

Ad Hoc Committee on Groton Polling Places

Minutes of Meeting – 27 January 2014 – Town Hall Selectmen’s Meeting Room

Vice Chairman Berta Erickson called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

Present were:

Michael Bouchard – Advisor
Michelle Collette
Berta Erickson
Mark Haddad – Advisor
Scott Harked (via telephone)
Brooks Lyman
Susan Slade

Absent were:

Carol Quinn
Stuart Schulman

The minutes of the 21 January Meeting were amended to remove an opinion about the accessibility of the Grotonwood facility and unanimously approved.

Berta described her discussions with GDRSD officials and Police Chief Don Palma about the use of the schools. The general feeling conveyed was that everyone would feel better if elections were not held at active schools. She mentioned that other towns still use schools for polling places – Chelmsford and Harvard were mentioned. Apparently these towns use the school facilities as polling places while the school is in session, with the exception (Harvard?) that the schools are shut down for Presidential elections.

Michelle Collette made a motion – seconded - to not use any active schools for polling places. After some discussion bearing on the possibility that it might be necessary to use the schools (thinking mainly about the Middle School Gymnasium) whether we like it or not, Michelle withdrew her motion. The general consensus was that the use of school buildings was a last choice.

There was a discussion of the Groton Pool and Golf Center. The consensus was that while the GPGC would be a suitable place to hold the election for both Precincts 2 & 3; until the handicapped access problem was solved, that it would not be suitable. There was serious question whether this could be attained in time for the spring Town election (or even for any elections in 2014) given the need to spend money to make the site and building improvements and the need to have those expenditures approved by Town Meeting with the attendant delays in starting construction work. The possibility of moving the handicapped access to the Snack Bar end of the building (where there are more parking places without requiring earthmoving) was brought up; this will be investigated.

It was moved and seconded, that Grotonwood be eliminated as a potential polling site. The motion passed 3 Yea, 2 Nay.

Scott Harker suggested that we use Town Hall and Prescott School for the spring Town elections – one precinct in each location. The use of Prescott School for the 2014 fall elections was questionable due to the Town’s intent to sell the building. If this occurs, the new owner may not

want the town to use the building as a polling place. A general discussion centered on parking problems; it was felt that parking at Town Hall and Prescott School was adequate for one precinct, but not for two, particularly for a Gubernatorial or Presidential election. There was some discussion of using auxiliary parking areas – the Groton Inn parking lot was mentioned.

Several possibilities for both near-term and long term were mentioned:

Both Precincts at Town Hall

Split between Town Hall and Prescott School.

Both Precincts in Prescott School for the spring, 2014 Town election.

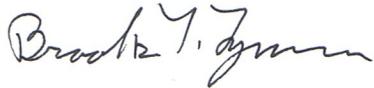
Investigate long-term usage of GPGC for both Precincts.

It was agreed to continue discussion of these possibilities at future meetings.

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, 3 February @ 2:00 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

The meeting was adjourned approximately 3:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brooks Lyman".

Brooks Lyman
Secretary