

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
FEBRUARY 13, 2006  
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES  
“APPROVED”**

**Present:** George F. Dillon, Jr., Chair; John L. Saball, Vice Chair; Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; Mihran Keoseian, Member; Jean E. Kitchen, Administrative Assistant; and Kathleen Newell, Office Assistant

*The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.*

**Trust for Public Lands RE: Surrenden Farms/Campbell Trust Land**

**Also present:** see attached list.

Mr. Badge Blackett (TPL) related the background history and mission statement of the Trust for Public Lands. Mr. Blackett stated that the TPL is usually contacted by municipalities to broker real estate endeavors. Mr. Blackett stated that this project was unique as the TPL was asked by a combination of land owners to develop a package to present to the Town of Groton. Mr. Blackett reviewed the property on a map; and broke down the purchase price with Lots 6, 7 & 8 at \$10,200,000; Lot 8 North and 10 at \$9,100,000; and also \$100,000 for establishing an endowment; for a total purchase price of \$19,400,000. Mr. Blackett detailed the sources of funding as follows: \$5,650,000 (maximum) Town of Groton/CPA funds, \$5,000,000 Groton School; \$3,600,000 sale of existing houses; \$2,250,000 Private Fund Raising; \$500,000 Self Help Grant; \$500,000 Other Public Funds. Mr. Blackett stated that the proposed sale of existing houses on the property is estimated at \$3,200,000 (Groton School has indicated it will buy the house on Lot 10 and one of the smaller houses for faculty housing). Mr. Blackett reviewed potential sources as follows:

- There is a possibility that the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife may be interested in purchasing Lot 8 South as there is state owned property adjoining the parcel, and there may be the potential of a conservation easement later on.
- Self Help Grant – Division of Conservation Services

Mr. Blackett reviewed the following timeline:

- March 1 – TPL will make a non-refundable deposit on the project in the amount of \$4,900,000, a positive vote of support from the Board of Selectmen is necessary to take to Annual Town Meeting. TPL would like to meet with the Finance Committee, Conservation Commission and Community Preservation Committee
- April 24 – Annual Town Meeting- TPL would like to get a positive vote the first night.
- May 1 – TPL makes another non-refundable deposit in the amount of \$350,000
- June 30 – Proposed closing on Lots 8 & 9
- December 17 – Closing

Mr. Blackett opened the floor to questions from the attendees. Ms. Alberta Erickson (Groton- Dunstable Regional School Committee member) asked if there had been any consideration given to setting aside a tract of land for a school. Mr. Blackett stated that it had been discussed however there are many factors which make it improbable i.e. arsenic contamination on portions of the property; inability to use CPA funds for schools; the need to get a positive vote and overrides from two towns to proceed with a school and the impact that a proposed school in the project would have on fund-raising.

Ms. Susan Yeager asked if there would be provision for maintenance of the land. Mr. Blackett stated that an endowment would be put in place.

A resident asked how many years the CPA would fund the project. Mr. Blackett stated that the CPA could fund the entire Town's portion of the project and Treasurer/Collector Christine Collins had been structuring the borrowing in a way which would not use all of the CPA funds, however the funds for commitment to open space may be completely expended for the first few years.

It was the consensus of those present that this was an incredible opportunity for the Town to preserve a critical natural resource which would have many benefits to the residents of Groton.

Mr. Dillon asked anyone who may have further questions to contact Ms. Kitchen who would then forward them to the TPL Steering Committee at its next meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2006.

- **Highway Surveyor Tom Delaney RE: Snow & Ice Deficit**

Mr. Delaney stated that it was his unpleasant duty to request deficit spending. Mr. Delaney reviewed the increased costs of supplies used to keep the roads open. Mr. Dillon stated that \$245,000 had been budgeted for Snow & Ice removal and the deficit before the most recent storm had been \$12,500. Mr. Delaney stated there had been approximately \$10,000 expended in overtime during the past storm because it had occurred during the weekend; bringing the current deficit to approximately \$30,000. Mr. Cunningham asked if the Town was part of a buying consortium. Mr. Delaney stated that he is currently purchasing off the state bid list and getting a better price.

*Mr. Saball moved to authorize deficit spending for the removal of snow and ice for FY06. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.*

- **Gordon K. Newell RE: Land Transfer Title for West Groton Water District**

Mr. Newell reviewed the timeline of events from Special Town Meeting to approve the land transfer and the legislation that was drawn up and had been well received in both the House and Senate. Mr. Newell commended the efforts of Representative Robert Hargraves and Senator Steven C. Panagiotakos in moving the legislation. Mr. Newell noted that a caveat had been added specifying that if West Groton Water Supply District ceases to use the land for a specified period of time, it will revert back to the Town Forest Committee.

*Mr. Saball moved to execute the Access, Use and Water Supply Easements between the Town of Groton and West Groton Water Supply District, dated February 13, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.*

**David Manugian RE: Grant for Fitch's Bridge**

Ms. Marion Stoddart, Ms. Jean Wright and Highway Surveyor Tom Delaney were present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Stoddart stated that Mr. Manugian could not be present and that she and Ms. Wright were present to try and answer any questions the Board may have. Ms. Stoddart stated that the Committee had wished to present their application for the Transportation Enhancement Program grant the following evening at MRPC. Ms. Stoddart stated that they would need a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen agreeing to long-term maintenance of the bridge in order for the Committee to pursue the grant. Ms. Stoddart stated that Highway Surveyor Tom Delaney had agreed to accept the maintenance with two conditions: completion of the bridge restoration and removal of brush and debris to access the bridge. Mr. Delaney stated that he did not foresee extensive maintenance for the project and there would be a need to create a line item for the future. Mr. Delaney stated that he would need to bid out the more detailed maintenance i.e. painting.

Ms. Stoddart stated that the preliminary study had been done and there was still money in the fund to do the final study. Ms. Stoddart emphasized that the Committee would not be asking for more funding from the Town, but was asking for an agreement to maintain the bridge upon completion of the restoration. Ms. Stoddart stated that she was aware that there were questions from the Board and Town Accountant. Ms. Stoddart asked that those questions be submitted in writing for her to forward to Mr. Manugian and although they had hoped to present the application tomorrow evening, there was another meeting in three months.

Ms. Kitchen stated that Town Accountant Valerie Jenkins had simply wished to make it known that the Town would be making contributions via Highway Department maintenance.

Mr. Saball stated that it was clear what was being presented and he was in support of the project. Mr. Cunningham stated that the Board had seen the information before and he also supported the project. Ms. Kitchen reviewed the breakdown of in kind services.

Mr. Keoseian addressed Mr. Delaney stating that he (Delaney) was requesting additional help for the Highway Department and questioned what would happen if he did not get the requested help. Mr. Delaney reviewed the proposed maintenance list and stated that there didn't seem to be anything that would have a huge impact on his department and time.

*Mr. Saball moved to approve a letter in support of the Fitch's Bridge Committee seeking Federal Transportation Enhancement funding for the rehabilitation of Fitch's Bridge and reaffirm that the Town maintain the Bridge upon receipt of said funding and successful completion of the rehabilitation. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.*

**Vote for Health Insurance Percentage for Personnel By-law and Eligible Part-Time Elected Officials**

*Mr. Saball moved to approve a 20% Employee Share and 80% Town Share of Health Insurance for by-law Employees and part-time eligible Elected Officials, effective July 1, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.*

**OTHER BUSINESS**

*Mr. Saball moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes of February 6, 2006, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.*

*Mr. Saball moved to approve and not release the Executive Session Minutes of February 6, 2006, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.*

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REPORT**

Ms. Kitchen stated that MRPC had a program which would not cost the Town anything if we were to join on the application and there will be a public hearing in a few weeks. Ms. Kitchen stated the program has to do with assistance in major home repairs/rehabilitation. More information would be forthcoming.

**SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORT**

Mr. Dillon read a reminder notice of the Women's Club co-sponsored event at the Senior Center regarding invasive plants.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
respectfully submitted,  
Kathleen Newell  
Office Assistant

Date Approved: February 27, 2006

Enclosure: Attendance Sheet for Trust For Public Lands Surrenden Farm/Campbell Trust Land