

Town of Princeton, MA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Regular Meeting
November 24, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. Present were Chairman Raymond Dennehy, Alan Sentkowski, Joe O'Brien and Town Administrator Dennis Rindone.

Dog Hearing

Raymond opened the hearing at 5:00 pm in response to a complaint of a potentially vicious dog.

Chief Schmohl made a statement of the events that occurred on November 3, 2008. A call was received on November 3 from Alwin Haase for a dog bite at his address on 40 Bigelow Road. Chief Schomohl responded with Sergeant McCaffrey. The Fire Department was called for an ambulance. Alwin Haase said he was attacked by a dog and was bitten on both of his arms and his back. Chief LaPorte arrived and took care of the wounds and photographed them as well. The dog was found at 6 Bigelow Road and brought to 40 Bigelow Road where Mr. Haase identified the dog as the one who bit him. It was Leo Mongtagna's dog. The dog is up to date on shots and the Animal Control Officer has a copy of the rabies certificate. Mr. Haase drove himself to the hospital.

Animal Control Officer Louis Massa stated he received a call around noon that a husky type dog attacked someone on Bigelow Road. He suspected it was Leo Mongtagna's dog, who owns an Alaskan Malamute named Sunny. Louis is also the Animal Control Officer for Sterling and said the dog bit someone there four days earlier and the owner was told to quarantine the dog for ten days. He contacted Leo who said his dog was tied in the back yard and must have broken loose. Leo arrived at his residence at 6 Bigelow Road and put the dog inside. Louis told Leo quarantine means the only time the dog is allowed outside is to go to the bathroom and not to be tied out on a run. Louis said he believes the dog is dangerous and should be evaluated by a certified dog trainer that specializes in dog behavior.

The victim, Alwin Haase was sworn in and stated that he was inside his house when he heard his dogs barking and saw the dog in his yard. He brought his dogs inside and said the dog did not appear to pose any threat. As he proceeded to walk to his garage, the dog attacked him from behind and ripped his pants, bit him on the back and both arms. He spent over four hours in the emergency room, received a tetanus shot and has had three aftercare appointments. One area is infected and he is seeing a vascular surgeon for a problem with his left arm.

Leo Mongtagna, the owner was sworn in and stated that Sunny is just over a year old and is the third Alaskan Malamute he has owned during the past twenty six years. He said when Louis told him to quarantine the dog he thought it was okay to tie him outside. He apologized to Alwin and said he put a deposit on an eight-foot chain link fence pen area. The dog got out of the house on November 18 by hitting the garage door opener and he is now kept inside at all times.

Dog Hearing - continued

The hearing was opened for public comment. A letter from Karen Blackmer, 60 Bigelow Road, was read for the record. She feels the dog is a danger and should be euthanized. She is afraid to walk on her street and afraid for small children.

Roger Boylard, of 36 Bigelow Road said he heard what sounded like a dog fight and looked out his window and saw Alwin with the dog but didn't realize he was being attacked. He's concerned for his seven year old grandson. Roger provided a letter from Judy Green who witnessed two workmen being chased indoors by the dog.

Michelle Fraser, of 118 Wheeler Road, said Sunny visits her dogs every week and has never shown any issues with his temperament and cannot believe he would hurt anyone or is dangerous in any way. She expressed concern about being quick to euthanize the dog and asked for other options to resolve the problem.

The Board discussed their concerns. They want to be assured this doesn't happen again. The owner failed to quarantine the dog and the dog escaped from the garage. The Board is concerned with the safety of all residents. Louis said a certified dog behaviorist could evaluate the dog and determine if he is trainable. In the meantime, the dog must be kept in a secure facility and the owner will be responsible for all expenses.

Raymond moved that within 24 hours of this hearing, the owner must report to the Dog Officer that the dog is in a safe and secure environment approved by the Dog Officer. In addition, the owner must make an appointment with a certified animal behaviorist approved by the Dog Officer within 24 hours to analyze the dog's temperament and a report must be made to the Select Board as to the temperament and trainability of the animal. The hearing will reconvene on December 8, 2008. Alan seconded. All in favor. (3-0).

The hearing was closed at 6:15 pm. All were in favor (3-0).

Tax classification Hearing

The hearing will be reconvened on December 2, 2008 at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall.

Police Lieutenant – Temporary Position

Chief Schmohl is recommending Sergeant McCaffrey for a temporary position of Police Lieutenant to work on administrative procedures and to act on behalf of the Chief of Police during his absence. The funding for a salary increase could be through a grant. Alan moved to establish a temporary position of Police Lieutenant and to recommend Sergeant McCaffrey-Powers be moved to the position effective on January 1, 2009. Joe seconded. All in favor (3-0).

Public Lands Review Committee

The Board reviewed the Statement of Purpose drafted by Joe Lee. The Committee would make recommendations to the Select Board on volunteers wishing to serve and the Select Board would make the appointments.

Public Lands Review Committee-continued

Alan moved to approve the Statement of Purpose for the Public Lands Review committee dated November 1, 2008. Joe seconded. All in favor (3-0).

Placement of Signs

Deb Knepper would like to place signs to publicize the 250th Celebration. There was discussion about updating the bylaw for a permanent sign.

Joe moved to accept the request for temporary signs for the 250th celebration to be located at the intersection of route 140 and 31, Post Office Square, Dingman Park and TPS, pending local approval. Alan seconded. All in favor (3-0).

Flag Design and Town Seal Design

The Board reviewed the draft of the town flag. It is almost complete. The town seal will be the focal point.

The seal will have the Town Hall and the Library on it.

Right of First Refusal Process

Terri Longtine provided an overview of the process with the Open Space Committee. Annual applications are completed for Chapter 61 A and Chapter 61 B. Chapter 61 is a ten year period with the requirement of an annual notice to the Board of Assessors relative to any cutting that has taken place. Terri sends renewal reminders. If a landowner decides to take land out of Chapter, Terri notifies Dennis and he informs the Select Board and the Open Space Committee. Any change of use will trigger a tax roll back. The town has the right of first refusal upon receipt of a purchase and sale agreement.

HTP Waste Reduction Task Force

The RFP will be available for vendors on November 25, 2008.

New Boiler Installation Complete

The boiler is installed and working well.

Tax Rate Update

The town is currently in public disclosure. A letter went out to all residents notifying them that voluntary payments are welcome. \$146,000 has come in to date.

Revenue Report

The report is will be ready once the tax rate is set.

Budget Guidelines Letter

The Board reviewed last year's guidelines letter. The Board will begin working on the FY10 letter.

February Special Town Meeting

Dennis informed the Board that there are between six to eight articles for STM including the trench law, fees and road advisory committee.

Historical Commission Alternate Appointment

Alan moved to appoint James Gray of 46 Hobbs Road to the alternate position of the Historical Commission with a term to expire on June 30, 2009.

Eagle Scout Court of Honor – December 14, 2008

Joe will attend the Court of Honor for Scout James Algarin.

FY09 Warrant #11

The Board reviewed and signed the payroll and vendor warrants from the Treasurer & Accountant.

Minutes

November 10, 2008 Regular Meeting – Alan made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Joe seconded. All in favor (3-0).

November 12, 2008 Meeting – Alan made a motion to accept the minutes for the meeting held at Narragansett High School. Joe seconded. All in favor (3-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm. All were in favor (3-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Secretary