

# **Maurice's Planning committee 02.28.24**

Wed, 02/28 4pm· 82 mins

Attendees: Ryan, Carl, Emily, Bob, Sharon, Roland, Farrukh, Jan, Heather

## **Summary**

The Maurice's Planning Committee held a meeting on February 28th, 2024, to make a final recommendation for a master planning consultant for the Maurice's Campground project. Six proposals were received in response to an RFP issued on October 23rd, 2023. The members of the committee had previously reviewed and individually ranked the proposals (2/21), after interviewing the top 3 candidates. Studio G was the top choice with the highest ranking (unanimous by a 9-0 vote).

The results of the price bid openings were reviewed. The lowest bid was Studio G at \$ 199, xxx, under the \$ 200,00 budget.

The vote is to recommend Studio G to the Select Board as the planning firm, subject to contacting Studio G to discuss feedback from reference checks indicating potential bandwidth/resource concerns given their work on other town projects but not a serious shortcoming to moving forward.

## **Review of Feedback from reference checks**

The committee shared and reviewed the outcomes from the reference calls. Reference checks were positive but merely raised some concerns about bandwidth given other ongoing projects.

## **Vote to Recommend Studio G**

The committee voted unanimously 9-0 to recommend hiring Studio G to the Select Board, subject to contacting Studio G first to discuss concerns raised in the reference checks about potential bandwidth issues/resource constraints in taking on another town project.

## **Plan for Contacting Studio G**

Ryan, Carl, and Gary will contact Studio G (Gail) to relay the good news of the selection recommendation along with discussing the reference check feedback regarding bandwidth concerns. The committee will meet again before the Select Board meeting to finalize the recommendation.

## **Next Steps and Future Meetings**

The committee plans to meet again on March 6th to approve outstanding minutes and prepare for presenting the recommendation to the Select Board on March 12th/14th. New town staff will be invited to that meeting to get brought up to speed on the proposal review and selection process.

1. Confirm date for Select Board meeting to formally recommend Studio G as the master planning consultant - March 12
2. Carl and Gary to schedule a call with Gail at Studio G to relay selection recommendation and discuss reference check feedback.
3. Full committee to meet again March 6th to approve minutes and finalize recommendation before presenting to Select Board

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Details of the meeting

## Open Session/Public Announcements

There were none.

With that Ryan moved to adjourn open session and move to executive session not to rejoin open session per MGL chapter 38, section 21, purpose 7, to comply with or act under the authority of any general or special law or federal grant and aid requirements relative to MGL, Master planning services from Maurices campground.

Review status of the Minutes review and approval including the executive sessions.

It has been raised at the forum that our notes were not up to date on the Website. The team is puzzled as we produce and approve minutes. Heather took action to get caught up from the Fall as well as the current work including executive sessions so that the Town can upload them all to the town page.

A member commented on this in saying this is just a symptom of our town governance challenges, which we have. The town depends a lot on volunteers, hard to expect the volunteers to know all the mechanics at the whole of this, but we will be in good standing asap.

Team reviewed their reaction to the pricing quotes/proposals. Given the budget was well advertised, it was a surprise that 2/3 proposals were not just over the budget but over by a significant figure. Studio G was just a hair under budget. This solidifies Studio G standing as the top pick.

We did make half a dozen calls to Studio G and the references they gave us and all of them were very positive. We learned one caveat we got was merely questioning. "Does Studio G have the bandwidth?" We recognize they are also the lead architect on Lawrence Road. As a result, it seems a fair question for us to raise.

In other ref checks, the client is doing most of the community interface. But it is a concern. We wouldn't mean to say that we might back away from supporting Studio G, but we think that's a valid question.

We also recognize we did not hear back from our reach out to references we were given to call for Goldson. We did not hear back from Gloucester or South Portland. This is a question as to why they didn't want to respond and participate in an interview. Though last week was holiday week for

a lot of high schools or for schools and maybe they were just really busy. They're both bigger towns than Topsfield. Also note the field recommendation on Goldson was very good.

The team agreed we should inform Studio G of the feedback we heard and ask them to address whether they have the bandwidth for this. We have basic confidence in their team and feel compared to the other ones. There's no question this was our best selection.

As part of that process, we delegated three people to have a conversation with Gail about the concerns that came up. We should proceed with Selectboard recommendation that the Town should proceed in entering into a contract with Studio G.

#### Discussion

Discussion to make clear that the Selectboard will vote to execute a contract with Studio G. according to Town bylaw.

The team agreed to move forward in the interest of time. Talks with Gail can happen in parallel because truly it is not a deal breaker kind of a situation.

Ryan 2nd the motion.

#### Revised Motion

**The Maurices Planning committee recommends to the Selectboard that it vote to have the town enter into agreement with Studio G to prepare the master plan for Maurices Campground as outlined in the town's RFP dated October 23, 2023**

Roll call - All approved, 9-0.

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Emily reminds us that we need to ensure a certain matter is addressed in the negotiations.

The zoning analysis of zoning impediments as an additional level of effort, the added service, and the number of meetings they would attend to 12 vs 10. The scope needs to be amended in the final contract.

We agreed the presentation to the Selectboard would include the comparative rankings chart, which demonstrates this is the highest ranked proposal. As was done with 95 Lawrence Road project and presentation. It's the highest ranked proposal with the lowest bid and it's within the budget.

Our recommendations to move forward, collect a date with Barbara so that we can let Studio G know if they want to attend.

As to when do we tell the other five who were not awarded. Ryan explains once we make the recommendation to the select board. After presentation to SB, they are all public documents at that point. Then our chair would let them know, but Ryan will validate this procedure with Tom G our Town Administrator.

## **Reviewed Minutes**

Need to review all back to 8 January.

The team wants more time to review and approve as there are so many. The team suggested Heather make up a chart of the meetings, the notes were sent and their status of approval. Pending team approved the notes from Jan 8 , 10, 18, 24. Reconvene again to review status and approve remainder of the notes

Motion to adjourn.

Seconded

Roll Call Vote - Vote to adjourn.