

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE STRAFFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
July 26, 2017

Members of the board present: Toni Pippy (chair), John Freitag, Brian Johnson, Stephen Marx, Kate Siepmann

Also present: Lisa Bragg (Town Clerk) and Jon MacKinnon (Road Foreman)

Participating citizens: Marie Ricketts, Lee Vormelker, Rod Sloat

Citizen concerns

Marie Ricketts described as a Catch-22 a situation in the Town Plan that calls for development in village centers where there is no room for development. She and Lee referred to a co-housing project in Bristol, Vermont as a model for a co-housing cluster development. They suggested that the lot lines delineating the south Strafford Village Center be extended to include their 7-acre property on Tyson Road, which runs from the junction with route 132 to the junction of the mine road. They have already subdivided the property into 2 to 3-acre building lots.

Rod Sloat came to report that his property has flooded 3 times in the 8 years that he has owned it. There is a complicated history of water flow affecting three neighboring Brook Road properties. Road foreman Jon MacKinnon remembered that a new culvert was installed in 1997. He also noted that driveways have been changed since that time. Brian volunteered to be the Selectboard point person on this issue and will coordinate with Patrick Ross (from the State), Jon MacKinnon and the landowners.

Rod was concerned that in his opinion the Town Parcel maps do not accurately reflect his boundary line with the adjoining property now for sale. Mike Hebb, who is in charge of the Town Parcel maps, has made clear that the parcel maps are only a rough estimation of where lines are located and people should rely on deeds for exact details of their property lines.

Highways

Jon reports that the work on bridge #29 is on schedule. After many complaints about the State traffic control signs indicating that Route 132 is closed, the state removed the signs. Jon had requested that the signs read "Road closed. Please follow detour.", not that they be removed. The new solar "traffic calming" sign needs to be mounted on a 12-foot pole with its solar panels. Toni: we need to get it done now!

Storm damage report – July 1 flooding

Jon reported that the current damage estimate is almost \$317,000. While there is not any guarantee of FEMA coverage, the Town will begin work immediately on damage to Rte. 132. A motion by John Freitag, seconded by Toni, "to authorize up to \$100,000 to get repairs promptly underway" was unanimously approved.

Approve minutes

Minutes of the July 12 regular meeting were approved (Freitag moved, Brian seconded). Minutes of the July 19 town plan hearing also approved by all (Brian moved, Toni seconded).

Correspondence: A letter from Roz Finn expressing her extreme dissatisfaction with the bridge project next to her house was withdrawn by Roz. The Board expressed sympathy for her plight.

We received a notice of education tax rates for fiscal 2108 from the Vermont Department of Taxes. Non-residential tax rate to be assessed: \$1.4688. Homestead tax rate to be assessed: \$1.5397

Mike Hebb wrote the board with a suggestion about handling the twin delinquencies of the Stanley and Lord properties. With the possibility of finding alternate uses for the properties, the board tabled the discussion and John will respond to Mike directly.

Warren Group: The Lister received a request for the grand list and asked the Selectboard about charging for this. Lisa stated that it's her practice not to charge when sending the grand list electronically.

Hearty congratulations to Lisa for graduating from a 3-year course at the New England Municipal Clerks' Institute and Academy. With her degree, she received commendations from the International Institution of Municipal Clerks in Texas and from the Vermont Secretary of State, Jim Condos. Needless to say the Board is proud of Lisa's accomplishments and grateful for her knowledge and steady hand at keeping the town affairs on an even keel.

The board received two useful booklets on deer yards from Art Hanchett, whose entire property is mapped as a deer wintering area. He will be working with the State and Board to change and clarify the language that he finds unnecessarily restrictive.

Correspondence from Dori Wolfe inviting town officers and the public to a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Elizabeth Mine Solar Project on September 22. The board wants to express its gratitude and admiration to the people, particularly along Mine Road, for their patience throughout the prolonged upheaval during construction.

Best wishes from the board to Bill Burden, who had a tractor accident. Neighbors-Helping-Neighbors is providing assistance with transportation and other needs.

Property Tax Rate

Prepared by Lisa and verified by Toni, the total Grand List amounts to \$1,770,245. The total tax rate for the town went down a bit to .669. John moved and Kate seconded that we accept the tax rate as presented. All approved.

Town Governance Report – received July 20, 2017

The Board wishes to thank members of the Town Governance Committee for their conscientious and instructive effort at creating a document that might be called "What Everyone Should Know About How the Town Works." Due to the lateness of the hour and because one member had not yet seen the report, we decided to postpone an in-depth discussion of how best to implement the recommendations and suggestions in the Report. We will post the Report on the town website with the recommendation that all citizens take time to read it.

Town Plan Approval Schedule

Here are the Select Board meetings before and up to the approval of the Town Plan:

August 9th Regular Board Meeting, 6pm, Town Office

August 16th, Special Board Meeting - Agenda is final edits to the Town Plan , 6pm, Town Office

August 23rd Regular Board Meeting, 6pm, Town Office

September 13th, Regular Board Meeting, 5pm, Barrett Hall

September 13th, FINAL HEARING TOWN PLAN, 7pm Barrett Hall

September 27th, Regular Board Meeting, 6pm Town Office. One agenda item will be adopting the Town Plan.

Liaison reports

The Recreation Board, in conjunction with the School, is planning a complete cleaning out of the Red Barn.

The original Town Office floors have been exposed, sanded and refinished to the delight of all.

Brian moved, Kate seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:45, to the delight of all.

Faithfully submitted,

Kate, recording secretary