

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2010 BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

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

The meeting was opened at 7:38 PM by the Chair.

TREASURER'S REPORT: In the absence of Kevin Peck, Mr. Deschaine reported Mr. Peck had \$4,239,813.25 of which \$4,000,000 was invested.

PARK PERMITS/MUNICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:

Tom Oliver of the New Life Baptist Church was present to request the continued use of the Municipal Center for their Sunday services. Mr. Canada asked how the use of the facility was working out for them. Mr. Oliver said that everything was fine. Mr. Canada asked if they were mopping the floor after their use as requested. Mr. Oliver said they were and were happy to do so. Mr. Federico said that he was very happy with their use of the Municipal Center. Mr. Canada moved to renew their lease with the same terms and conditions for an additional year. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Code Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector: Terry Barnes was present to give his monthly report. He reported on issues related to the fire suppression system at the Parkman Brook Plaza. This is the plaza that contains Staples. The owner is willing to meet with the Town to resolve the various issues concerning the plaza, more specifically, the possible leak in the fire suppression cistern.

Mr. Barnes then reported that a company called Generex has been installing generators throughout Town, which do not meet the State building code having to do with the placement near combustible materials. The State Fire Marshall's Office has also been involved.

Unit 2 building permits in the Sewall Farms Subdivision have been reissued, so construction is starting to renew in that development.

Mr. Barnes stated he has been working on updating materials for the Town website. There are also new code changes coming, which will require adherence to the 2009 International Building Code versus the current 2006 code.

Other than that, he has been busy with continued construction inspections at the Lindt Chocolate Factory.

Town Planner: Lincoln Daley was present to provide his monthly report. He reported on projects that have come before the Planning Board including a minor expansion of the VIP retail store. The second project is a three-lot subdivision and lot-line change to the Doug Scamman

property in advance of the Town acquiring a conservation easement on that property. The Planning Board has approved both items.

One other project that has come before the Planning Board was the proposed development of the former Foss property on Bunker Hill Avenue. After consultation with staff, the applicant requested to postpone his preliminary review of the proposal until they had more information available.

Mr. Daley stated that the Planning Board has been working on drafting a goal and objective statement. This included working on updates to the Master Plan, training, redrafting their Rules of Procedure and amending the site plan for subdivision regulations. Otherwise, the Planning Board has been working with him to improve the material posted on the Planning Board's page of the new website.

Mr. Daley reported that the proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for the Gateway Commercial District is complete and it is now on the ballot. He wanted to thank all involved in assisting over the past several months to make this happen. Although these efforts may have been tedious at times, it was very productive and reflected so in the final amendment presented.

Lastly, Mr. Daley reported on his coordination of the Town's efforts to apply for an Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant. Program Coordinator, Sandra Bisset, will be presenting to the Board in greater detail later in this meeting.

Recreation: Tara Barker was present to provide her monthly report. She provided a written report on the Recreation Revolving Fund that was not available last month due to the year-end closing.

Ms. Barker reported that Kim Woods has been studying for the State Pesticide License Test. She hopes to take the exam sometime during the month of April. Mr. Canada asked how frequently is the test given. Ms. Barker and Mr. Federico both stated that it is given regularly and that it only takes a phone call one or two days in advance to schedule taking the test. Mr. Canada asked if Ms. Woods has been keeping up with her other work. Ms. Barker said that Ms. Woods has been reorganizing the maintenance garage and maintaining the ice skating rink.

Ms. Barker reported that the Recreation Commission has been setting goals for the coming year. One of those goals is to begin to conduct background checks for coaches and volunteers. Mr. Federico asked what the cost of doing so was. Ms. Barker said that depends on what approach is taken. If they were to use the State system, it is approximately \$25 per person for an in-state check and \$45 per person if it is an out of state background check. The Parks and Recreation Association has another program as well which may be cheaper and faster than the State systems. Mr. Deschaine asked if it would involve just coaches or coaches and volunteers. Ms. Barker said both are being considered. A second goal for the Commission has been to start investigating online registrations. A committee is being established to look into alternatives and representation on the committee includes all the different sports programs. The last goal the Commission has set is to obtain an intern from the University of New Hampshire to help the office this summer.

On the topic of this summer, Ms. Barker noted that the summer program registration period has started today. She also noted that baseball signups were being done last week and various other summer and fall programming is in the works.

Ms. Barker lastly reported on a question and answer session held at the Local Government Center during the State's monthly Parks and Recreation Association meeting.

Mr. Canada asked if the ATV signs were in the Park budget for this coming year. Ms. Barker said that they were and as soon as the budget is approved at Town Meeting, those signs would be purchased. Mr. Canada then asked if the Park budget also included an ATV for use at the Park. Ms. Barker said that it did. Mr. Canada then suggested starting investigating possible purchases of that vehicle in anticipation of Town Meeting approval.

Assessing:

Andrea Lewy was present to give her monthly report. She reviewed her recommendations for abatement requests and veteran's credit applications. (Please see attached.) More specifically, when reviewing the individual requests, a discussion took place concerning Mark Lilly's abatement, which requested to have a vacant lot at the corner of Winding Brook Drive and Oak Lane declared an unbuildable lot. Ms. Lewy recommended recognizing it as such. The Board placed one condition on approving the abatement, which was to have the lots at 3 and 1 Oak Lane merged since one of them was unbuildable. Mr. Canada moved to accept Ms. Lewy's recommendations on the abatements as presented with the added condition on the Mark Lilly abatement request. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The Board then reviewed the veteran's credit applications. Mr. Canada moved to accept Ms. Lewy's recommendations on the veteran's credit applications. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Administration: Mr. Deschaine provided his weekly report. He noted to the Board that Unitil had told him that there was a lack of support by the Public Utilities Commission staff for the Joint Solar Project with the Town and Unitil. Hearings; however, will occur the first week of March, at which time representatives from Unitil and maybe the Town can improve the outlook for the project.

Mr. Deschaine presented the results of the 2008 audit, more particularly, the findings of that audit. Part of those findings was an improved receipt system in the Police Department's and the Highway Department's cash handling procedures. Of note was the lack of use of sequential receipts for gun permits at the Police Department and at the Transfer Station for drop off charges under the Highway Department. Mr. Canada also expressed concerns that no system was in place to track income on the sale of wood chips by the Highway Department. He suggested that, at a minimum, the Accounting Supervisor be given a copy of the receipt issued by the hauler at the time of pick up. This would enable the Town to reconcile pick-ups with payments. Mr. Deschaine will be moving forward with those Departments to improve and implement the auditor's suggestions.

Mr. Deschaine presented the parade permit request by the Reach the Beach bike race. Mr. Federico moved to approve the request as presented and authorize the Chair to sign the permit. Mr. Canada seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

At 9:40 PM, Mr. Canada moved to go into non-public session to discuss a personnel matter and an elderly exemption request. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. At 10:19 PM, Mr. Canada moved to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes due to the matters of personnel and the elderly exemption application that were discussed. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Martin Wool was present on behalf of the Stratham Community Church to request permission to place a sign at the entrance of Emery Lane for advertising three church suppers occurring in February, March and April. He said the sign, which is actually a banner, would be posted only three days before each event. The banner is approximately three feet by eight feet and will be placed on Emery Lane facing Portsmouth Avenue. This has been the location for such signs for many years before. Mr. Canada moved to allow the use as described. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Karl and Bruce Scamman were present to discuss how the base value of the first acre of commercial property was determined, which is currently valued at \$700,000. They characterized this determination as the driving force for an astronomical increase in land values along the Commercial District. Karl Scamman continued to express the concern that one or two sales within the district have over influenced the market rates that have been established. Mr. Canada asked Karl Scamman what he thought his lot was worth. He estimated \$1,200,000. Bruce Scamman explained his thoughts on the assessments as compared to an appraisal done on their father's property. Andrea Lewy explained how she arrived at the commercial land rates, which were based on sales data suggesting a range of values for one acre of land to be between \$650,000 to \$752,000. There were other sales she reviewed in Exeter and after adjusting for certain factors the range was between \$732,000 to \$758,000 as being the median sales price after April 1, 2009. This resulted in her generally conservative estimate that would lead her to believe that \$700,000 for the land value was appropriate. Comparatively, land values in 2003 were all over the place, starting at \$180,000 with various adjustments. Bruce and Karl Scamman agreed that the 2009 assessments were much more consistent. They expressed a concern that there was not a recognition that special conditions of each lot do value their property. Ms. Lewy said she would be willing to look at that if they file an abatement outlining those concerns. Mr. Canada thanked them for their time and for bringing their concerns to the Board.

Sandra Bisset, of the Municipal Energy Assistance program, who is the Town of Stratham's coordinator, was present to discuss her work on energy grants for the Town and energy efficiency programs. She has been working with the Town, and more specifically Lincoln Daley, since December and will continue her work until June of 2010. This effort is being funded by the Public Utilities Commission Grant from the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Fund. She then gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Board on her efforts. (Please see attached.) Lincoln Daley summarized the Block Grant application he constructed for the Town.

Mr. Canada moved to affirm the grant application submitted on February 16, 2010 on behalf of the Town by Mr. Daley. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PARK PERMITS/MINICIPAL CENTER RENTALS:

The following Park permits and Municipal Center rentals were reviewed and acted upon:

The National MS Society request for a bike ride fundraiser at the Park on August 21, 2010 was approved.

Katelyn Stewart for a birthday party at the Park on June 19, 2010 was also approved.

Robin Pelechowicz for a wedding celebration at the Park on September 18, 2010 was approved.

Diane Varga requested to use the Municipal Center for a birthday party on March 19, 2010. This was approved.

Bradford Bent requested the use of the Park and the Fire House for a wedding and a reception. The Board discussed his previous involvement in the Fire Department and his current absence from Town and whether he had consistently committed to assisting with the Fair. The application was tabled awaiting confirmation of his membership within the Fire Department.

Katie Scamman requested the use of the Municipal Center for a baby shower on March 27, 2010. This was approved.

Tiffany Dibartolomeo requested use of the Fire House for a wedding reception. This request was tabled awaiting confirmation of her active membership with the Ladies Auxiliary.

The Board then discussed various preparations for Town Meeting and improvements to the Town website.

At 10:45 PM, 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