

Eminent Domain Committee meeting, March 16, 2016, 7:00 pm
Second-floor Conference Room, Brookline Public Library
Minutes

Commenced at 7:05 pm

Members present: Craig Bolon as chair, Clifford M. Brown, Catherine Donaher, Thomas J. Gallitano, Jean Stringham, Leonard A. Weiss and Christine Westphal

Others present: Regina Frawley, TMM-16, Steve Chiumenti, TMM-16, and Bill Pu, TMM-16

Catherine Donaher led a discussion of options for open space in South Brookline, including Putterham Library grounds and “Baker Woods.” Committee members reviewed maps of locations under discussion.

Regarding Putterham Library, discussion of repurposing land around the library (including area currently used for parking). Regarding Baker, discussion of the vacant wooded lot on Beverly Road, adjacent to the playing fields. Regarding Putterham Meadows, the wooded lot along Newton Street was discussed.

According to Catherine Donaher, eminent domain should be lower in priority, after other options are explored. Other town-owned land considered. Negotiating with Chestnut Hill Realty considered, current owner of subject land at Hancock Village.

Review and discussion of Stantec document: schematic of proposed Chestnut Hill Realty (phase I) development.

General consensus that the desired use—open space—is a legitimate basis for an eminent domain taking. Leonard Weiss is concerned about expense of an eminent domain taking. Similar concerns from Clifford M. Brown and Christine Westphal.

Public comment from Steve Chiumenti: Absent a recommendation for an eminent domain taking, Chestnut Hill Realty is unlikely to negotiate.

Public comment from Regina Frawley: Spoke with State Rep. Ed Copping more than 3 years ago about possibility of eminent domain taking. Not adverse to negotiation process. Land near library not a long term solution and not large enough for the type of open active/passive recreational uses contemplated. Baker School option also not viable. Park and Recreation departments will fight any effort to use Putterham Meadows land. Urges that walkability be the touchstone. Also addressed the issue of valuation.

Thomas J. Gallitano to ask State Rep. Ed Copping about last three appropriations under the statute in question and description of process for getting an appropriation.

Next meeting: March 30, 7 pm
Adjourned at 8:50 pm