

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 4, 2006
APPROVED**

Present: Peter S. Cunningham, Chair; George F. Dillon, Jr., Vice Chair; John L. Saball, Clerk; Joshua Degen, Member; Jeff Ritter, Interim Administrative Officer and Kathy Newell, Office Assistant.

Absent: Mihran Keoseian, Member

Chairman Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Treasurer Christine Collins RE: Borrowing – Surrenden Farm Acquisition; Water Project; Pollution Abatement Trust; Bond Anticipation Note; Self Help Grant

Ms. Christine Collins and Town Clerk Onorina Maloney were present for this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Collins stated that signatures were required for the Self-Help Grant and the money would not be reimbursed until it has been spent. She has lined up the note dates and will be paid off by grant money and will be able to pay down the \$510,000 as discussed. Mr. Cunningham asked if this was long term in July 2007. Ms. Collins affirmed.

Mr. Cunningham asked about the self-help grant and if we would need to borrow to get the money. Ms. Collins stated that we can't get the money back from the State until it is spent, we have been notified that we have been awarded and signed the grant which becomes a contract with the State. There are a lot of steps, the contract should be back to her to send back with this note and it becomes a part of the purchase price for Surrenden Farms.

Ms. Collins asked who would be attending the closing to represent the Town of Groton. Mr. Cunningham stated that Town Counsel would be present and it would be a virtual closing.

Personnel Manager Elizabeth Currier RE: Employment Process and Policy Review – CORI Policy, Town Hall Office Hours and Coverage Policy; Update on Timelines for Employee Handbook and Performance Evaluations

Ms. Currier reviewed the policies stating that the initiatives were tools that will help strengthen the employment process, employment application and offer letters (offer letters are employment contracts).

Employment Application – Mr. Cunningham stated that the application looked very comprehensive and asked what had been done before. Ms. Currier stated a short version had been used. She had done research and brought it before the Personnel Board.

CORI Policy – Once approved it will need to go to Town Counsel for review and she will start the process and hope to have done by mid-January.

Mr. Dillon asked who would be certified to view the CORI. She stated that she would be certified and she would also like the Interim Administrative Officer to be as well.

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the CORI policy. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Town Hall office hours and coverage – this is an extension of the contract.

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the Town Hall Office Hours and Coverage policy. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Handbook and Performance Tools - Ms. Currier stated that she would like to have a handbook ready for February and there was a need to have an evaluation ready for February when one new hire's probationary period is up.

Mr. Degen asked if the handbook would be distributed to only new hires or to existing employees. Ms. Currier stated that she would present drafts.

Mr. Dillon asked where the Board stood on doing evaluations. Ms. Currier stated that the last time the Board had conducted evaluations was in February 2005.

Mr. Degen asked if there was a list of employees who the Board is responsible for doing evaluations and suggested there be a written policy of who reports to the Board of Selectmen and who does the evaluation.

Police Chief Robert Mulhern RE: Police Department State Certification

Chief Mulhern explained the State and National accreditation process. There are 151 standards that need to be met for both the facility and operations of the department. Chief Mulhern showed a box which contained the standards. Waivers can be requested but are hard to obtain. Chief Mulhern explained that the standards have been met but they don't have the index i.e. paper trail showing the policy. A mock assessment will be performed and then they will request a group of assessors do an onsite review.

Mr. Cunningham asked if the standards varied by the size of the department. Chief Mulhern replied that the standards were the same. MPI sets policy procedures and the manual. The department has updated accordingly.

Chief Mulhern stated that there are two financial issues: 1) Reserve Officers – the standard calls for all officers to have 40 hours of training and 2) Dispatch – the standard calls for instant playback of recorded calls. Chief Mulhern stated that there are two options for reserve officers, either eliminate and increase full time officers or keep the reserve officers and pay the increase for overtime. With regard to the instant playback, when the department is certified the Town will be reimbursed \$500 from MIIA and will get a break on the insurance yearly. The cost of being certified is \$1,000/year.

Mr. Cunningham asked if the recent upgrade could be easily upgraded to accommodate the instant playback. Chief Mulhern stated that there was a recent upgrade and there is playback and recording capabilities, but not instant playback.

Mr. Cunningham stated that he has always supported the reserve officer program as it works as a feeder program. Mr. Cunningham asked if it was reasonable to think that the reserve officers have the time and inclination to go to the academy. Chief Mulhern stated that they would be willing to go if compensated and if they are required to go they should be compensated.

Mr. Saball asked if the next goal would be National certification. Chief Mulhern stated that that had not been broached yet as there are expenses incurred with each step.

Mr. Degen asked if E911 updates could be used to cover the upgrades. Chief Mulhern stated that it could be years before the upgrades are received to meet the standard.

The Board concurred to move forward.

Ms. Barbara Ganem RE: Sampas Land Donation on Longley Road

Attorney VanderLinden and Craig Auman, Conservation Commissioner was also present.

Ms. Ganem stated that this was an 11 acre parcel being donated to the Town and the intent was to donate the land prior to the end of the year. Attorney VanderLinden is in the process of preparing the deed.

Attorney VanderLinden stated that the land is registered and there have not been any conveyances on the property since the 1970's.

Ms. Ganem gave a detailed description of the land, its topography and importance as an extension of the trail network.

Mr. Dillon moved to accept a donation of land by Ms. Betty Sampas consisting of approximately 11 +/- acres situated on Longley Road for conservation purposes subject to title examination and approval of Town Counsel. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 3 in favor, 1 abstention (Degen), 1 absent (Keoseian).

Attorney Robert Collins RE: Conservation Restriction, Deerhaven Subdivision

Attorney Collins asked that this agenda item be rescheduled for two weeks.

Attorney Charles VanderLinden RE: Conservation Restriction, Lot 6 Gibbet Hill, 2 acres

**Mr. Degen recused himself and left the room at 8:20 p.m.*

Attorney VanderLinden stated that Lot 6 of Gibbet Hill was part of the original purchase a parcel that the Webber family had retained to develop, but they are now giving a conservation restriction. Mr. Cunningham thanked Mr. Webber and his family, stating that without them Gibbet Hill would be a sub-division.

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the grant of the Conservation Restriction and Conservation Easement to the Groton Conservation Trust for premises owned by Gibbet Hill Farm, LLC located in the Town of Groton, Massachusetts, situated on Martins Pond Road, comprised of approximately 2 +/- acres, bounded and described and being a portion of the same land described in a deed recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds at Book 31800, Page 219. Said conservation restriction and conservation easement are described and shown as Lot 6 on a recorded plan "Exhibit A (Gibbet Hill) on two Sheet 2 of 2, Conservation Restriction and Conservation Easement in Groton, Massachusetts (Middlesex County)", dated December 13, 2002, prepared by Precision Land Surveying, Inc., scale 1"=160', recorded as Plan Number 11370 of 2002. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

*Mr. Degen returned to the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

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Mr. Bruce Wheeler, Academy Hill Realty Trust RE: Quitclaim Deed on Academy Hill Conservation Land

Attorney Alex Perra and Mr. Bruce Wheeler were present for this portion of the meeting.

Attorney Perra state that the Town would be holding the fee and the Groton Land Trust would be owning the conservation restriction which the Conservation Commission had accepted.

Ms. Ganem stated that Town Counsel had reviewed from the point of view of the Town holding the restriction, not the Town owning the land, some question of the timeframe of placing the conservation restriction on the deed and it would need to be vetted by Town Counsel.

Mr. Cunningham asked who would hold the Conservation Restriction if the Town held the land. Attorney Perra stated that the Groton Land Trust would want the opportunity to hold the restriction. Attorney Perra had spoken with Natural Heritage and Town Counsel had reviewed when the proposal was the other way around and had requested some changes in the relationship between the Town and NEHSP.

Mr. Dillon suggested that the issue be continued as the draft of the deed needed to be reviewed by Town Counsel and the conservation restriction needed to be reviewed.

Mr. Cunningham suggested December 18, 2006 and inviting Ms. Collette to attend.

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Surrenden Farm Project Update; Review Motions & Presentation

Mr. Cunningham stated that the Special Town Meeting was next week and he thought that Mr. Degen could move Article 1. Mr. Cunningham stated that he would not be able to attend due to a prior commitment and Mr. Dillon has been the alternate member on the Committee.

Mr. Cunningham reviewed a letter from the Department of Fisheries & Wildlife and also reviewed the topic of the warrant articles.

Mr. Dillon stated that an attorney for DFW had been present at that morning's meeting and it was nice to put a face with the DFW. There were good discussions and another meeting will be held to get the technical aspects from both water departments. Most if not all of the issues have been resolved.

Mr. Cunningham stated that this was a partnership between the Town and DFW.

Mr. Degen stated that it was nice to have a face to go with the State's commitment and Attorney Crook had elaborated on why the State wants to have the conservation restriction. DFW is interested in large parcels of land to protect and Attorney Crook will be at the Town Meeting to answer questions that may arise.

There will be a site walk on the land on Sunday, December 10, 2006 at 2:30 p.m.

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OTHER BUSINESS

Selectmen Liaison Assignments

Mr. Saball stated that he had spoken with Mr. Degen and he would take over as Highway Liaison for Mr. Saball. Mr. Degen requested that he be an alternate on the Affordable Housing Task Force.

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Appointment – Holly Estes – Conservation Commission

Mr. Dillon moved to appoint Holly Estes to the Conservation Commission for the vacant, unexpired, three-year term, term to expire June 30, 2009. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

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Annual License Renewals

a. Class II Licenses

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the renewal of the following Class II Licenses, licenses to expire January 1, 2007:

Frederick A. Miller d/b/a Miller's Classic Cars

Robert H. Olson d/b/a Groton Towing Inc.

Ernest W. Piper d/b/a Piper Foreign & Domestic Motors

Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

b. Common Victualler

Mr. Dillon moved to approve Common Victualler License renewals for the following businesses, all licenses to expire December 31, 2007:

R.C. Kimball, Inc. d/b/a Oliver's Grille & Pub

Donelan's Supermarkets, Inc.

F.J. Catalano Enterprises, Ins. d/b/a Dunkin Donuts @ 133 Main Street

Courtneys Donuts LLC d/b/a Dunkin Donuts @ 318 Main Street

Courtneys Donuts LLC d/b/a Dunkin Donuts @ 3 Forge Village Road

Groton Country Club & Recreation Authority

Groton Convenience, Inc. d/b/a Groton General Store

Groton House of Pizza

Sunset Farm Bed & Breakfast

The Herb Lyceum

The Main Street Café

The Natural Market, Inc.

Pastore's Restaurant

Filho's Cucina

Rivercourt Residences

Groton Stage Coach Inn & Tavern, Inc.

Santi's Restaurant, d/b/a Johnson's Restaurant & Dairy Bar, a/k/a Johnson's Drive-In

Trustees of Lawrence Academy

Peltonen's Dining Services, Inc. (@ NEBS)

Gibbet Hill Grill LLC d/b/a Gibbet Hill Grill Restaurant

Gibbet Hill Grill LLC d/b/a Gibbet Hill Grill Function Hall

Shaw's Supermarkets, Inc.

Main House Restaurant

PGI Realty, LLC d/b/a Groton Exchange

Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

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Surplus Declaration – Tax Collector/Treasurer and Police Department

Mr. Dillon moved to declare the following computer equipment (Tax Collector/Treasurer's Office) as surplus: CPU, model HP Surestar DAT8, serial number 990908016733, Groton ID tag C00225. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Mr. Dillon moved to declare the following vehicle (Police Department) as surplus: 1999 Ford Crown Victoria cruiser, VIN# 2FAFP71W4XX111265. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Holiday Door Decorating Contest

Ms. Jenkins stated that she was requesting permission for the Town Hall employees to decorate their respective office doors for the holidays. There would be no permanent attachments used and each office would clean up after itself.

The Board concurred to allow the contest.

Minutes

Mr. Dillon moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes of August 28, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 3 in favor, 1 abstention (Degen), 1 absent (Keoseian).

Report of the Interim Administrative Officer

Mr. Ritter reviewed his activities of the week.

Selectmen Liaison Reports

Mr. Cunningham stated that the Blue Ribbon Committee would be starting a series of Open Hearings soon.

Mr. Dillon stated that the Station Avenue Redevelopment sub-Committee had accepted its committee charge and would be meeting on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.

Mr. Dillon had attended the Tree Lighting Ceremony on Firefighter's Common and Mr. Winnie Sherwin had the honor of lighting the tree.

Mr. Degen stated that the William's Barn Committee had had a successful fund-raiser.

Mr. Degen stated that the School District was exploring bringing football to the High School and they would be exploring using artificial turf.

Mr. Dillon noted that some time ago the Parks Department had been asked for an inventory of the facilities and conditions of the fields. Mr. Cunningham asked Mr. Saball to contact the Park Commissioners to get an inventory.

Mr. Dillon moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Saball. 4 in favor, 1 absent (Keoseian).

Approved: _____
John L. Saball, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Newell
Office Assistant

Date Approved: *February 26, 2007*