

Memorial Town Hall, 1 Library Street, Georgetown, MA 01833

Ph. (978) 352-5755 Fax (978) 352-5727

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Memorial Town Hall

4/8/13

State of the Town Meeting

6:00 PM

3rd Floor Meeting Room

Selectmen Present: C. David Surface, Chairman; Gary Fowler; Stephen Smith;
Stuart M. Egenberg, Clerk

Others Present: Police Chief James Mulligan; Fire Chief Al Beardsley;
Carol Jacobs, School Superintendent; Ellie Sinkewicz and
Michelle Smith, Co Chairs School Building Committee;
Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello, Council on Aging Director; Jim
DiMento, Park & Rec & CPC; Howard Snyder, Town
Planner; Michael Farrell, Town Administrator; Janet
Pantano, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Philip Trapani

Meeting opened at 6:05PM by Stephen Smith as a quorum of the Selectmen was present.

State of the Town Presentation by Departments-presentations attached.

State of the Town ended at 8:05PM.

5-minute recess

Board of Selectmen meeting commenced.

Board Business

ATM Warrant for May 6, 2013- adjustments

Mr. Surface invited Vanessa Johnson from Essex County Greenbelt (ECG) to come forward to discuss ATM13-22 item H. CPC Open Space Category, "Conservation Restriction". He stated that this is for the property at Wheeler Brook Farm, 57 Jewett Street. Ms. Johnson stated that ECG has been working with the Conservation Commission on this restriction and that they would make sure that the conservation restriction is applied. She described what the Conservation Restriction entailed and that it permanently limits the development of the property. She stated that the property has to stay as an active farm/farmland. She stated that in essence they are buying the development rights from the owner. She stated that this is to keep the character of the land and town.

Mr. Smith asked that the current owner can not be forced to do this that they must be a part of this process. Ms. Johnson stated that this is correct the owner has to agree to all terms of the conservation restriction.

Mr. Fowler asked if there are any other farms in the area with conservation restrictions. Ms. Johnson stated that there are similar projects in Hamilton Green Meadows Farm which has an active CSA on the property and a piece of Ingalsby Farm in Boxford has a restriction. Mr. Fowler asked that this has worked well in these areas. Ms. Johnson stated that it has and that this is what ECG does. Mr. Fowler stated that Wheeler Brook is an active river and preserving the river is important.

Mr. Surface asked the amount that ECG is investing in this project. Ms. Johnson stated that ECG is spending \$100,000. Mr. Surface asked how the price was determined. Ms. Johnson stated that an appraiser was hired and that they can not pay more than the market value and the amount being paid is below the market value.

Mr. Smith stated that the FinCom had a split vote and asked why. Mr. Farrell stated that some FinCom members felt that his is giving tax dollars to a land owner.

Mr. Egenberg asked if the landowner could put a conservation restriction on his own property or is there another way. Ms. Johnson stated unless the landowner has the funds and can take a write off then they would not do this as it is giving away their assets. She stated that no landowner makes as much money with a conservation restriction as they would if they sold the land for development. She stated that the \$250,000 is a negotiated amount.

Mr. Surface stated that 18 acres of land in Georgetown would sell for more than \$250,000.

Mr. Smith moved to recommend approval of ATM13-22 item H. CPC Open Space Category, "Conservation Restriction". Mr. Fowler seconded the motion.

Discussion

Mr. Egenberg stated that the town would give away its first right of refusal to purchase the property if approved. Ms. Johnson stated that ECG would be sure to keep the land as a farm. Mr. Smith stated that \$250,000 for 18 acres would go fast on the market and where Wheeler Brook Farm is willing to take less to keep as a farm is good for the Town.

Motion was approved by a 4-0 vote.

Discussion on meeting on Thursday, April 11, 2013 at 6PM to finish recommendations on the warrant. Board wanted more time to review the budget and changes received from town counsel.

Mr. Smith moved to adjourn. Mr. Egenberg seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

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Meeting was adjourned at 8:45PM.

Minutes transcribed by J. Pantano.