

TOWN OF DEERFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN - WORKSESSION
November 5, 2013
MINUTES

Call to Order

5:30pm: Chairman, Steve Barry called the meeting to order.

Present: Steve Barry, Chairman; Alan O'Neal, Vice Chairman; Rebecca Hutchinson, Richard Pitman and R. Andrew Robertson Selectman

Also Present: Leslie Boswak, Town Administrator; David O'Neal, Deerfield Fair Association (DFA) President; Debra Tibbetts, DFA Secretary; Daniel Briggs, George Clark, Heather Fernald, Richard Marquis, Donald Wyman and Glenn Young, DFA Directors

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Barry asked all to rise and pledge allegiance to the Flag.

Items for Review

Fireworks Display

Chairman Barry indicated that the Board received one written complaint from a Mr. Mailholt regarding the Fireworks display held at the fairgrounds at the end of October. Selectman Robertson also fielded two verbal complaints, the main issue seemed to be the length of time the fireworks ran for and that it was done on two consecutive nights. The Fair Association noted that the increased noise was likely due to the event being in late October without the foliage on the trees to reduce the sound travel. They have received inquiries from local groups and vendors' looking to set up booths next time the event is held. It was suggested and agreed that increased advertising and communication be done for any future fireworks displays and that it would be helpful to set time expectations for the property abutters.

The Board asked if the DFA might consider coordinating one of the displays with the Old Home Days Celebration scheduled for August 16th.

Tailgate Trick or Treat

Both Boards received lots of positive feedback from the Tailgate Trick or Treat, all agreed that the area was much more ideal for foot traffic and public safety.

Electrical Plan

Vice Chairman O'Neal asked where the DFA stood with its Electrical Plan. It seems to have been made clear by the State Fire Marshall that jurisdiction for this falls under the Town Fire Chief. The DFA thanked the Select Board for their communication with the State Fire Marshall's office and the work that has been done in documenting past communications. The plan is for the DFA to contract with a certified engineer to develop a full plan for the property. This will ensure it is done accurately and to code and reduce the liability for the Fair Association. The DFA has been frustrated with inconsistent and seemingly inaccurate direction from the State Fire Marshall's in the past, to the point that they feel they have experienced harassment. Some \$500,000 has been spent to date on improvements and changes to the Electric facilities on the fairgrounds and the DFA questions how much of that was really necessary.

Vice Chairman O'Neal spoke to the importance of identifying the target timeframe for the project. The DFA will be identifying and interviewing potential Engineers and begin to collect cost estimates in the coming weeks. L. Boswak will follow up with the Directors in March looking for a progress update on the Electrical Plan.

Police Department/Fair Security

Both Boards expressed a concern for the way the Security at the Fairgrounds is currently handled by the Town's Chief of Police and with the arrangement for compensation. Chairman Barry is of the opinion that it is the Town's responsibility to pay for Officers on duty during Fair week who are not on Fair grounds, the Town requires a Police Department regardless of whether the Fair is operating or not. He does not feel that Chief Greeley should serve as the Security Superintendent for the Fair and would like to see the DFA appoint its own separate Security Lead who Chief Greeley can serve as a consultant to.

Selectwoman Hutchinson asked for a brief history of why the Fair was charged for 4 days of police charges. If the Department is increasing its staff due to the Fair then she might be able to justify some compensation from the DFA. Selectman Pitman pointed out that the DFA pays some \$137,000 in taxes for Police protection. There are 34 officers on the DFA payroll for the 4 days.

The DFA will also be addressing similar issues with the County Sheriff's office, there has been some concern with their Officers serving on 15 and 16 hour shifts. The Board agreed that the goal for 2014 will be for the Fair to have its own Security set up without the Chief of Police being employed by the Fair. Shift length and other expectations should be clearly spelled out in the Security Plan. The Board of Selectman will need to put together its own internal plan for Fair week and communicate rate expectations to the Officers on duty who are not working on the Fairgrounds. Selectman Robertson stressed the need to develop a Security Plan and bring it to the Select Board early.

Fair - Parking

Vice Chairman O'Neal indicated many complaints had been received regarding parking along the roadside. It is understood that the area is for first responders only, but the number of cars seems to be becoming an issue. The DFA will work to compose a parking plan and will communicate it to the Town for proper enforcement.

Fair – Fire Coverage

DFA President O'Neal expressed the concern that during the Fair there were two accidents in Town that the Fire Department responded to in a way that left the Fairgrounds empty of coverage. The DFA is paying for Fire protection and should not be left without any First Responders should something occur. Contract language will be changed next year to address this.

Fairground Fire House

The DFA suggested to the Board that the Fire House at the Fairgrounds could be looked at as an alternative to the proposed Town Safety Complex. They indicated that with relatively minimal work the building could be winterized and improved to address the Fire Department's shortfalls with the current location. The DFA realizes that the majority of their revenue is dependent on the 4 days the Fair is in operation and that success relies heavily on the weather. As a result, they are continually looking for ways to generate a more permanent stream of revenue, for example through a long term lease. The Select Board thanked the DFA for the suggestion and will approach the Fire and Police Chiefs with the idea. The DFA will compose a formal letter introducing the idea to the Town and forward to the Select Board for further discussion at a future meeting.

Fairground Storage

DFA President O'Neal noted that Winter Storage at the Fairgrounds is having an extremely successful year, the facilities are almost full and the DFA would like to know if the Fire Department will be using the Fire House for storage. If not, the DFA will look to rent out that space. Chairman Barry will speak with Chief Tibbetts, but in general the Select Board would prefer the Fire Department take full advantage of the building and move any and all equipment indoors for the winter. The Select Board will discuss the pros and cons of each facility (costs, security, heating, etc.) and will have Chief Tibbetts communicate winter storage expectations to the DFA as soon as possible. Vice Chairman O'Neal asked if the Town might also store the wood chipper in this space, to which the DFA answered they saw no reason why not. L. Boswak will begin the process of communicating with the Highway and Fire Departments. Director George Clark suggested that if the Town is using the building for storage, perhaps the DFA should not be paying taxes on it. The Select Board will discuss the idea further.

Next Work Session

It was agreed that the groups can wait until the Spring to hold another meeting. L. Boswak will look to set a date in April.

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourns at 7:55p

Next Meeting Monday, November 18th @ 5:30pm

*The Minutes were Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katherine A. Libby, Recording Secretary.
Pending Approval by the Board of Selectmen*