

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 23, 2009 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman David Canada, Selectmen Bruno Federico and Tim Copeland, and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine.

The meeting was opened at 7:50 PM following the Stratham Hill Park Association meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Kevin Peck reported he had \$513,809.21 in the general checking account.

NEW BUSINESS:

Vicki Avery was present as one of the organizers of the annual tree lighting celebration at the Stratham traffic circle. The members of the Stratham Volunteer Fire Department, Ladies Auxiliary, Boy Scout Troop 185, Stratham Community Church, and area businesses are sponsoring various activities to include the tree lighting at 5:00PM on Sunday, December 6, 2009, after which participants will return to the Fire House for various other activities in keeping with the season.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Town Planner: Lincoln Daley was present to give his monthly report. He has not heard any additional information regarding the Department of Transportation flyover cost estimates. He has called the Department of Transportation and they stated they did not have the revised cost estimates yet for the greater-detailed photos. Mr. Canada pointed out that the cost estimates will be needed soon in order to be included in the 2010 budget process.

Regarding zoning amendments, Mr. Daley reported that the Form Based Code is being prepared by the Rockingham Planning Commission. They continue to work on different drafts of the code and have been meeting with the Planning Board and the Gateway Subcommittee to review those drafts and approve them.

The Planning Board meeting scheduled for December 2, 2009 has been moved to December 10, 2009 to allow more time to redraft the ordinance. Mr. Daley stated that January 8, 2010 would be the first day to hold a public hearing on any amendments and that January 19, 2010 would be the last day to post any final amendments. He is still hopeful that the Form Based Code will be proposed for this coming March's Town Meeting for a vote.

Mr. Daley also reported that the Board of Adjustment has requested a revision to the home occupation portion of the Zoning Ordinance. They hope the revision will strengthen the enforcement of the conditions that the Board of Adjustment places on different approvals. Home occupations, over time, seem to expand and grow which go beyond the intended approval. Mr. Deschaine questioned the solutions being proposed. It has been alluded to having a certification process where owners of properties with home occupations are required to certify that they are still in compliance on a specific schedule. Mr. Daley is still working on the specifics of the proposal.

Mr. Daley then reported on the revisions to the Master Plan. He has developed a work plan that sets up a completed draft for the Master Plan by March 2010. Individual chapters are being worked on during the period between now and March.

Mr. Canada inquired about the potential zoning change occurring in Greenland, which would rezone a section of Portsmouth Avenue from their Winnicutt Road to the Stratham town line as commercial. He asked if the Town of Stratham had any input on another town's zoning amendments similar to the regional impact statute. Mr. Deschaine and Mr. Daley said that that statute does not apply to zoning amendments and that regional impacts can only be found with pending applications for new subdivisions or site plans.

Mr. Copeland complimented Mr. Daley on his work. Mr. Federico and Mr. Canada agreed with that assessment. Mr. Copeland said he especially liked Mr. Daley's professional and positive attitude in trying to get things done. Mr. Daley thanked them for their compliments.

Recreation: Tara Barker was present to give her monthly report for Parks and Recreation. She reviewed with the Board the activity within the Recreation Revolving Fund Account. She also provided a comparative of the enrollments for 2008 and 2009 Recreation programming. Based on these numbers, outdoor programming seems to be the most popular with residents. Indoor activities are not as popular, with a few exceptions. Mr. Deschaine noted that the 76ers were missing from the activity report. Ms. Barker will check for other activities not reported. Ms. Barker told the Board that it was her intention to revamp the Summer Camp program in an effort to boost participation. Attendance has been slipping.

Mr. Copeland expressed his interest in incorporating the Parks and Recreation Department into the Town's Emergency Operations Plan. After attending the Local Government Center's annual conference last week, it seemed to be essential to have the Parks and Recreation Department involved. The staff from these Departments can help manage children and others during a disaster and provide supervision during recovery efforts. Ms. Barker agreed with Mr. Copeland and supported the prospect of involving the Statewide Parks and Recreation Association, which is working on a mutual aid system to help its members during disasters. She certainly supported their efforts and greater involvement of her Department within the Town's Emergency Operation plans.

Ms. Barker then reported that all the irrigation systems have been winterized for the year. The water at Stratham Hill Park has been shut down for the year and Park Ranger Kim Woods has expressed an interest and an ability to be able to close and open the Park's water system. She felt that with perhaps one more year of working with AquaTech, Ms. Woods would have the knowledge and confidence to fully winterize town systems in 2011. Mr. Canada asked if Ms. Woods could do all the irrigation systems. Mr. Deschaine said that he thought one thing that limited our ability to do such work was not having a large enough portable air compressor necessary to blow out the lines. Mr. Copeland suggested renting a compressor necessary to complete the job. It would be more cost effective than hiring someone else to do the work.

Ms Barker informed the Board that she and the Recreation Commission were currently working on Master Plan revisions and that their work should be completed by December 8. Mr. Federico had several suggestions on future facilities he felt should be identified in the Master Plan.

Police Chief John Scippa was present and the Board asked if he had any thoughts on the tree lighting ceremony previously mentioned. Chief Scippa said that he spoke to the organizers of the event and they are mapping out efforts to make the event as safe as possible.

Town Assessor: Andrea Lewy addressed several abatements for fifteen individuals who overpaid their taxes from the first payment that was due. The overpayment was caused by reductions in their assessment and the tax rate subsequent to the first bill. She further explained the causes for the overpayments. Mr. Deschaine noted that this is one of the ramifications of having a semi-annual tax billing process. This was not an issue during the 2003 revaluation since, at that time, they were only billing once a year. Mr. Canada moved to approve the fifteen abatements at a cost of \$8,734. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 8:53PM Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss a personnel matter regarding filling the position of Assessing Assistant. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 9:49 PM Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the personnel matters discussed. Mr. Copeland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Administration: Mr. Deschaine reported on the well exploration efforts that were occurring on the Scamman Farm. The Farm and Ranchland Protection Program has been reported not to allow water withdrawals that are not associated with the farm; therefore, it was increasingly important to understand the probability of a productive well field being found on the Scamman Farm. If the well field was sufficient for a Town water supply, then a separate easement would be needed from the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program easement.

Mr. Deschaine reported that he had been unable to secure a firm date for an employee flu shot clinic from our health care provider but was continuing his efforts to do so.

Mr. Deschaine then explained the work plan for the new HVAC system being installed in the cafeteria section of the Municipal Center.

The Board then discussed the Board of Selectmen's page on the new Town website. It needs various materials to be filled out in order to make some of the links work. Mr. Canada asked the other Board members to think about what to include on that page for discussion at the next meeting.

At 10:13 PM, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss another personnel matter. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 10:30 PM, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the matters of personnel discussed. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Board then discussed the draft bylaws for the Public Works Commission that Town Counsel had drafted for the Board to consider. Mr. Canada expressed his concerns about vesting too much authority with a non-elected body like the Public Works Commission. He did not like the language in the statutes relating to Public Works Commissions and that the Town had adopted. Consequently, he felt that abolishing the Commission and replacing them with an advisory committee was preferable. This would limit their ability to assume authority from the statutes in areas that the Board of Selectmen would not support. The other Board members agreed with his assessment, but would review the bylaws with that in mind.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED THIS WEEK/MEETINGS TO REPORT ON:

The Chair then reviewed the meetings scheduled for the coming week and the meetings, which were held during the past week. Mr. Federico reported on the Financial Advisory Committee Meeting where they spent most of the time studying the projected costs of Special Education.

MUNICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:

Josh Jennings for a Farmer's Market meeting to occur on December 9, 2009. That use was approved.

At 10:50PM, Mr. Canada moved to adjourn. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reviewed By,

Norma Corrow
Recording Secretary

Paul Deschaine
Town Administrator