

SELECTBOARD MEETING

Approved Minutes

January 7, 2013

7:00pm Calais Elementary School

Attending: Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Mike Garand, Donna Fitch, Rolf Mueller, Alfred Larrabee, Dot Naylor, Gail Graham, Jack Russell, Gary Root, Jan Ohlsson, Anne Winchester, Meredith Cowart, Richard Cowart, Marge Garfield, Art Edelstein, Steve Sweeney, Mike Loignon, Sharon Fannon, Jeff Fannon and Rose Pelchuck.

Actions:

Approval of November 26th Meeting Minutes – Scott Bassage made a motion to approve the Minutes and offered one amendment. Rose Pelchuck noted the Minutes were previously approved. If they were not approved, Scott would like the Minutes amended regarding the beaver baffles on Adamant Pond.

Approval of the December 13th Joint Meeting Minutes – Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0. (Mike Garand arrived after the vote.)

Town Invoices & Road Commissioner's Orders of the Day – The Selectboard reviewed and processed the town invoices and orders of the day as per usual protocol.

Road Commissioner Update – Alfred Larrabee reported the Highway Department is running smoothly. Scott Bassage inquired about pushing up the snow piles at the trash/recycling depot. Alfred will bring the payloader down to move snow to improve access.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO ZONING REGULATIONS: 7:15pm

Jack Russell, Planning Commission Chair, reported the Planning Commission held public community meetings around town. The following townspeople commented on the proposed changes and both Jack Russell and Gary Root offered responses.

Rolf Mueller – Spoke in opposition to the overlay districts as it relates to the Rural Residential District. Jack Russell said we have to begin to move forward on preserving natural resources. What we are trying to do is allow you to build on your property while preserving natural resources while working together. Jack Russell noted we do not have a good natural resources inventory in this town.

Gary Root – The foundational changes proposed by the Planning Commission are looking to minimize impact on infrastructure, roads & schools that we all pay for. We are looking at encouraging development in town while minimizing impact. Any development in town impacts everyone; we are trying to minimize cost and maximize benefit. This document is the best stab at balancing the needs of landowners and impact. This is not the end of the story but a beginning.

Sharon Fannon – This is very complicated information and she is trying to understand the changes. People would like the link to overlay maps. Valid question from Rolf Mueller to know what percentage of town is now covered by the proposed overlay districts.

Jeff Fannon - asked about if the Department of Fish & Wildlife updates is incorporated in our zoning regulation updates.

Marge Garfield – asked about Gary Root's response about putting more houses by the road as this gives the impression of a lot of development. Gary Root responded by saying the Planning Commission put a greater weight on what happens to the farm field (marketable hay product, Christmas trees, vegetables). In the Town Plan, we aimed at a five-year goal to produce some percentage of our own food in town.

Dot Naylor – likes some of the ideas but is cautious citing the example of Charlotte, VT, which she has been frequenting since 1968 and how the town has evolved to one that is no longer affordable for the average person to buy property in.

Gail Graham – grateful for working with the Planning Commission to her subdivision.

Marge Garfield – inquired about how to weigh creating agricultural land where there is a core forest. Jack Russell responded by saying “salamanders vs. humans” what are the trade offs? We don't have a definitive answer. There is no disincentive for trading silviculture vs. agriculture. There is a vision for low impact development and an easier way to do it. Rolf Mueller noted that it is not easy to get a Conditional Use Permit from the DRB.

Anne Winchester – is all for preserving core forest but concerned about changing the language and is willing to make proposed language changes with the Planning Commission.

Richard Cowart – Noted serious problems with some language that jumped out at him. He gave an example of what the text says and what the reality is and used the example of obtaining a report from a certified wildlife biologist. Before the Selectboard votes, the Selectboard should look at the maps and understand what percentage of the town the districts cover in the town.

Rolf Mueller – offered some general housekeeping comments.

Mike Loignon – concerned that the draft be correct the first time around. Denise Wheeler explained the process of incorporating technical changes versus substantive changes.

Gail Graham – concerned for many reasons about these proposed changes to zoning. The voters may not have adequate information on what they are voting on. Jack Russell totally agreed and said it is one of his greatest frustrations.

Dot Naylor – suggested publishing the Planning Commission agendas and brief Meeting Minutes on FPF to know what the Planning Commission is addressing. If we were able to follow through Meeting Minutes, it would help.

Sharon Fannon – would like to see a summary for people to understand. It would include what they are (current text) and this is how we are changing; with the up side and down side. It is a huge barrier for the average person to digest these regulations.

Marge Garfield – saluted the work of the Planning Commission. Adding this new layer of complication is cumbersome; can it be condensed to fewer pages? She suggested putting the definitions in the beginning. Jack Russell responded by saying he is going for the Goldilocks effect – in the middle. Jack explained the increasing complexity being forced on us by the legislature and the courts. The Planning Commission struggled with not expanding the regulations. For example, the flood regulations part was mandated; I totally sympathize and we don't have an answer.

Denise Wheeler thanked everyone for coming to this public hearing and expressed sincere thanks to the Planning Commission for all the work put into these changes. The next Selectboard Meeting on January 14, 2013 will be a continuation of this public hearing. The Selectboard will review the comments heard this evening and move forward or make substantive changes. Gary Root will work with Richard Cowart on language changes and will send them to Denise Wheeler prior to the next meeting. Toby Talbot encouraged Jack Russell to have a simple handout in layman's terms citing the intent behind the changes. This concluded this portion of the public hearing. The public meeting will be continued to next Monday.

Executive Session: Zoning Enforcement, Appeals, Litigation, etc. – Scott Bassage made a motion to go into Executive Session in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) (1) at 8:25pm for the purpose of discussing exempt public records under attorney-client privilege with Garrett Baxter, Esq. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. The Regular Session resumed at 9:17pm. Denise Wheeler had nothing to publicly report. Public comment on the Draft Revised Dog Ordinance will be heard at the January 14th meeting

Update on Contract Renewal with Central Vermont Humane Society - Ann Ward from CVHS will be here on the January 14th public hearing. Denise Wheeler said the contract only pertains to stray dogs and Anne Ward will be available to answer questions.

Annual Warning for Town Meeting – The Selectboard reviewed the draft Warning as written by Donna Fitch, Town Clerk & Treasurer. Donna Fitch suggested having property taxes due in November and May in two equal payments with a grace period. The state notifies the towns in September how much we pay in school taxes. Toby Talbot wants to look at monthly cash flow to make sure we are not borrowing and paying interest.

Retaining wall project in North Calais – Rick DeWolfe and Chris Cochran will come on January 14th to provide new project costs since the project was initially priced. Alfred Larrabee noted there are higher priority

projects in town above this retaining wall project. In Alfred's view the wall and road look stable and have not changed over the past few years. Toby Talbot asked Alfred to make a list of priorities with price tags to help the Selectboard choose the best projects for the upcoming year. There are three different kinds of grants that the town can apply for: Structures Grants, Better Back Roads Grants and Highway Grants.

Cemetery Commission wants to buy land on Lightening Ridge Road for the cemetery.

Toby Talbot said the town should have a Capital Reserve Policy before we asked taxpayers for the funds for the Capital Reserve Fund. The Selectboard needs to define the intent of what you do with the fund. Maybe draft a short capital plan before hand.

Ernie Parish is getting quotes for a standing seam roof on the Town Hall.

Kellogg Hubbard Library reps are coming to the meeting next week.

Alfred Larrabee inquired if the new road grader was going to be on the Warning. Alfred is meeting with two companies for quotes. He will report back at the next meeting.

Other Business - Alfred Larrabee informed the Selectboard that Doug Lilley has snow stakes in the town's right of way in front of his house on Lightening Ridge. Alfred is doing his best to avoid the stakes and wanted to forewarn the Selectboard about the situation. The road is narrowed down because Alfred cannot push the snow back since the tall snow markers are in the way. The Selectboard was in agreement that the traveled road needs to be properly maintained.

Executive Session: Zoning Enforcement, Appeals, Litigation, etc. – John Brabant made a motion to go into Executive Session in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) (1) at 9:55pm for the purpose of discussing litigation and contractual matters. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0. The Regular Session resumed at 10:10pm. Denise Wheeler had nothing to publicly report.

Tentative Agenda for the January 14th Meeting

- Draft Revised Dog Ordinance public hearing
- North Calais Retaining Wall Project further discussion
- Woodbury Fire Department
- Kellogg Hubbard Library
- EMFD Allocation between the towns
- Continued Public Hearing on the Proposed Changes to the Zoning Regulations

At 10:15pm, the meeting was continued until January 14, 2013 at 7:00pm at the Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck
Selectboard Administrative Assistant