel Development:

Andy Friedlich reported that he had read the statement we had approved at our last meeting to the Burlington Planning Board. He said that it was well received.

Reid Zurlo announced that a new organization called “HOPE” has been organizing an effort to assure that there will not be any adverse effects of the proposed development on Lexington neighborhoods. The group is looking for funds to support independent testing of the site and review the documents provided by the Town on Burlington. HOPE members have also been attending the Burlington Planning Board meetings and have been concerned that the rezoning might pass. She reported that some in Burlington expressed annoyance that Lexington people are taking such a strong interest in Burlington’s affairs. The HOPE organization is collecting signatures to get Burlington taxpayers involved. HOPE’s efforts to work with the Boards Of Health in both towns have not been very successful. The group plans to work with the State EPA and MEPA organizations, but need some real “hard” information for this effort to be successful.

The Battle Green Inn:

Someone asked if anyone knew the status of Mr. Michelson’s referendum opposing the rezoning of the BGI. No one had much information except that the deadline was scheduled for this Friday.

Approval of minutes:

The minutes of the October 5th meeting were reviewed and accepted. Sheldon Spector abstained because he was not present at that meeting. Andy Friedlich expressed thanks to the group who worked so hard to produce the Informational Meeting prior to the recent Special Town Meeting.

Treasurer’s Report:

The treasurers report showed a small expenditure to support the TMMA website. The report was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Submitted by Darwin Adams, Clerk