

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING(Joint meeting with Berlin City Council, Representatives from Shelburne and Milan)

TOWN OF GORHAM

MONDAY, September 24, 2012, 6:30 pm

SHELBURNE TOWN HALL

Gorham Selectmen present: Chairman David Graham, Paul Robitaille, Bill Jackson.
Berlin City Council, Mayor Paul Grenier, Shelburne Selectman Stan Judge, Milan Selectman George Pozzuto

Also present: Robin L Frost, Gorham Town Manager; Pat MacQueen, Berlin City Manager; Pam Laflamme, Berlin City Planner; Mike Waddell, Gorham Planning Board and Conservation Commission; Mike Scala, Senator Ayotte's office; Chuck Henderson, Senator Shaheen's office; Gene Chandler and Harold Parker, Rep. Bass's office.

1. Joint Meeting with Berlin City Council, Selectboards of Milan, Shelburne, Gorham

a) FEMA Floodplain Mapping: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Grenier at 6:30 pm. The parties introduced themselves. Mayor Grenier explained that there was an outreach meeting on September 5th regarding the flood maps. The questions asked of the FEMA representative that evening were not answered to anyone's satisfaction. He asked those assembled if they were interested in collaborating on a response to FEMA objecting to the proposed maps. All agreed to this collaboration.

Since he is the most knowledgeable of the history of the Androscoggin River, Mike Waddell was asked to provide background and his concerns with the mapping. Mr. Waddell talked about the historical gauge data and the Thor study. He also spoke of historical flood events and how he would use all of this information to show why the maps are incorrect.

It was also mentioned that when the maps were redrawn in the 1970's, studies were based on on-the-ground data and public input. None of this was done in this new version of the maps. Mr. Waddell suggested that the Town of Gorham should check the elevations on Androscoggin and Mechanic Streets.

Selectman Pozzuto stated that we need to know how effective the dams can be in protecting downstream communities. Currently lending institutions are requiring Milan residents to prove they are not in the flood zone even though the maps are not due to become effective until February 2013.

Selectman Jackson stated that the outreach meeting was quite frustrating. There was no consideration given to mitigation efforts completed between flood map versions. He recommends sitting down, listing concerns town by town, and challenging the data.

Mayor Grenier asked if a spokesperson should be appointed. Selectman Robitaille suggested that Mike Waddell serve in that capacity. It was decided that Mike Waddell would be the spokesperson for the collective communities and he would work with City Manager Pat Macqueen or City Planner Pam Laflamme.

Selectman Judge reported that Shelburne has a large floodway and sees very little damage from floods.

Selectman Robitaille stated his concern with the lack of detail on some of the streams that feed the

Androscoggin.

Mayor Grenier recapped the meeting, stating that the communities would form a consortium with Mike Waddell as spokesperson working with City of Berlin staff to communicate with the Congressional delegation. It was felt that it would be prudent to ask for a delay in the implementation of the maps. The Congressional representatives feel that asking for a delay based on gathering more information would be appropriate. They also felt that FEMA engineers should be available to answer questions.

Each community will prepare a letter to FEMA appointing Mike Waddell as their spokesperson and list concerns with the proposed maps. The letter will also ask for a delay in the implementation of the map, currently scheduled for February 2013.

It was suggested and agreed that Mayor Grenier would serve as co-chair with Mike Waddell and the Chairpersons of the Boards of Selectmen in Gorham, Shelburne and Milan would also co-chair.

Mr. Waddell suggested that the newspaper include a request for anyone who has photographs of the 1998 flood to share them with the consortium.

2. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

David Graham

Paul Robitaille

William H. Jackson