

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES JULY 10, 2007
APPROVED**

Present: George Dillon, Jr., Chairman; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chairman; Stuart Schulman, Clerk; Peter Cunningham

Absent: Mihran Keoseian

Also Present: Jeff Ritter, Interim Administrative Officer; April Iannacone, Office Assistant

Mr. Dillon called the regular meeting of the Board to Order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda for the public. He also made an announcement to the public as follows:

“The Board of Selectmen and other Town Boards are sensitive to the scheduling of their meetings so as to minimize possible conflicts with holidays. It is important that our community has the confidence that the Groton Board of Selectmen strongly embraces and welcomes the diversity of the people in our town, whether it’s their ethnic background, their religious beliefs or the color of their skin. The combination of ideas and points of view from both our long time residents and our newer residents make us a stronger place in which to live. All of us bring a unique perspective and, combined, these create a rich environment for our community. As the town grows and changes, it is important for all of us to value the diversity of our inhabitants and to be sensitive to cultures and religions that bring different calendars and observe different holidays. For the future we need to educate one another regarding the important dates of religious observation so that we can ensure that as many people as possible can participate in scheduled events.”

Procurement Certification

Highway Surveyor Tom Delaney addressed the Board in regards to his process in applying for Procurement Certification. Since January Tom has attended 3 courses given by the Inspector General’s Office. Now that he has passed all 3 courses he will be filing paperwork to become a Massachusetts Certified Public Procurement Officer (MCPPO). This certification is not a part of his general job description, however he has enjoyed the opportunity to take these courses in order to be able to help and advise different departments within the town. He will now be able to work with other towns and purchase items in bulk in order to help keep some costs down for the Town of Groton and other area communities. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) thanked him for all of his efforts.

Annual Reappointments

Mr. Degen moved to reappoint John Ellenberger, Kathy Harrington and Gabriel Nucci to the Cable Advisory Committee for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to reappoint James Patierno to the Capital Planning Committee for the two-year term, term to expire June 30, 2009. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to reappoint Hester Newbury to the Council on Aging for the three-year term, term to expire June 30, 2010. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to reappoint Robert Hanninen to the Earth Removal/Stormwater Advisory Committee for the three-year term, term to expire June 30, 2010. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to reappoint Cynthia Kollarics and Steven White to the Great Pond Advisory Committee for the one-year term, term to expire June 20, 2008. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Schulman moved to reappoint David Manugian to the Greenway Committee for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Cunningham seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Schulman moved to reappoint Laura Pollard to the Groton Country Club and Recreation Authority for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Cunningham seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Schulman moved to reappoint Stephen Byrne, Anthony Hawgood, Catherine Lincoln and Kathy Puff to the Local Emergency Planning Committee for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Cunningham seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Schulman moved to reappoint Richard Hughson to the Surrenden Farm Land Use Committee for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Cunningham seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Schulman moved to reappoint Raymond Ciemny to the Williams Barn Committee for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Cunningham seconded. Unanimous vote.

Zoning Board of Appeals Interview & Appointment – Harris Gerber McWade and Alan Hoch

Mr. Dillon announced that the second candidate Alan Hoch had called earlier in the day and had personally withdrawn himself as a candidate for the position. The BOS questioned Harris Gerber McWade about her interest in the spot on the Zoning Board of Appeals as well as her knowledge and understanding of the processes/procedures of the board. Ms. Gerber said that she had lived in town for many years and felt that it was time to give back to the community and get involved in the town. She has been attending the meetings for a few weeks and has also attended a state training seminar on 40B regulations. Mr. Schulman felt that because of her attending and being involved in the meetings already that she was a perfect candidate to fill the spot. Mr. Degen thanked Ms. Gerber for attending the meetings before being appointed so that she had an understanding of what she was going to

be doing.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Harris McWade Gerber to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the one year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Application to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for Affordable Housing

Mr. Ritter informed the Board that the application before them was a draft that is in process for their review and comments. The formal application will be available for the Board to vote on next Monday July 16, 2007 and will be presented to the Housing Partnership on Tuesday. The request to the CPC is for funding of \$35,000 to hire an affordable housing consultant. The consultant would help define a goal of how many affordable housing units per year the town would develop, review the concept of creating a community development plan, and help put guidelines on tracking affordable housing units in the town properly. A Community Development Corporation (CDC) would be created to hire a staff member to help the town to facilitate things to move forward and implement ideas already recommended in Groton's Affordable housing implementation plan. The CDC representative would also help the town apply for grants and inform the board of the processes and procedures to get plans approved through various boards. Mr. Cunningham agreed that a CDC staff member being hired would be a great thing to implement, especially to try to identify what affordable housing units may already be up in town that can help save the town from trying to develop new units. He believes that the Housing Partnership will almost definitely be in favor of supporting this plan.

Application to the Community Preservation Committee for Squannacook Hall

The Application to the CPC for \$20,000 for Squannacook Hall has already been submitted requesting funding for a feasibility study and not a contractor design as previously mentioned. BOS agree that it is a better change of direction and follows what was discussed during their site walk.

Council on Aging Interview & Appointment – Paula L. Lantz, Stuart J. Shuman, Cynthia Thompson, Martha Oldham

Three of the four candidates were unable to attend the meeting. Martha Oldham spoke with Josh to inform the BOS that she would be on vacation. Stuart Shuman informed the office that he had other obligations this evening. Cynthia Thompson was supposed to be available and was called away unexpectedly. Mr. Cunningham asked Paula about her interest in being a part of the Council. She informed the BOS that she had lived in town for 26 years and had been volunteering at the Senior Center for 3 years. She felt that the senior center is important and wants to be a part of the council to maintain the center and is interested in how it is doing and where it is headed. Mr. Degen thanked all of the candidates interested in the position on the Council and gave Paula thanks because the Council has already supported her efforts. The BOS consented to make a motion to appoint the candidate present and then re-interview the other three candidates at the next meeting for the other remaining vacancy.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Paula Lantz to the Council on Aging for the three- year term, term to expire June 30, 2010. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Community Center Discussion

Jeff asked the Board for direction as to how they would like to proceed regarding the Community Center. Mr. Cunningham felt that regardless of the limited public involvement in the survey the project itself should not be limited or pushed aside. The need for the center would arise in the future no matter how things proceeded now. He felt that it is worth endorsing and supporting the project. Mr. Dillon felt that in the beginning stages of a project like this one it is difficult to get public involvement without further clarification. If the development of a Community Center can help the future of the Country Club by generating more business, as well as interest in the town, then he feels it necessary. He encourages it to be looked in to further as long as the Country Club and the Council on aging are to take care of construction costs. He does not support the idea of using town taxpayer money for construction. Mr. Schulman suggested that possibly if fundraising were done to help fund further investigating and any surveys/studies needed then it would show how serious the town is about supporting the idea. Steve Webber addressed the Board and informed them that the intent is to support the project completely free of town tax funding. Not all of the funding for the project would be from fundraising, there is opportunity for grant money from the state for the creation of senior centers. The BOS consented that the project should be supported and looked into further. Mr. Ritter will send a follow up letter in support of the project.

Employee Safety Manual Review

Mr. Ritter informed the Board that this was the third draft of the Employee Safety Manual that the Safety Committee has been working on. There are still some typographical errors however this is just for informational purposes right now. It will come back in final form in the next several weeks for approval. The Safety Manual is being created for the MIIA rewards program. The enforcement of a Safety Manual will save the town money in lost time due to employee absence from injuries, as well as Workers Compensation and overtime paid to other employees to cover for the absence of an injured employee. Mr. Cunningham asked Mr. Ritter how many of these items the Safety Committee found that the town already had in process when they were researching and creating it. Mr. Ritter sated that a lot of the policies were already being practiced, but the town was taking the time to document and clearly communicate to the employees what the true expectations of the employees by the town are. Mr. Degen

stated that he felt the document was good and a good idea. He also mentioned that one change that might be added as a safety perspective to the town would be for the town to call every 6 months to verify the validity of licenses of all employees who drive town vehicles. Mr. Cunningham stated that another area of concern that they might look at adding would be in office or workplace safety handling customer relations with irate people.

Organizational Chart (for Council on Aging Certification)

Mr. Ritter informed the Board that the copy before them was based on a document from 1988 or 1989 and was reformatted to try to make it easier to follow. The Council on Aging needs a copy of the Chart for certification purposes. Mr. Cunningham stated that it should probably be noted 'subject to change' since there was already a few obvious changes to the chart. Mr. Dillon felt that as long as the order of things showed that the BOS was the appointing authority for the council on aging they should be able to use this copy and then revisions can be made later. He also felt that as long as we have gone to the extent of clearing things up this far we should continue to finish it properly. Mr. Cunningham stated that he would help give some clarification to the order of things to help correct it.

Quitclaim Deed and Acceptance Lot 2 of Surrenden Farms

Mr. Ritter informed the Board that the Deed Documents needed a notary to witness the signatures and there was not one available at this meeting. He requested that the Board table this item and bring it to the July 16, 2007 meeting so that the Town Clerk could be available to witness the signatures. Mr. Dillon asked about the fundraising for maintenance for Groton's portion of the land. Mr. Cunningham asked about the \$5,000 donation. Mr. Ritter will write a letter to the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to follow up.

Appointment to the Archives Committee and to the Information Technology Committee

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Eleanor Gavazzi to the Archives Committee for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Chris Coutu to the Information Technology Committee for the one-year term, term to expire June 30, 2008. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Squannacook river rail trail

Bruce Easom addressed the Board regarding the creation of the Squannacook River Rail Trail. He informed the Board that if the Town of Groton is on board with the project and proceeds with the project at the same time as the other town(s) then it can be completed for less than the cost of trying to do it alone at our own time. Mr. Cunningham gave further background information on the project. He stated that the preliminary engineering costs would be shared with Townsend. Mr. Degen felt that the creation of the rail trail is a good idea but questioned whether the MBTA had indicated that they would lease or be willing to lease the land for the project. Mr. Easom informed the Board that they had in deed created an 85 year lease for the land costing the town \$1.00, however the lease still needs to be reviewed before the town signs it because the town could end up taking on the environmental liability of the land. Mr. Cunningham stated that the BOS have a copy of the lease on file if any of the members would like to take a look at it. Mr. Easom requested that the BOS be a sponsor of the application. He felt that projects like this are best handled from the top down. The project will require cooperation between inter-town and state agencies and that the BOS should be involved to help with the coordination. Mr. Cunningham stated that he would be willing to help with this project.

REPORT OF THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Mr. Ritter informed the Board that the Surplus Property Sale took place last Friday, June 29, 2007 and took in a total of \$1300. He gave thanks to all who helped to organize the event. The Police Chief Screening Committee will be holding their 3rd meeting tomorrow, Wednesday July 11, 2007. A total of 65 resumes have been received. Jeff as well as members of the Committee met with the Police Department Personnel, will be meeting tomorrow with the Fire/EMS Personnel, and lastly with Kathy Newell on Friday July 13, 2007. The Administrative Assistant Position has been posted both internally and externally and the deadline for applications is in approximately 2 weeks. Mr. Ritter is in the process of working on the Monthly Report. He is also working on meeting with the Town of Shirley regarding the Squannacook Dam Project and has called Senator Panagiotakos' Office regarding the status of the \$125,000 in the Capital Budget. Lastly, Ira Grossman from the Nashoba Associated Board of Health will be serving as Groton's Health Agent replacing Ben Contue.

SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Dillon announced that the Civil War re-enactment will take place this weekend, July 13-15, 2007. The event will take place at Hillbrook Orchards on Old Ayer Road. There will be a band concert and Fireworks Friday night as well as numerous activities on Saturday and Sunday. The Groton Historical Society will also have activities on Saturday and Sunday. Any one wishing to attend these events is urged to park in town and flag down one of the numerous shuttle buses to take you down to the orchard. There will be too much going on to try to drive down to the orchard directly.

Mr. Cunningham informed the board and the public that the Blue Ribbon Governance Committee would be meeting on Wednesday July 18, 2007 to create the final draft of the charter document.

OTHER BUSINESS CONTINUED

Mr. Degen moved to approve the Work Session minutes of June 4th, 2007 as amended. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to approve the Executive Session minutes of June 4th, 2007. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to approve and not release the Executive Session minutes of June 25th, 2007 as amended. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Degen moved to approve the Regular Session minutes of June 25th, 2007 as amended. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Degen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Schulman. Unanimous vote.

Approved: _____
Stuart Schulman, Clerk
April Iannacone

_____ respectfully *submitted*,

Office Assistant

Date Approved: *July 30, 2007*