

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2008
APPROVED**

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

Sustainable Community Committee Update

Mike Roberts, Chair of the Sustainable Community Committee, thanked the Selectmen for the time to come in and discuss what they have been doing. The committee is intending to submit an article for the April Annual Town Meeting warrant. The committee would like to develop a commission that is recognized as spokespeople for this issue that can help town organizations, and townspeople, to understand about sustainability and how to become a sustainable community. He then gave a presentation which went over background information about sustainability, what the committee has been doing, and what they would be looking to do once the commission is formed. He also stated that there are a number of grants available for sustainability causes.

Mr. Dillon asked about the part of the warrant article that stated that membership will change as determined by the commission. Mike replied that they have not figured out the best organization of the commission yet, and as things get going they may need to change the type of representation or the number of members if they have issues maintaining a quorum. The sustainability plan that they will create will finalize things.

Mr. Dillon thanked Mike for an exceptional presentation and for all of his information.

Mr. Keoseian also thanked Mike for a well developed presentation. He then asked Mike if as they become more informed they are discovering downsides or issues to avoid. Mike replied that Haynes Turkle had talked with Lexington who informed him that there was a danger of envisioning and working on too much too fast. They were given the advice to determine specific tasks or initiatives and try to keep focused on them.

Leo Laverdure stated that one of the things they realized is that this is about integration of decision making. It is about looking at every decision made by every committee, and steering the committees to help people think about how their decisions affect everything else. They would advise on how to think smarter and make better decisions.

Mr. Cunningham stated that he had a good point. In many ways they would be more of an advisory group helping boards, or groups, understand the larger issues and consequences of their decisions which is not always done now. He then suggested that as the committee gets ready to prepare the article they fine tune what the makeup of the commission will be, because whatever is voted on at Town Meeting will be what stays. Mike stated that this was one of the dilemmas that the committee was working on at this time.

Mr. Schulman stated that with some examples of energy efficiency they need to look at whether or not it is going to cost more money. Mike replied that most people tend to take what's available and pay less now. There is very little increase in costs to change some of these codes, and they need to look at the return on the investment.

Al Collins stated that it was more about the integration of decision making and thinking more outside the box. By putting in a little more insulation you could put in a smaller heating system. You might spend more on one side and then spend less on another side of things. You could put an extra \$100,000 into more energy efficient appliances and insulations, but that could save you \$30,000 a year in energy costs down the road. The decisions go beyond just what you are initially looking at, and it's about making some compromise in the decision making. Greener building is only costing about 1% more than average costs, but it is saving a lot of energy and money in the long run.

Mr. Degen stated that he thought the presentation was great and he does support the idea, but he has just a few concerns. He suggested that they make their recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. He also had concerns over the composition of the commission. Boards over 7 people are not highly recommended because there are more problems with meeting their quorum. If they need to bring someone in for a presentation and

information that would be best. Mike replied that he agrees with that suggestion and is beginning to think along those lines going forward.

Steve replied that he thinks the program is an excellent idea, but he questioned whether this group should become a part of town government. He thought that they might be more productive as a private organization. Mike stated that he understood Steve's point, and they have thought about it and talked about it, but they don't totally agree. They brought the idea of the study committee to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) because they were knowledgeable and it was a nice formal link with the town. There would be no legal link or legislation. They felt that both a larger private organization aspect as well as credibility to other town departments was necessary.

Leo stated that he thinks that the connection to the BOS and Town Meeting is important because they need weight to get the community behind them and involved.

Mr. Dillon stated that there were a lot of good ideas and a lot of interest there, but there were a lot of busy people and it was a matter of making the time to be available.

The Selectmen all gave thanks to Mike and the Committee for their information.

Affordable Housing Consultant Interview

Mr. Ritter stated that 3 weeks ago he had pulled together a team of 6 people to interview the 2 consultants that submitted proposals. They met once for a planning session, held the 2 interviews and reviewed references for both. They decided to invite Dick Heaton from H&H Associates to meet with the BOS for questions. One member of the team is on vacation and was unable to be here.

Mr. Dillon stated that the screening group showed a preference towards this consultant.

Mr. Cunningham stated that while on the screening committee he learned that what Groton was asking for is different from what was typically done. Other communities have had consultants come in to develop a plan but not quite in the way that we are looking to do things. Both consultants had a different skill set that would be appropriate for where the town is looking to go, but for this phase of the plan they felt that H&H would be best.

Mr. Degen stated that one of the main reasons that the town was looking to move forward with this was to meet the needs of affordable housing and take the control off of developers and 40B project. The main difference between the two consultants was that Mr. O'Hegan was more familiar with the permitting end of things. Mr. Harrison and Mr. Heaton have reviewed and implemented similar plans. He recommended that they hire this firm. They have had over 21 years in affordable housing and they were more familiar with all aspects from day one to the end.

Mr. Dillon stated that he had a recommendation from the Town of Bolton stating that Mr. Heaton came highly recommended and had a good background.

Mr. Heaton thanked the Board and stated that he appreciated the opportunity. He will spend time to work with the BOS to learn what goals they have and the criteria to help pick the best piece of land to help meet those goals. If they are looking at housing for seniors they might want land close to town to have access to town services. If they are looking for housing for young couples they might want land closer to schools or recreation areas. He will look at the goals, the criteria, evaluate the land, what the costs would be to develop and he feels that he could come forward with a proposal that best fits the needs of the community.

Mr. Schulman stated that from looking at 40B applications on the ZBA for many years what they found most frustrating was the 25% rule. Only 25% of the units in a project needed to be affordable, so if a developer was proposing a 100 unit development they only had to have 25 affordable units. He noticed that with the projects in Bolton they built apartments that were 100% affordable. If the town looked at other projects that were 100% affordable they would meet the requirements and avoid more 40B developments.

Mr. Dillon asked if the housing inventory and affordable units was based on the 2000 census. Mr. Heaton replied that they were. He asked that the BOS, as a group, determine what target percentage they are looking at for affordability.

The Selectmen congratulated and thanked Mr. Heaton.

Mr. Degen moved to award a \$25,000 consultancy contract to H&H Associates to assist the Town in advancing its affordable housing programs pursuant to the affirmative vote on Article 23 of the October 22, 2007 Special Town Meeting. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Request for a One Day Liquor License from the Groton Dunstable Education Foundation

Mr. Dillon stated that the request was from the Groton Dunstable Education Foundation for their reach for the stars event on March 15th from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm at the Groton school. He stated that the Selectmen had received all of the appropriate information and insurance documentation. He informed the public that the tickets were \$40 per person and could be ordered online. This organization has done a lot and they deserve the support.

Mr. Degen moved to approve a one day, All Alcohol License for Cheryl Smith on behalf of the Groton-Dunstable Education Foundation for Saturday, March 15, 2008 located at the Groton School, Farmers Row, Groton; within the hours of 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Annual Town Meeting Warrant (1st Draft Review)

Mr. Ritter stated that the draft before the Board was the first draft. He will wait and share another draft after the close of the warrant on Thursday the 28th. The articles at this point are the articles that appear every year. They are the most important and have to be submitted. He has drafted to reflect the FY09 actions. To date he is not aware of any articles that have been officially submitted. There were two articles that were drafted based on the recommendation from Woodard & Curren about advancing work done regarding wastewater challenges. The first article would create a Lost Lake Sewer Committee and the second would be to create a West Groton Sewer Committee to address the significant wastewater issues in both neighborhoods.

Mr. Dillon stated that the Board needed to push on the 2 parcels that were being transferred in the Lost Lake area. He mentioned that there might be changes to the debt exclusion for the ?? property. Also there should be a separate warrant article for money form the Capital Stabilization fund because there may be the possibility of minor capital requests form the stabilization funds this year.

Mr. Cunningham asked about the Police Cruisers. Mr. Dillon replied that that would be from capital and not stabilization. He is mostly looking for place holder due to a discussion of some one time non-recurring requests, which would normally be part of each operating budget, form stabilization.

Mr. Dillon then suggested that Mr. Ritter research the Groton Country Club article. The Legislation states that it is to go before Town Meeting every 3 years.

Mr. Cunningham asked if the language had been checked for the election question number 2 on the first page regarding the Charter. Mr. Ritter replied that it had.

Mr. Degen asked if there would be a hearing on the Charter. Mr. Cunningham replied that there would be a hearing tomorrow evening and he would be there.

Mr. Ritter suggested the Board think about any other articles that they may feel need to be included in the warrant.

Mr. Dillon asked if Mr. Ritter could check on the latest language regarding the debt exclusion.

Council of Aging Appointment, Frances Goldbach

Mr. Dillon stated that last week the BOS had made the appointment for the remaining portion of this year, and the term should have been to expire in 2010.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Frances Goldbach to the Council on Aging for an unexpired three year term, term to expire June 30, 2010. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

SAFE Grant Proposal

Mr. Ritter stated that this was a recurring grant for \$3200. This is a 100% grant to the town to be used for educational materials for the schools. He needs the authorization to proceed to the next step before next Friday.

Mr. Degen moved to authorize the Interim Administrative Officer to sign the Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) Grant Application. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

REPORT OF THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Mr. Ritter stated that there would be a budget meeting on Tuesday at 7:00 pm in the High School Library. Next Thursday at 8:00 am there would be a meeting with MART and Friday at 8:30 am there would be a meeting with the LRTA regarding the senior transportation. There would be an application submitted to the Federal

Government for the Station Avenue land acquisition. Last Thursday he received a letter from the Office of the Inspector General as part of a State-wide effort to collect information on 40B projects. He is looking for information on how well these projects have worked or have not worked for the town. He has asked Michelle to work on a draft for the February 29th deadline. Lastly, he has drafted a letter back to Carl Flowers in response to his request that is ready for Mr. Dillon to sign.

SELECTMAN LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Cunningham stated that he would be attending a hearing tomorrow before the Joint Committee with Representative Hargraves and Senator Panagiotakos. The sidewalk action group has met and will report back to the BOS with some suggestions about defining those maintained by the town and those maintained by homeowners.

Mr. Schulman stated that he had attended the meeting of the School Committee last Tuesday regarding the Schools budget and both Groton and Dunstable budgets.

Mr. Degen stated that he has been doing as much as possible to work on trimming the budget. He is also working with the Chief of Police to prioritize the streetlights.

Mr. Dillon stated that last Tuesday he met with Jeff, Christine, Val and a few volunteers to go through the town's insurance information. It was very helpful and he appreciated their efforts. They have determined that overall the coverage is good, but there were some things that they could take a look at. The town's current provider will be coming in to go over some questions with them.

Mr. Cunningham asked if they recommended asking the firms to resubmit proposals. Mr. Dillon stated that they would not. They concluded that they would have to investigate what is forthcoming with the current provider before doing anything else.

Mr. Degen asked if they planned on sending out another RFP for new bids at all. Mr. Ritter replied that right now the coverage that the town has is adequate so they are planning to stay with the current provider. They are going to focus on areas like increasing deductibles and other ways to cutback costs a little. They will plan another RFP next year.

Mr. Dillon stated that there was no real recommendation yet. They will be meeting with MIIA and depending on their action at that meeting will determine the course they take from there. We are the customer and the level of service being provided is far from adequate. After discussing this with them a better recommendation may occur.

Mr. Dillon then stated that a 43D Infrastructure Meeting will take place next Thursday morning. Today they started pre-negotiation meetings regarding the Police Union negotiations that would be starting soon. Tomorrow morning he and Jay Prager would be meeting with the 4 Union representatives to discuss the fiscal outlook for the next year.

MINUTES

Mr. Degen moved to approve the December 10, 2007 regular meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Schulman seconded. The vote was four in favor (F.D., J.D., S.S., M.K.) and one abstained (P.C.).

Mr. Schulman moved to approve the December 17, 2007 regular meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The vote was four in favor (F.D., S.S., P.C., M.K.) and one abstained (J.D.).

ADJOURN

Mr. Degen moved to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Mr. Schulman seconded. Unanimous vote.

Approved: _____
Stuart Schulman, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
April Iannacone
Office Assistant

Date Approved: April 7, 2008