

**Town of Princeton, MA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Regular Meeting
December 8, 2008**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM. Present were Chairman Raymond Dennehy, Joe O'Brien and Town Administrator Dennis Rindone. Alan Sentkowski was absent.

Road Advisory Committee – Gates Road Discussion

Larry Greene and Glenn Lyons were present for the discussion. The reconstruction of Gates Road is planned for FY10. The entire road length of 7,920 feet is in poor condition and needs to be reconstructed. On average 285 vehicles travel the road each day. The road is expensive to maintain with \$4,000 to repair pot holes, \$3,200 on labor for repairs and is more costly for snow and ice removal than the other roads. A STRAP grant is available for road reconstruction for towns with a population under 7,000. The grant amount is \$500,000, with \$250,000 allocated over two years. Larry hopes to apply for the grant by February, if awarded, the amount will be used for Gates Road. Between \$63,000 and \$111,000 will still be needed from the Chapter 90 and a portion of the \$175,000 allocated for in the annual budget.

Tree Hearing

The hearing opened at 5:15 pm. Joe Lee and Jon Fitch were present for the discussion. 37 trees all over town have been marked for removal and are considered hazard trees. An additional 55 trees have been posted for removal on Gates Road at the request of PMLD to make room for poles and wires. Joe Lee was concerned about removing those trees; some are 250 years old and questioned whether the poles could be put by the field on the opposite side of the road. Jon Fitch said there is no road access if they are in the area by the field. Also, room is required for subsurface drainage.

Peter Weiss was very concerned about the removal of the trees stating the town spent a million dollars to preserve that part of town and the trees are a major contributor of the rural character. There was discussion about reengineering the project to prevent the removal of the trees.

Resident Hayla Sluss submitted a letter expressing her objection to the removal of three trees on Worcester Road. The trees are dead and must be removed.

Joe moved to approve the trees marked numbers 1 through 37 on the list provided by Joe Lee, except those marked by PMLD between Gates Road and Thompson Rd and to reconvene the tree hearing on Monday, December 15, 2008 at 3:30 pm at the Four Corners. Raymond seconded. All in favor (2-0).

Website Update

Lynne Grettum informed the Board that the framework for the new website is set up. Virtual Town Hall met with most departments on December 2. The remaining committees will receive a survey. The next step is to develop a training plan. There will be five main users and about twenty others. The launch date is scheduled for February 1, 2009.

Wachusett Earth Day Update

Arthur Allen updated the Board on the status. Progress is being made on the site; however there is a delay due to issues between W. Boylston and DCR. They are being worked out. The town will not incur any additional expense and the 2010 projection is still the same.

Memorial Day Committee & 250th Steering Committee

Chairman Patsy Mollica provided a letter to the Board. The soul purpose of the Memorial Day Committee is remembering and honoring Princeton's veterans. The Committee would like to have an expanded parade with floats and sought after bands and with more veterans participating. It is estimated to amount to \$5,000 and the Committee is asking for a portion of the money allotted to the 250th Committee for the anniversary year. The Memorial Day Committee has \$1,000. The Board discussed cuts in the budget and the particularly tight budget year. A donation from the Crowley family will be used for the "kick off" celebration on New Year's Eve. The Board agreed to allow \$2,000 of the amount allocated to the 250th to go to the Memorial Day Committee. The total amount available to them at this time is \$3,000. Dennis will provide additional ideas on funding at the January meeting.

Solar Powered Message Board

Ken Seims offered to provide a Solar Powered Message Board placed at the bottom of Gregory Hill Road to help publicize the 250th Anniversary Kick Off celebration. The Board was concerned about setting a precedent and is mindful of residents being sensitive to this type of sign. The Board declined the offer.

Dog Hearing- Reconvened from November 24, 2008

The hearing opened at 6:40 pm. All were in favor (2-0).

Certified Dog Trainer, Philip Bolack conducted an evaluation of Leo Mongagna's dog Sunny. After evaluating Sunny, Phillip concluded that he showed no sign of dominance based aggression or fear based aggression. What he observed was an overly rambunctious, undisciplined dog, with a moderate to high prey drive. He found him to be a balanced dog, in need of training. Phillip recommends Sunny and Leo enroll in obedience training and continue on to receive an AKC Canine Good Citizen Certificate; in addition, the residence will be secured with an appropriate containment system. The Board asked Philip if he felt the dog would attack again. Philip said he couldn't be sure at this time since he doesn't know how people would interact with him, however, it is very unlikely that Sunny will attack after six months of training. There is no way to test this, but training needs to be ongoing thereafter on a regular basis for reinforcement. Philip's goal is to make Sunny "bullet proof" to handle whatever trigger a human may create. Philip also said Sunny being an Alaskan Malamute is a large, powerful dog, therefore there is a greater responsibility on the owner to control the dog. Training must be consistent. The Board is concerned about Sunny attacking someone a year or five years down the road.

At 7:00 pm Joe moved to recess the dog hearing and go to the tax classification hearing. Raymond seconded. All in favor (2-0).

Tax classification Hearing

The hearing opened at 7:00 pm. All were in favor (2-0).

The Board of Assessors recommend a single tax rate for the town. Joe moved to accept a single tax classification starting in July, 2009. Raymond seconded. All in favor (2-0).

New growth and final certification have been approved. The rate should be set this week and tax bills will go out on Monday.

The Select Board and the Board of Assessors signed the documents.

The hearing was closed at 7:08pm. . All were in favor (2-0).

Dog Hearing- Reconvened from November 24, 2008 -continued

The hearing was reconvened at 7:09 pm. All were in favor (2-0).

Animal Control Officer Louis Masa agrees with Phil; however he believes it will take at least a year of training, not six months. Philip acknowledged training must be continuous to keep the dog sharp. At this time Louis believes Sunny is still a dangerous dog until he sees proof otherwise. Sunny must also be neutered. Leo said he has an appointment to neuter him on December 18.

Bigelow Road residents expressed concern for the safety of their children if Sunny broke loose again. There was concern about whether Leo would make the commitment, in terms of time and follow through on a continuous basis. Residents said the dogs he had in the past also appeared aggressive.

Raymond told Leo that Sunny would have to be on a vigorous and monitored training program with no freedom outside of a contained area. He would have to be muzzled when transported. It would involve a significant time and financial commitment. He must make the decision to be very involved to rehabilitate the dog. The Board has no tolerance for any other incidents. Joe feels that there would be future issues with this dog. There is a long time between today and the time the dog is trained. Joe asked Leo for other options such as bringing the dog back to the breeder. Leo said that is not an option and that he would make the time to train his dog. He said he will not euthanize the dog. The Board asked Leo to provide a proposed solution. Leo said he is purchasing an enclosed fence, having the dog neutered and will start obedience training. The Board was not convinced Leo would follow through or that he had the understanding to fulfill the commitment. Leo said he does understand and will do what it takes.

Joe moved to recommend the dog be euthanized. Raymond seconded. All in favor (2-0).

Leo has ten days to appeal the decision.

FY10 Budget and Guidelines Letter

The Board reviewed the draft budget and signed the guidelines letter written by Alan.

Departmental Fees

Joe moved to accept the fee schedule as presented, beginning on January 1, 2009 and to recommend to town meeting that the dog and demand fees be increased. Raymond seconded. All in favor (2-0).

FY09 Warrant #12

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

The Board agreed to reconvene the remaining agenda items on December 15 at 6:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm. All were in favor (2-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Secretary