

SELECTBOARD MEETING

Draft Minutes

January 5, 2016

7:00pm Calais Town Office

Attending: Denise Wheeler, Scott Bassage, Rose Pelchuck, Jack Russell, John McCullough, Jan Ohlsen, Paul Rose, Gary Root, Rich Quelch and Ronnie Shaw.

Actions:

Denise Wheeler, Chair, called the continued meeting from December 28, 2015 to Order at 7:12pm. This meeting was a joint meeting with the Planning Commission to review the proposed Regulatory Implementation Section of the proposed, revised Town Plan. As the meeting began, Planning Commission Chair, Jack Russell, asked each person to verbalize what they would like to have happen by the end of the meeting. The sentiment heard was working collaboratively, staying focused on what is best for the town, finding our vision, to finally get through the Regulatory Implementation section so the Selectboard can hold another public hearing, move forward on building trust as the boards used to have, a spirit of hopefulness and harmony. Scott Bassage would like to see page numbers and dates included in the proposed Town Plan throughout.

The Selectboard and Planning Commission reviewed each section, paragraph by paragraph until a consensus was reached for desired language (and intent) in the proposed Town Plan. The final changes were recorded by Rich Quelch, Planning Commission Secretary, which will be distributed electronically to the Selectboard and Planning Commission.

Denise Wheeler set the date of February 1, 2016 at 7:00 pm in the Town Office Building for a Special Selectboard Meeting to hear public comment on the newly-revised, proposed Town Plan. Jack Russell encouraged us to hear public comment at the public hearing and not respond to emails that can be misleading and misinterpreted.

Denise Wheeler asked the Planning Commission about the Warning Article they proposed for Town Meeting 2016 asking for a town wide vote to adopt the Town Plan. Currently the Town Plan is adopted by the Selectboard. Scott Bassage explained the history of townspeople voting on adoption of the Town Plan. Scott said the last time the Town Plan was voted on by the townspeople was in the 1980's and it did not go well at all; there was no chance for appeal or discussion. Denise Wheeler reiterated regulatory language is in the current Town Plan; this is not new. Jack Russell agreed that regulatory language is in the Town Plan but stated regulatory language impacts landowners in zoning and that is why approval of the Zoning Regulations is put before the voters. Jack went on to say that there is a potential that three people on the Selectboard can vote on a change in the Town Plan, which can have a dramatic impact on the town. That is what scares Jack the most.

Scott Bassage noted the Selectboard has an impact on townspeople at each meeting by setting the tax rate and spending town funds. Denise Wheeler said she fears not having any Town Plan if it goes before the voters and gets voted down. Planning Commission members weighed in saying the public needs to be educated about the Town Plan so it doesn't get voted down, the Town Plan needs to represent everybody and we want what's best for the town. "We feel as a group the format of the Town Plan has a greater impact on development in town and by having a town vote, you have another opportunity for the public to give input," said Rich Quelch. Jack Russell said, "I trust the voters when push comes to shove." Denise Wheeler said, "As painful as this has been, we learned a lot." Gary Root spoke about the process to revise the Town Plan, and in the end noted "dynamic tension creates excellence".

Jack Russell closed this portion of the Planning Commission meeting. Scott Bassage made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 9:00 pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck
Selectboard Member