

**Salem School Committee
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 5, 2020**

A Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, October 5, 2020 at 6:00 pm using the Zoom platform.

Members Present: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Ms. Mary Manning, Ms. Amanda Campbell, Ms. Ana Nuncio, Dr. Kristin Pangallo, and Mr. Manny Cruz

Members Absent: Mr. James Fleming

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Amanda Chiancola

Mayor Driscoll announced that Amanda Chiancola, a senior planner in the Planning & Community Development Office, would be joining the meeting. Ms. Chaincola works closely with the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board and other affordable housing committees.

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the School Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and explained that the purpose of the meeting is for discussion of the items on the agenda, the School Department owned land at Salem High School and a parcel located at 5 Rear Frederick Street for feasibility of creating affordable community housing options, in particular housing preferences for teachers and school staff.

Mayor Driscoll gave a brief overview explaining the housing crisis in Salem. She said they are looking to meet demands on all levels, market rate, affordable, subsidized and workforce housing. Mayor Driscoll explained that Salem Housing Board works with subsidized housing, which includes elderly, disabled or family housing. They have very long waiting lists and not enough housing for everyone on the list. Workforce housing is also a challenge. This is for individuals that work in our community and would like to live here, but can not afford housing here. The most amount of housing that has been created is market rate housing.

Mayor Driscoll introduced Amanda Chiancola. Ms. Chaincola presented options for School Department owned land at Salem High School and a parcel located at 5 Rear Frederick Street for feasibility of creating affordable community housing options.

Ms. Chaincola began with presenting the site information for Salem High School property. She said that this is a 61 acre property and an active school on site. She said that although there are a lot of advantages with the property, there are also a lot of challenges. The property has extensive ledge and wetlands, there are powerline constraints, there are current zoning restrictions, and traffic and flow is difficult and would need to be rerouted.

Mayor Driscoll added that the ULI (Urban Land Institute) came in to do an assessment on the properties. She emphasized that this was just a preliminary assessment. Mayor Driscoll explained that this group consists of land experts and that they spent the day assessing both advantages and challenges and providing their potential plans.

The recommendations that were made include to create a long range master plan that would consider improvement to the site circulation and parking, future programming for the needs of the school and future needs of the community.

The parcel of land located at 5 Rear Frederick Street near the Witchcraft Heights Elementary School is a smaller piece of land, only 29,555 square feet and is landlocked. A new street would need to be built between the school and the property. This would also require relocating parking.

The Mayor answered several questions from the Committee. She explained that the goal is to introduce concepts to the School Committee and to see if there is any value to consider these plans.

Ms. Manning asked a question regarding the student population and enrollment trends at the high school and when was the data they used from. Ms. Chiancola responded that the data used was from 2018. Duncan Mayer brought up the issue of the traffic flow and how busy that area is now. Ms. Chiancala responded that there were no traffic experts on the panel, but if housing was to be added, the master plan would be worked to include the school and housing. Mr. Cruz commented that he would like to see how this possible teacher housing would work as a recruitment tool, since many young professionals out of college, especially in the teaching field, can not afford housing in Salem. Dr. Pangallo expressed her concerns, especially with land issues and cited the problems that the Horace Mann school has had with settling and structural issues. She also asked how much housing demand there is and did they know how many units would become available. Mayor Driscoll responded that they are currently updating their citywide housing demand study. She reiterated that this property is in a preliminary study stage and that they may not work out since they have yet to do any testing on soil and topography and was waiting to speak to the School Committee before going forward with any testing. Ms. Campbell asked regarding the ownership of the land. Ms. Chiancola clarified that the property at the Salem High School is owned by the school district and the land at the Witchcraft Heights location is owned by the city. Ms. Campbell asked who would ultimately have ownership of the properties and Mayor Driscoll responded that it is too early to respond to that and we still have due diligence to do to see if this is even feasible. Mr. Cruz suggested working with our partners in higher education to poll individuals who are entering the teaching profession to see how many would like to live where they work. Ms. Nuncio asked if we had given any thought to partnering with neighboring communities regarding housing and Mayor Driscoll responded that we are already in partnership with Beverly and Peabody regarding affordable housing availability. She also explained that whenever housing is built in any of those 3 cities, those 3 cities receive preference with regards to waiting lists.

Mayor Driscoll explained that the next steps for the high school property would involve building a master plan and for the property that abuts Witchcraft Heights, it would involve working with MHP to do the next phase of due diligence and if housing can be accommodated and reach out to neighbors.

Mr. Cruz made a motion to continue review and analysis on these sites to accommodate additional housing to serve our district. Dr. Pangallo seconded the motion. Ms. Manning requested a friendly amendment to add potential housing for schools and staff. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting this evening, Mr. Cruz motioned to rise and report. Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 6-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy A. Weiss

Executive Assistant to the School Committee
& the Superintendent