

FINAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

January 16, 2012

7:30 P.M. – MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING – HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Peter Christie. Present were: Peter Christie, Chairman; Katherine Connolly, Vice Chairman; Judith Doherty, Selectman; Athos Rassias, Selectman; Bill Geraghty, Selectman; and Julia Griffin, Town Manager.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT.

Chairman Christie called the meeting to order. Chairman Christie asked for Public Comment. There were no comments from the Public.

Chairman Christie noted that he went to Tahoe during the holiday to go skiing and he reported that there is more snow for skiing at the Dartmouth Skiway than in all of the Sierra Nevada.

2. VISION APPRAISAL ON-LINE DEMO – MIKE RYAN.

Chairman Christie invited Mike Ryan, Town Assessor, to speak to the Board. Mr. Ryan stated that he was asked by Ms. Griffin to give a presentation regarding on-line databases that provides access for assessing information for Hanover. Ms. Griffin reported that she asked Mr. Ryan to do the demo because it's been about 10 years since local communities started putting their assessing information on-line. Back then, the Select Board was concerned about privacy issues with having this information easily accessible on-line although the information is public and anyone could come to Town Hall to find it. Ms. Griffin stated that since that time, Hanover is in the minority for not having its information on-line.

Mr. Ryan stated that Vision Appraisal is one of a few software companies that have this database. Mr. Ryan gave the Board an overview of the communities that are currently on-line with Vision Appraisal in each of the New England States.

Mr. Ryan noted that the Town of Bedford requires that a person sign into the database with an e-mail and a password. Selectman Doherty asked if Bedford is then tracking the properties that the person is looking at through the sign-in. Mr. Ryan stated that he didn't know if they were tracking this information or if it was just being used as a gateway to the program.

Mr. Ryan gave an overview/demonstration of the website. Mr. Ryan stated that this would be a positive step forward for the Town. This would eliminate a lot of in-person requests from people looking for this information for example, real estate agents.

Mr. Ryan stated that this might create more phone calls initially when people want to have information corrected or clarified.

Selectman Rassias noted that the Town currently has the assessment information on-line and a person could find the additional information regarding the location through Google maps. Selectman Rassias questioned what this database would add to the information that was already available on the website. Mr. Ryan stated that this website would provide additional information all in one place and he went over the various information included.

Selectman Christie asked if there was any data that Mr. Ryan would need to collect that he does not currently have to populate the software. Mr. Ryan stated that he has the information required and they could decide what information would be included on the database which is a “canned” program and user friendly.

Ms. Griffin stated that this is meant to be enhanced customer service for residents and others. This was something that she wanted the Board to see prior to the budget hearings. Vice Chairman Connolly stated that this looks like the property card only better.

Selectman Doherty stated that she can only see the positives in this but she asked if there were any towns that had backlash after entering into this. Mr. Ryan stated that there was a lot of skepticism when this was started in the late ‘90s but he’s not aware of towns having issues. Selectman Doherty stated that it feels like this would really benefit Hanover and it’s been around long enough so that if any of the fears were real, they would have been realized by now. Mr. Ryan noted that the original fear pertained to having the layout of the house on the web but there is no layout of the rooms in the house. Selectman Doherty stated she is glad that this is being presented in such a way that people’s concerns will be addressed in advance of going forward.

Ms. Griffin stated that if someone had an issue regarding safety concerns, they could request to be blacked out from the system. Mr. Ryan stated that they have had a couple of taxpayers that did not want their information included on the one line assessment information that was posted on-line.

Ms. Griffin stated that they are compiling the proposed budget and needed the Board’s input on this; they have put the money in the proposed budget as a placeholder but she wanted the Board to have an opportunity to voice their questions and concerns.

Jonathan Edwards, Planning & Zoning Director, stated that he has used the website to access information for Lebanon when working on a water and sewer analysis. This would enable the Planning & Zoning office to obtain this information in-house more timely from their desk as well as other applications.

Vice Chairman Connolly recalled that there were objections years ago but this was more about the one-line list that was going to be put on the web versus putting more detailed information on-line.

Selectman Doherty stated that she is pleased that Mr. Ryan brought this information forward now and noted that the cost for this proposed database is \$2,000.

3. HAYES FARM PARK INITIAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.

Ms. Griffin stated that the Town now owns the Hayes Farm property and there is a natural park on the 4+ acres owned by the Hanover Conservancy and Conservation Commission. The Town has mowed the farm field a couple of times. They are looking at the best location for a handicap accessible entrance and a restroom for the Etna Library. Ms. Griffin stated that they wanted to plan with the ability for the Etna Library to expand in the future. Town staff's primary concern was to provide additional parking and upgrade the restroom which is substandard.

Ms. Griffin reported that Jim Kennedy did a wetlands map for the area. She noted that Jonathan Edwards and Peter Kulbacki, Public Works Director, developed a parking lot plan for the Etna Library which included some grass parking to gain access to the top of the property.

Ms. Griffin stated that the Friends of Etna Ice Skating also expressed interest in making a larger skating area which would require a little bit of cutting and filling of the land to make more of a regulation size outdoor rink. Carl Tischbein built a shelter near the rink as part of an Eagle Scout project. The waterline to the rink has been upgraded for easier access.

Ms. Griffin reported that the proposal is to make some improvements to the parking lot behind the Fire Department using Town staff. All of the improvements for this project could cost an estimated \$100,000 to \$150,000, assuming that Town staff from Public Works does the majority of the labor.

Ms. Griffin stated that Town staff have had discussions about whether this should be budgeted for in the operating budget or if they should fundraise or bond for this project. Ms. Griffin stated that there are no dramatic proposed changes to the large meadow. Ms. Griffin stated that the proposed parking lot and addition to the Library is in an area that would not impede the wetlands or detract from the view of the area.

Chairman Christie asked for clarification about the original purchase of the property. Ms. Griffin stated that the purchase of the property was primarily through a fundraising campaign and there was a small amount of money that came out of the Conservation Fund. The total raised was around \$130,000 and the wetlands assessment was funded through those efforts as well. The Storrs-Bent conservation easement was another project that was fundraised for.

Chairman Christie asked how much out of the \$150,000 estimate would be attributed to the parking lot. Ms. Griffin stated that the cost for the parking is around \$45,000 to \$55,000 due to the cost of materials. The cost for the addition to the Library is around \$75,000. Ms. Griffin stated that this is the estimated materials cost but the labor could be done by Public Works so the cost would come out of their operating budget.

Chairman Christie asked if this could be done in stages. Ms. Griffin suggested that the parking improvements and the handicap access should be done as a priority. If they put the parking lot in behind the Library without access on that side of the building, people will have to walk all the way around. Ms. Griffin stated that the project of the parking lot behind the Fire Department and the grading for the ice rink is the less expensive part of the proposal. Ms. Griffin noted that the Public Works Department felt that this summer would be the best time to do this because they will be working on the Transit Hub in front of the Hanover Inn during the summer of 2013 so this would push off this proposed project until 2014.

Chairman Christie noted that they could mix and match the funding through fundraising and other areas. Ms. Griffin stated that her concern about fundraising is that they don't want to burn out fundraising support. Ms. Griffin stated that in speaking with Ms. McClain about this, the Town debt is low so they could look at bonding.

Selectman Rassias stated that in breaking down the project, mixing and matching the way that it is funded may make sense because the larger part of the project is the parking lot and the handicap access needs to be done at the same time. They really need a breakdown of the actual cost.

Selectman Rassias stated that he would not want to see tarmac in the parking lot but more of a porous material. Ms. Griffin stated that they discussed using gravel behind the Fire Station and at the Library because the porous material comes up when plowed.

Mr. Edwards noted the areas on the map that are considered wetlands. If they do go through with the parking lot, the Town will need to file a DES (Department of Environmental Safety) permit because it's close to the wetlands. He noted that the pervious pavement would allow for water to go through the ground and out through the groundwater.

Selectman Geraghty stated that he was concerned about the safety issue with regard to the current practice of people parking on the roadway. He asked if the rink improvements are part of the Parks & Recreation budget.

Ms. Griffin stated that Hank Tenney, Parks & Recreation Director, has set aside money to make improvements to the rink area. The Hanover Improvement Society took the boards from the Thompson Arena that were donated to them by Dartmouth which could be used for the rink.

Vice Chairman Connolly asked if the handicap access is tied to the expansion of the Library. Ms. Griffin stated that the addition at the rear of the Library was designed to fit within the architecture of the Library. George Hathorn designed the addition so that no ramp is required which will save maintenance and design expense.

Vice Chairman Connolly wondered if they could do this in the limited time within the budget period. Ms. Griffin would like to find a way to fund this in the next fiscal year so they could find a way to complete the work in the summer and fall of 2012. Ms. Griffin stated that the design kept in mind the possibility of a future addition for the Library.

Selectman Doherty stated that it would be helpful to make a list of projects and the timing of these projects especially for items that may be bonded.

Chairman Christie stated that he is concerned about bonding for this type of project since it is small and it should be something that could be worked into the operating budget.

Chairman Christie noted that the outdoor skating rink is well used in that area.

4. BANNER REQUESTS:
- Hanover Parks & Recreation Department

Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to approve the Banner Request for the Hanover Parks & Recreation Department Pond Party. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE BANNER REQUEST FOR THE HANOVER PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT POND PARTY.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
- December 19, 2011

Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to Approve the Minutes of December 19, 2011. Selectman Geraghty SECONDED the motion.

THE BOARD VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED, 1 ABSTAINED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2011. (Selectman Doherty abstained from the vote.)

6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS.

Ms. Griffin reported that the first draft of the General Fund budget is almost complete and she will do another review over the weekend. Ms. Griffin stated that she will work on the items that could be added or cut to meet the tax rate target.

Ms. Griffin will send a proposed budget meeting schedule by e-mail for the last week of February. The Social Service agencies will present to the Board during the first Board of Selectmen's meeting in February.

The NH Legislature is now back in session and there are a lot of interesting bills filed by a very independent legislature. There are a number of bills that are radical departures from the way the State conducts business now. In the midst of working on the Town budget, Ms. Griffin may end up going to Concord to add testimony to these issues.

Chairman Christie stated that the NH Primary seemed to go very well and it was extremely well organized and he knows that this doesn't happen by itself. Ms. Griffin stated that Willy Black moderated for the Primary but reminded them that someone needs to run for Town Moderator at Town Meeting.

Ms. Griffin stated that this is a busy election year with Town Meeting in May, the State Primary in September and the Presidential Election in November. Ms. Griffin noted that they could not run these elections without the help of all of their volunteers.

7. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS.

Athos Rassias

Selectman Rassias reported that the Conservation Commission met last Wednesday; they had a previous site visit and a review of the project to rebuild a bridge that the Conservation Commission is in control of. The bulk of the meeting was taken up by reports by the subcommittees such as the Trails Committee, the Open Space Committee and the Bio Diversity Committee. Reorganization continues within the Commission to fill the vacant positions.

Judy Doherty

Selectman Doherty reported that Jonathan Edwards has been helping to facilitate dialogue between the Affordable Housing Commission and the Planning Board. The Affordable Housing Commission meets on Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Select Board room.

Selectman Doherty noted that since the Gile Project and other projects moved into production and post review process there has been dialogue back and forth about affordable housing. She noted that the Planning Board came forward with a series of questions about the residential review process. One of the goals has been to make sure that commissions are communicating with the Select Board and other commissions. The Planning Board's questions include: How can regulations promote Affordable Housing? For whom are we providing affordable housing? Where would they put that type of housing? What kind of density is needed? These are good and challenging questions and she applauds the Planning Board for taking the time to have these kinds of discussions.

They have been attending each other's meetings and this is a great example of the groups working together.

Kate Connolly

Vice Chairman Connolly reported that the Planning Board met and will be discussing zoning changes and they needed to address Affordable Housing. The Planning Board had one proposal for tree elimination on Goss Road by National Grid. The issue was that the tree had already been removed so they could not give them approval to do so.

Vice Chairman Connolly reported that the Planning Board also approved a subdivision on Grasse Road. In 1981, the Town received 3.2 acres for recreational purposes when the original Grasse Road subdivisions were approved. Since then the conversation has advanced and the Town now has 11 acres for recreational purposes from Dartmouth College next to the Water Department land and eliminated the requirement for the 3.2 acres. The Planning Board will meet with the Affordable Commission later this week.

Vice Chairman Connolly also reported that she is going to Concord tomorrow to the NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions to look over a proposed bill to eliminate Regional Planning Commissions.

Bill Geraghty

Selectman Geraghty reported that he attended the Recreation Board meeting on January 9th and their main topic was the Pond Party. The Pond Party will take place on February 11th from 12:00 to 3:00. They are hoping for more snow and are also looking for volunteers. Selectman Geraghty also noted that Bill Young's enthusiasm has carried over from the 250th Celebration to the Pond Party.

Peter Christie

Selectman Christie reported that the Finance Committee is busy focusing on the School Budget and will be looking at the whole picture now and see what the implications are now that the teachers' proposed contract is in.

8. OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no Other Business reported.

9. ADJOURNMENT.

Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.

THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:38 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith A. Doherty, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth S. Rathburn.

SUMMARY

- 1. Vice Chairman Connolly MOVED to approve the Banner Request for the Hanover Parks & Recreation Department Pond Party. Selectman Rassias SECONDED the motion.**

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