



TOWN OF ADAMS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, April 13, 2016 – 6:00 PM
ADAMS TOWN HALL, 1st FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

On the above date the **Board of Selectmen** and held a workshop at the **Adams Town Hall** at **6:00 p.m.**

Chairman Richard Blanchard presided the meeting. Present were **Vice Chairman Jeffrey Snoonian**, **Members Joseph Nowak** and **John Duval**. *Member Arthur Harrington was absent.* Also in attendance was **Town Administrator, Tony Mazzucco**.

The Select Board Workshop was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS DISCUSSION

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership

Member Nowak advised there was a meeting last night for the *Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership*. He passed out copies of a draft plan that would go to the legislators in Massachusetts. BRPC approached the legislators whose communities are represented by the plan, and outlined the bureaucratic process. He reviewed that this is a twenty-one community venture that offers a way to partner with both the state and federal governments. It provides an avenue for people with forest property to sustainably take care of it. There will be opportunities and funding available to assist with economic development. The diversity of representatives was discussed. There are a lot of local woodlands with junk timber and in order to make better woodlands there needs to be some sustainability and better use of the wood.

There was concern expressed about conservation restrictions and the parameters of permanent conservation restrictions and restriction monitoring were discussed. Chapter 61A puts land in preservation for tax purposes but residents must indicate they want to put their land into the agreement. Conservation restrictions make property more marketable and the partnership will teach the proper way to maintain it. Sustainability could be cutting practices, recreational purposes, habitat or watershed protection and containment. If the partnership is approved a trust will be put aside. The Executive of Environment and Energy, as well as the Forestry Service are on board. If funds are provided there will be a Visitors Center and a location for administration.

Board Members asked questions and got clarification on parts of the plan. The agreement doesn't go with the sale of the property. Municipalities would receive \$25,000 per year for payments from the Partnership. Initial funds would be given through the state and federal government and the trust fund will perpetuate the program. The Partnership is asking for \$5 Million from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and \$25 Million from the Federal Government to put into the trust fund. North Adams and Cheshire have already signed to join the Partnership. An executive board will be put together and Towns can go to them with projects that they will administer. This program is meant to help small communities to help landowners, and the Town of Adams would be asked to opt into the program. Landowners would then opt into the program if they wish. The technical assistance provided by the program would be beneficial to the community.

Strategic Plan Work

Discussion on Strategic Plan work was tabled and deferred to the April 27th meeting. *Community Development Director Donna Cesan* was not able to attend.



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Remote Participation

Town Administrator Mazzucco reviewed information about adopting a remote participation policy. The Attorney General does allow it through a statute as a Board of Selectmen option and it does not need to go to Town Meeting. It would be a written policy for the town, and ultimately adopting the state law. He noted for participation costs the individual utilizing the policy would be responsible but if the Board needs certain aspects to function the Town should supply it. A policy can be ready for adoption next week and he recommended adopting the State Statute as written. There must be a physical quorum present and an Executive Session may be done but the remote person must be in a secure place with nobody else present. Participation must be audible, and all votes by roll call. Video is optional but no texting or digital participation would be allowed. The remote participant cannot be used as part of the quorum. Once adopted other municipal boards and committees may utilize remote participation, and training would be provided. The Board may also un-adopt it. For important meetings this would be an important option to allow flexibility but it could not be used for Town Meeting. If the Board adopts the policy other boards must make it available. There must be a 24 hour notice to the Chair that remote participation is needed. Posting and minutes will remain the same and reflect the utilization of the remote option and reason for it.

This option could be tried out at a workshop where no votes are taken and used by member discretion. It could be important for Board Members who put work in and would like to be there for the vote. The clarity of the conversation over the speaker phone was questioned but the phone currently has had excellent results so far in other uses. Restrictions could be put on the policy so a member could not use this option for more than four or five meetings in a row.

Consensus was reached by Board Members to put this topic on the next meeting agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made to adjourn by Member Duval


Second by Vice Chairman Snoonian

Unanimous Vote

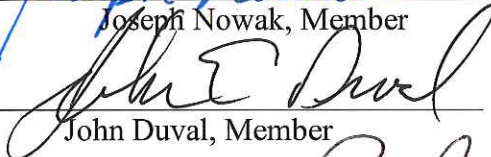
Motion passed

The Board of Selectmen Meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

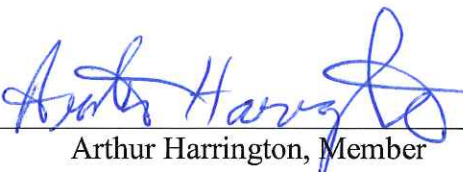
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary




Joseph Nowak, Member



John Duval, Member



Arthur Harrington, Member



Jeffrey Snoonian, Vice Chairman



Richard Blanchard, Chairman