

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SEPTEMBER 17, 2001
REGULAR SESSION
"MINUTES APPROVED"

Present: Chairman Peter S. Cunningham, Clerk Dann Chamberlin, Member Thomas P. McCuin, Jr. and Administrative Officer Jean E. Kitchen.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00.

BOWMAN EARTH REMOVAL

At a previous meeting, consideration of the Bowman's earth removal permit request was postponed until this evening, at the request of the applicants. They were now requesting to extend it until the Selectmen's Oct. 1 meeting.

Mr. Chamberlin moved to postpone consideration for an earth removal permit at 96 Overlook Drive until October 1. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

TOWN EARTH REMOVAL - Thompson Mill Pond Dredging

The Town proposes to dredge the Thompson Mill Pond and remove earth material on property shown on Assessors' Lot 102-1 owned by Carl Canner and the Town which is located off Townsend Road and West Main Street.

Earth Removal Inspector Michelle Collette said that the Committee walked the site last Friday and met prior to the Selectmen's meeting. The Committee voted to recommend approval of this project because it is in the public interest to do so. The Committee voted unanimously to grant an Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Permit and to recommend that the Selectmen grant a Special Permit for the removal of 15,000 cubic yards of material pursuant to Ch. 134, Sec. 11, with the following conditions:

1. An alternative site shall be located for stockpiling and drying dredged material prior to moving such material to the landfill, if necessary.
2. The Selectmen shall determine the hours of operation. The Earth Removal Regulations state "Earth removal operations shall be conducted only between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m." However, under the circumstances, the Committee recommended that the Selectmen extend the normal hours of operation to facilitate completion of the project prior to October 15, 2001.

Mr. Chamberlin asked how many residents would be impacted. Ms. Collette said the impacted individuals would be the Canner's, Wheatley's and a few others.

Mr. Chamberlin noted that he, Ms. Kitchen and the Highway Surveyor met with DEP representative Martin Jalonski earlier that day, who was getting a lot of complaints. DEP will be issuing an order this week that the project must be completed by October 15, 2001 and that the release of water downstream will not contain any sediment. Another argument was for the extended hours of operation. Mr. Cunningham said the contractor has an interest to complete the job as soon as possible and is aware of the release of water not to contain sediment. Mr. Chamberlin said H&V does a water release in the fall. The Town needs to coordinate with them. H&V's release would help bring the water level back up. Mr. Cunningham said the impoundment needs to be re-hydrated, but not so quickly as to damage downstream.

Mr. Chamberlin pressed the point that the dam was a regional resource and that the Town should sell it to DEP for \$1. Looking long range, he thought the Town should pursue this. He did not think the Town should own the dam.

Mr. Chamberlin moved to grant the Town of Groton and Carl Canner (as owner) an Earth Removal Permit for the purposes of dredging material at property shown on Assessors' Lot 102-1 owned by Carl Canner and property located off Townsend Road and West Main Street with the following conditions:

1. An alternative site, to be determined by the Highway Surveyor, shall be located for stockpiling and drying dredged material prior to moving such material to the landfill, if necessary.
2. The hours of operation to be Monday through Saturday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The hours of operation has been extended to facilitate completion of the project prior to October 15, 2001.

The motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham spoke of last week's discussion regarding the dam. He said that Marion Stoddart was mentioned to have had a hand with those who were manipulating the dam. That was not the case. She happened to be on site because she received a call that someone from the National Heritage would be there. After talking to all parties, it was determined that she had no knowledge of anything occurring at the dam. When she arrived and saw something going on, she left immediately.

Ms. Stoddart said she was very upset when she heard a statement that she had a part in manipulating the dam. She added that she did not see anyone manipulate the dam. She went to take photographs of the river as well as meet with the National Heritage. Ms. Stoddart said that when she went to the site, she had been told that work had been done to the gate. She told them that they should not touch the gate and she left immediately.

Mr. Cunningham spoke of multiple benefits of getting the dredging done and looking for assistance when refilling the pond.

Ms. Stoddart was in on Friday when Mr. Reiner, EPA, recommended that it be partially closed. Mr. Cunningham said that initially Mr. Reiner felt it should be closed completely. Another concern Mr. Reiner expressed was whether the gate was fully operational. Mr. Cunningham told him the gate was operable when work was done last winter.

PUBLIC HEARING - Parking Lot & Road Between Broadmeadow Rd. & Station Ave.

Mr. Chamberlin moved to open the hearing. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously. The purpose of the hearing was to begin discussing the design and alternatives for the proposed road and parking lot between Broadmeadow Road and Station Avenue.

John Michalak, from Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, LLC, presented preliminary sketches. He said he received approval from the Conservation Commission to move the trail over in this area. He wanted to know how many spaces the Town wanted and what the purpose was for the access road. Mr. Chamberlin said he would rule out Alternative 2. He said Alternative 3 was more attractive. Mr. McCuin was in favor of combining Alternatives 1 and 3.

Mr. Cunningham noted that the idea was to accomplish addressing the need for additional off-street parking in the downtown area. The other goal was to gain access from Broadmeadow Road to Station Avenue. Alternatives 1 and 3, which have a curve in the road, are traffic calming. He also envisioned the traffic would flow from Broadmeadow Road to Station Avenue. He said he did not have a definite number of parking spaces in mind.

Andrew Searle, Court Street, said that the Electric Light Dept. moving would be determined in the fall. He asked if the Board considered that the shed would be gone.

Virginia Wood asked if the Highway Dept., Police Dept. or DEM reviewed the alternatives before the Selectmen that evening. DEM's concern was the horse trailer access.

Bob Feldman, Court Street, asked what the pedestrian plan was. He was told that presently there was a painted sidewalk on Broadmeadow Road to Playground Road. Jennifer Diedrich, Station Avenue, said there was no sidewalk from the trail to Playground Road. Mr. Cunningham said that was not part of this plan.

Ms. Diedrich asked about the speed sign on Station Avenue. Mr. Cunningham said that could be looked at. Police Chief Mulhern said it would be posted at 25 MPH.

Ms. Stoddart asked if the parking area could be something other than bituminous. She asked what the length of the horse path would be. Mr. Cunningham said the equestrian path does not go to Ayer. He said the Board wanted delineation to show the parking spaces. Mr. Searle said they could use water permeable bituminous that does not necessarily mean it has to be gravel.

GELD Manager Roger Beeltje said there was a question regarding some place to move to. Town Meeting will determine whether to develop here or at a new site. If it is a new site, GELD will gather input from neighbors to see what everyone wants at the current GELD site. Then it will prepare an RFP. There will be a better idea about the parking, etc. after the RFP is ready. If GELD stays, there is a limited amount of land and they would need to look at existing land. This process regarding the road and parking lot may be too soon. An RFP may have a different concept of parking. GELD will hold a meeting on Wed., at which time there may be a facilitator.

Mr. Cunningham said the Master Plan supported business development and parking in this area. The role GELD plays is critical. Mr. Chamberlin felt that the existence of the road and parking would bring more responses. Mr. McCuin said they would be mutually exclusive.

Reporter Chris Long asked who owned the property. Mr. Cunningham said the Town owned it, but GELD paid for it. Town Meeting determines if it gets sold. Ms. Long asked the time frame of the RFP. She was told that the process would take about 5 months to have the RFP ready for bid. It could make the spring Town Meeting.

Anne Christie, Court Street, liked Alternative 3 because of the one-way traffic flow. She asked if there would be steps taken to continue the one-way on Court Street. Mr. Cunningham asked if she meant enforcement.

A resident of Broadmeadow Road was concerned about the traffic on Broadmeadow if a new road was put in.

Mr. Chamberlin said they might look at gating Playground Road. Mr. McCuin said that Ms. Moore suggested discontinuing the top of Playground Road.

Chief Mulhern said he liked Alternative 3 and did not support closing the road near the playground at this time. Having no through traffic (i.e. Playground) is difficult to enforce. There is no reason to change the one-way status of Court Street. He said the parking is needed.

Highway Surveyor Tom Delaney said DEP would not approve Alternative 2 (the road going through the middle of the parking lot). He suggested that the Town's plan for the roadway and parking lot be included in the GELD RFP.

Karen Liljegren, Court Street, asked if the one-way scenario was set in stone. Mr. Cunningham said that one-way was a preference, but was not set in stone.

Mr. Searle suggested not having angled parking. If it was at a right angle, it could allow people to go back out to Broadmeadow Road (from the parking lot to Broadmeadow could be two way).

Most of those present in the audience preferred Alternative 3.

Doris Chojnowski, GELD, said the RFP would look at a clean slate as though there were nothing there. Two-way traffic is still a possibility.

Mr. Chamberlin moved to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

HANSON MEMORIAL

Bonnie Biocchi said the Hanson family, who died in one of the plane crashes last week, lived on Painted Post Road. Karen Lofgren and Shelly Murray opened an account for a Hanson's memorial fund to plant a memorial tree and have a memorial event in October. Any additional money raised will be donated to the Red Cross or memorial in the name of Christine Hanson. There will be a booth at Grotonfest for residents to sign and accept contributions. They are looking for a site to plant the tree near the bandstand. The Friends of the Trees will be purchasing the tree with the donations.

Mr. McCuin suggested the excess funds collected be given to the NY Police and FireWidows' and Children's Benefit Fund. Mr. Chamberlin approved of the idea of the memorial tree and hoped for wide-spread support.

All checks should be made out to the Hanson Family Memorial Fund and either dropped off or mailed to the Town Clerk.

ROAD OPENING - Lost Lake Dr. and Beecher Rd.

The purpose of the permit was to excavate the road for water service. This road opening will only disturb pavement on Lost Lake Drive and Beecher Road. The other portion is in the right of way.

Mr. Chamberlin moved to grant a road opening permit to Frank Genetti of 9 Beecher Road for a 210 foot water main and that the work will be completed to the satisfaction of the Highway Surveyor. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

ROAD OPENING - Lost Lake Dr. and Spruce Rd.

This road opening was for the purpose of extending a water main from Lost Lake Drive to 10 Spruce Road. The only pavement to be disturbed will be on Lost Lake Drive. Mr. Kelly cannot put in a septic system without Town water.

Mr. Chamberlin moved to grant a road opening permit to Timothy Kelly of 10 Spruce Road for a 180 foot water main and the work will be completed to the satisfaction of the Highway Surveyor. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

COUNTRY CLUB & RECREATION AUTHORITY APPOINTMENT

Mr. McCuin moved the appointment of Janet O. Healy as a member of the Country Club & Recreation Authority, term to expire June 30, 2004. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Local Cultural Council Appointment

Mr. Chamberlin moved the appointment of Ms. Laura Rogerson Moore as a member of the Local Cultural Council, term to expire June 30, 2004. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT

Motions for Town Meeting

Mr. Chamberlin offered to move Articles 5-8.

Rail Trail

Mr. Chamberlin said that the fact that the residents were not notified in advance that a trail would be cut in Saddle Lane and Drumlin Hill Road was still an issue. Paul Funch will not cut any more until the outcome of the Conservation Commission's meeting.

MBTA

The MBTA alternate delegate for Mr. Chamberlin will be Kathleen O'Connor.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:40 PM Mr. Chamberlin moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and voted unanimously.

Approved: _____
Dann Chamberlin, Clerk

Respectfully Submitted,
Jean E. Kitchen