

Minutes of the Strafford Selectboard  
April 26, 2017

Members of the public party present: Toni Pippy (Chair), Brian Johnson, Stephen Marx, John Freitag, Kate Siepmann

Other active participants: Lisa Bragg (Town Clerk), Jon MacKinnon (Road Foreman), Jennifer Brown (Herald reporter), contractors at the Elizabeth Mine Solar Project: Stephen Campbell (Greenwood Energy), John Danner and Alex Droussiotis (ContiSolar), Zeb Jenks (Northwoods Trucking)

Citizens: Melvin and Sue Coburn, Marie Ricketts

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Citizens' Concerns

Marie Ricketts voiced two concerns. First, could the landowners whose land has been affected by the tree clearing on the Mine Road make the burnable wood available to people in Town who may need the wood for fuel? The Board responded that the disposition of the wood is entirely up to the individual landowners, and that the Board has no jurisdiction at all in this instance. Marie then asked about the outlook for cell phone service in Town, adding that the absence of service raises serious health, safety, and economic concerns. While the Board concurred, this is again an area over which the Board has no control. It was suggested that the appropriate people to contact would be our legislators in Montpelier.

Melvin and Sue expressed concern about the traffic barrels that have been positioned across the road from the store, in the prohibited parking spaces. Melvin pointed out that that space is necessary for trucks unloading supplies and requested, ideally, that the road be widened by  $\pm 2'$  and be labeled a Loading Zone. The Board asked if a short term solution of removing the barrels would satisfy Melvin's immediate concerns and he assented. Brian moved and Steve seconded a motion "To get rid of the barrels and erect a Loading Zone sign, contingent on the approval of the Orange County Sheriff." The motion was carried by a unanimous vote. John Danner, of Conti, said, "no problem, the barrels are gone."

2. Elizabeth Mine Solar Project Update

Steven Campbell reported that the roads in the Solar Project are nearly complete, which will end the gravel truck traffic in the very near future. The next phase of trucking will be tractor trailer trucks hauling ballast to the installation. If traffic is light, John Danner hopes to have all the ballast trucks through town by 11:30 a.m. He warned that these trucks are slow moving, heavy (especially when loaded), and not very maneuverable. He cautioned motorists against tail gating because they will be invisible to the truckers. Steve Campbell also requested that if drivers have questions, they refrain from asking flaggers and contact him (781) 422-9073 or John Danner (609) 234-2151.

In order for John F to post the upcoming trucking schedules (subject to change, according to conditions) on Mondays, Steve and John D agreed to put together their weekly progress reports on Fridays, rather than Mondays. The Board expressed its gratitude for the efforts of the Project staff to communicate with the Board and to comply with its requests.

3. Town Roads and Equipment Update

Jon MacKinnon reported that all is well with the Town equipment and that all mud-damaged roads are now passable and will be better than that in a few days.

#### 4. Approve Minutes

The Minutes for the April 12 were unanimously approved with only minor spelling and punctuation corrections. The Minutes for the April 19 meeting were approved by a vote of 4 to 1, Brian dissenting.

#### 5. Correspondence

Eric Thorpe raised concerns about weight permits on Tyson Bridge. Permits will be granted immediately.

Rod Maclay expressed concern over the condition of Evergreen Cemetery. Although the Board has no legal authority over the elected Cemetery Commission, Toni volunteered to call the Commissioners to see what can be done.

6. The Strafford Local Emergency Operations Plan was signed and unanimously approved, motion by Steve, second by Brian.

#### 7. Town Plan

The Strafford Planning Commission (SPC) will submit its Town Plan to the Board on May 15. The Board then has 120 days to review, emend, hold public hearings, and approve the Town Plan. This Plan, the culmination of several years of diligent work by the SPC, is one of the most important documents in the Town. The SPC hearings on the subject have been sparsely attended, at best. In an effort to encourage interest and participation in our hearings, the Board has unofficially agreed to publish occasional, readable synopses of various sections of the Plan, with links to the Town website for the actual wording. Thoughtful feedback from townspeople is not only welcome, but necessary to determine the direction we want to take as a community over the course of the next 8 years and beyond. The Town Plan is available for viewing on the Town of Strafford website. Please alert us to any areas of general concern and help us to give this the depth of attention it deserves.

Stay tuned...

#### 8. General

Town Office building: Lisa and Kate met for several hours last week discussing the condition of the Town Office and it's future. There are routine problems of maintenance, upkeep, rehab. There is limited funding budgeted for short term maintenance issues. A longer-term plan for a more extensive overhaul is in its very early stages. The Town Office was designed, built, and given to the Town by Justin Morrill in 1885. For years, it served as the Town's first library. As one of Strafford's historic landmarks, the Town did receive a grant for the replacement of its slate roof. We hope to build on that, initially with cosmetic clearing up and eventually with some form of historic restoration, involving grants from various preservation resources. We would love to hear from anyone familiar with grant applications and possible grant-making resources.

Stanley & Lord: a letter drafted by Kate to the Town Attorney regarding the disposition of these two delinquent properties was approved by the Board for mailing.

Faithfully submitted,

Kate Siepmann

Journeyman (*"a worker who is reliable but not outstanding"*) Recording Clerk