

Minutes
Water Tower Task Force
April 26, 2016

Members Present:

- Ellie Multer, Chair
- Nelson Barter
- Jim Knight
- Dorothy Rosenberg
- David I. Chipman
- Donnette Goodenow, Alternate
- David Mercier, Alternate

Staff Present:

- Marguerite Kelly, Treasurer
- Mark Eyerman, Town Planner

Others Present:

- Bob Muller
- Robert McIntyre

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

The chair asked the people present to introduce themselves and they did.

The chair noted that many of the people at the table come with pre-conceived ideas about what should be done with the Mitchell Field water tower. She asked that the task force members put any pre-conceived ideas aside and look at the situation objectively based on the information the task force develops. She reminded the task force members that the dealings of the task force are subject to the rules governing public meetings and that members should not discuss the task force's business outside of meetings nor discuss the task force's business via email other than to suggest agenda items or similar administrative things.

The chair told the alternate members that they are welcome to attend all meetings of the task force but that they are not required to do so. They will be notified if their attendance is needed for a specific meeting. Jim Knight asked if alternates can participate in the discussion and the chair indicated that they can.

The task force next discussed when and how often the task force would meet. After discussion, the group decided to meet once a month initially to see how it goes, to meet at 6:30 PM and to meet on Tuesdays. The next meeting of the task force was scheduled for 6:30 PM on Tuesday, May 17, 2016.

The chair suggested that the first task of the task force should be to develop technical information on the state of the water tower. She asked how long it can be left safely in its current condition. Nelson Barter notes that the Utility Services report said that it was unsafe to leave the tower empty. He reported that there were two separate water systems at the tank farm, a freshwater system and a saltwater system. Each system had different colored hydrants. He observed that there had been no water in the tank for a long time and that it may have been deactivated as long ago as 1968 but that he wasn't sure about that.

Jim Knight raised a concern about the condition of the piers and whether they are adequate to support a full tank of water. It was noted that there are also wind load considerations.

Dorothy Rosenberg suggested that the first task of the task force should be to look at what needs to be done to secure the water tower site and prevent unauthorized access. There was a question about whether the Board of Selectmen wants the task force to deal with this issue and the chair indicated that she would clarify that with the Board.

The chair raised the question of who can provide the task force with unbiased technical engineering services, someone with expertise who doesn't do the construction. It was noted that the previous evaluations of the tower were conducted by firms with an interest in doing the recommended improvements. Members suggested contacting the American Waterworks Association and the Maine Rural Water Association.

The issue of the piers or footings was raised again. Bob Muller suggested that they often seal concrete piers with epoxy to keep water out and to stabilize them.

The issue of short term security measures was also raised again.

The chair reported that an engineer from the Maine Water Company, Steve Cox, had volunteered to meet with the task force. In addition, Craig Douglas who works with the Brunswick-Topsham Water District might be available. After discussion, the task force asked the staff to invite Steve Cox to the next meeting.

There was discussion about how the work of the task force will relate to the overall plan for Mitchell Field and the work of the Mitchell Field Committee.

Nelson Barter suggested that the Town should have access policies in place to protect the Town.

The task force started to discuss possible uses for the water tower. David Mercier noted that the past studies were focused on making the tower suitable as a storage tank for water supply. Dorothy raised the issue of dual use as a communications tower. Robert McIntyre suggested that a bladder could be installed in the tank to provide a reduced capacity.

The staff was asked to explore possible engineering consultants and to begin to define what questions the task force will be looking for them to address.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Eyerman
Town Planner