

**WHITE CLIFFS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES – January 8, 2020**

3:00 p.m. – Selectmen’s Meeting Room, 63 Main Street, Northborough, MA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Todd Helwig, Committee Chairman - CPC Representative
Norm Corbin, Committee Vice Chair - Historical District
Commission Liaison
Julianne Hirsh, Board of Selectmen Liaison
Diana Nicklaus, At-Large Member

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Reardon, At-Large Member

OTHERS PRESENT : John Coderre, Town Administrator
Kathy Joubert, Town Planner
Martha Werenfels, Principal, DVBW Architects
Nealia Morrison, Project Manager, DBVW Architects
Eric Bush, Real Estate Advisor

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 13, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Postponed to the next meeting.

DBVW ARCHITECTS

Martha Werenfels, Nealia Morrison and Eric Bush presented.

Update on Phase I Roof Replacement

Ms. Werenfels stated that there is a new roof on the White Cliffs and noted that Ms. Morrison just took the photo of the new roof used in the Power-Point presentation one hour prior to the meeting. The DPW Director provided the work in progress pictures. Ms. Werenfels stated that the contractor replaced the roof in its entirety and also replaced the section over the porch, which was not originally included in the specs. The skylight was left as is, just new flashing and caulking. She was happy to report that the new roof looks good.

Summary of Character Defining Features (Phase II)

Ms. Werenfels discussed the character defining features included in her Power-Point presentation, which were rated by the level of significance. She noted that White Cliffs is so architecturally significant that most of its features could be identified as “character defining” with the exception of those that are not original. She then reviewed the most character-defining features of the White Cliffs:

1. Roof – overall form
2. Chimneys
3. Turrets
4. Windows
5. Exterior Wood Decorative Elements
6. Porches

7. Main Staircase
8. Fireplaces
9. Decorative Interior Woodwork
10. Decorative Ceilings
11. Stained Glass

Re-use Discussion

Ms. Werenfels deferred to Eric Bush, the consultant who is conducting the market analysis. Mr. Bush introduced himself and explained his role in the process, which is to look at the re-use potential, create a platform to discuss the potential use, and prepare a financial plan. Initial thoughts for re-use options, for this discussion only, included Event use, Municipal use, and Residential use – Senior/age-restricted housing. Ms. Werenfels provided several 3-D examples of potential additions to the White Cliffs that could be added to facilitate the re-use options.

Following the presentation, several comments and questions were heard from members of the Committee. Several of the members had questions regarding the Residential use and the need for senior housing. After discussing the Residential option in detail, it was concluded that it was unlikely to work due to site size limitations. Several members inquired about using the space for a museum and/or arts center. Mr. Bush replied that these options would be difficult to sustain financially. Mr. Corbin asked about office space. Mr. Bush replied that based on a survey, the option would be difficult to finance, given there are plenty of lower-cost alternatives in the area. Ms. Nicklaus suggested educational use, such as a satellite college. Mr. Bush will look into this option. Mr. Corbin noted that the event space option was a good alternative, even if it required reducing the overall seating capacity due to removal of the existing additions. Mr. Coderre asked if the re-use options could support larger additions if necessary to be financially feasible. Ms. Werenfels indicated the 5,000 sf examples were just for discussion purposes.

Next Steps

After discussion, Ms. Werenfels and Mr. Bush reviewed the next steps:

- Take the residential option off the table, since this option seemed to be the least feasible and concentrate on Municipal use and Event use
- Redo the 3-D images to include a potentially bigger footprint
- Look into education uses

This information will be prepared by the DBVW team for the Committee's next meeting in February.

DISCUSSION REGARDING SITE SPECIFIC HISTORIC DISTRICT FOR WHITE CLIFFS

Mr. Corbin referred the members to the documents he had supplied regarding the process to establish the White Cliffs Historic District. Mr. Helwig noted that since the Town owns White Cliffs, there is no time sensitive reason for applying for this. Both Mr. Helwig and Ms. Nicklaus expressed concern that they do not want to put restrictions on

the property because it could potentially limit the re-use options. Mr. Corbin indicated that he would gather additional information for a discussion at a future meeting.

Mr. Helwig entertained comments from the audience.

Henry Squillante. 72 Crestwood Drive – stated that placing Historic restrictions on White Cliffs will cause the Town to lose money.

Lisa Maselli, 13A Maple Street – agreed with Mr. Squillante.

Arthur Savas, 247 Crawford Street – Questioned if there is a new addition, would it still be eligible to be considered a historic site.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for February 5th at 3:00 p.m.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Hirsh moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m.; Mr. Corbin seconded the motion; Vote: 4-0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynda LePoer
Executive Assistant

Documents used during meeting:

1. January 8, 2020 Meeting Agenda
2. Meeting Minutes from November 13, 2019
3. DBVW White Cliffs: Phase III Feasibility and Reuse Power-Point Presentation
4. Documents provided by Norm Corbin: White Cliffs FINAL Study Report; MHC White Cliffs Letter on Historic District; NHDC By-Law; View from Street, December 2019