

Minutes
Select Board
4/9/18

1. Call Meeting

Present at tonight's meeting are Anne Surman, Kathy Corson, Julie Gilman, Molly Cowan, Don Clement, and Russ Dean. The meeting was called to order at 6:40pm by Ms. Gilman.

2. Meeting with Assessor

Joe Lessard, the Exeter town assessor, brought an appeal before the board for an industrial property owned by East Coast Benches Inc. They had filed with the Board of Tax and Land Repeals after being denied an abatement, and there was an offer made by the town to settle the appeal for a \$250,000 reduction in the assessment. The property had been assessed at \$2,856,200. The taxpayer had paid \$3,770,000 for property when it was purchased. The taxpayer felt that the sale was not a good assessment in the property because it had increased in value by about 30% where other similar properties increased by 3%. The assessing department and legal counsel decided that the argument could have been perceived as credible by the BTLA, so they advised to settle. If the settlement is granted, the property would be abated for three years from 2015-2017 for about \$6,500 each year for a total of about \$19,000.

Ms. Surman asked what the assessor was able to use for comps for the property. Mr. Lessard said that there were only two sales of industrial properties: they could only use the skating rink and the property in question. They also looked at other approaches to valuation. It had also been some time since that property had been viewed, and it was improved. The biggest concern was that an argument could be made that there was "sales chasing" by the town, although he emphasized that this was not the intent.

Mr. Clement asked what the assessment was prior to 2015. Mr. Lessard said that it would have been 70% of \$2,856,000. Mr. Clement asked what the consequence would be if the BTLA ruled in favor of the property owner. The owner is looking for his assessment to only go up by 3%. Ms. Gilman said that since this would be reducing the assessment by about 10% over three years, it would be a good compromise. Mr. Lessard said that the town doesn't believe it's assessment was inappropriate. It sold in 2013 and 2015 for over 3 million dollars. He said it was possible that some other properties had been remodeled as well, but we did not see them to update the description.

The board decided to wait until the end to act on this during the other abatements.

3. Public Comment

Darius Thompson commented that he was happy that the Select Board is now a "Select Board" instead of the "board of selectmen". He acknowledged Hadley Barndollar who was reporting the meeting for the last time. He also volunteered to help out with strengthening the conflict of interest policy and the anti-harassment policy. He asked about an update for the sidewalk extension on Drinkwater Road, for the safety of kids getting off the bus. Ms. Gilman said that the conflict of interest policy is on a future agenda, and that the board will look into Drinkwater Road further with the town planner.

Ava and Craig, two high school students from Exeter, talked about organizing a student forum on gun violence, and asked permission for the fee to be waived for their sound system, and for the

attendees to be able to use bathroom indoors of the town hall. Ms. Gilman said that they would need to make arrangements to use the bathrooms indoors for safety reasons, and that there are publicly accessible toilets outside.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to waive the fee, and to approve the application for the Student Forum on Gun Violence in the town hall on 4/13/18. Ms. Surman seconded, and it passed unanimously.

4. Minutes/Proclamations

Ms. Cowan read a proclamation to declare April 15th-21st as Exeter Classics Week to encourage people to celebrate the classics.

This proclamation was brought to the board by the Kirtland Society at Phillips Exeter Academy. McKayla, Sophia, and Jason, students from PEA, brought this to board. Ms. Gilman asked if their activities were open to the public. The students said that PEA hosts the state forum, which is usually held in their football field. They offered to find out if it is open to the public.

MOTION: Mr. Clement moved to adopt the proclamation read by Ms. Cowan. Ms. Corson seconded, the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes

A motion on the 3rd page needed to have the amount added in.

MOTION: Ms. Surman moved to accept the draft minutes as amended. Ms. Cowan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

6. Appointments

There were no appointments at this meeting.

7. Action Items

a. PEA Way Finding Signage – South Campus

Mark Leighton and Anita Bailey from Phillips Exeter Academy talked about a recent discussion of how to get people to the parking garage that was recently opened. They had developed a comprehensive signage plan with three trailblazer signs to be reviewed. The signs are all small and non-obtrusive. He gave out maps to board showing where the signs would be placed.

Ms. Corson said that the planning board was worried that people would park along Court Street, and asked how they have been directing traffic since the garage was opened. Mr. Leighton said that people are still learning, and that will get better. Ms. Bailey said that there are temporary signs that they have been putting out. Also, people familiar with the campus generally know where the parking garage is. The garage was very successful during the winter, even for the students and faculty. She also mentioned that emails are sent out occasionally asking people not to park in lots in order to clean the snow and to use the parking garage.

Gilman asked about the agreement for wayfinding to Gilman Park. Mr. Leighton said that it is part of there sign plan, and they are planning on doing that. Ms. Bailey also said they are trying to develop a campus map, and are planning on using a map kiosk to direct people to Gilman Park. Ms. Gilman said that she was expecting something more prominent than a kiosk and had hope for signage on the new building.

Mr. Clement asked if they had talked to the property owners about sign 1A-05, because it is close to their residence. Mr. Leighton said that they had not because the sign is hidden by landscaping there. Mr. Clement also asked about the sign by Little River because it leads to PEA in general instead of parking. Ms. Bailey said that the idea is to catch people's attention, and then direct them to the next sign with more information. Mr. Clement suggested another sign further down on Court Street.

Mr. Leighton said that they are also working with Google so that the parking garage's address is included on maps. Ms. Corson said that there should be an internal discussion for day students and faculty to begin parking in the garage and not on side-streets.

MOTION: Mr. Clement moved to approve the signs as requested, and that the academy coordinate with the highway department when installing the signs. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0-1 with Ms. Surman abstaining.

b. Swasey Parkway Closure

Ms. Surman said that in the last trustee meeting, she had a concern about safety in the road because the Select Board is responsible for the road, not the trustees. She got in touch with Chief Shupe about the road conditions during events. She was concerned about the liability that the town would be taking on. Ms. Gilman said that they have a schedule of events and construction. Where the loaming and seeding happens is going to be marked and roped off. She also said that there is the same liability on the parkway as any other road. Mr. Clement said that the main concern is about the continued construction and the material left around. According to the schedule, loaming and seeding is supposed to be done by May 18th. There is an event for TEAM on May 19th. Mr. Dean also pointed out that there are some other earlier events.

Jennifer Perry, the public works director, said that for the most part the pipeline is complete. The work on the main pump station will be ongoing through October of this year. Mr. Clement asked how the construction crew are accessing the site. Ms. Perry said that there will probably be one-way traffic on the parkway until October, and they have an access point. The pump station site is fenced in, but the area with loaming and seeding may only end up being flagged or staked.

Mr. Clement pointed out that most of the events are on weekends and holidays and asked if the construction is worked on at those times. Ms. Perry said that the contractor has not been working on weekends but may ask to later in order to make up for time. During farmer's markets, there will be work occurring, but the contractors will be accessing the road from the north end and will be in their own lane.

Florence Ruffner, chair of the Swasey trustees, talked about all these issues and the seeding/loaming. According to her, the contractor said they could use some kind of fencing around the area. They could also give a drawing about the best way to access for growers at the farmers market. During the music festival, the pavilion will not be used.

Dale Albert requested the board to look at the parkway for safety. He suggested having a permanent one-way road for the parkway and having a few days a week where the parkway would be completely closed to traffic (perhaps on Thursdays and Sundays). He also suggested installing speed bumps. Ms. Gilman said that speed bumps were not wanted by the fire department, but they could discuss other options. Mr. Clement also brought up the idea of having parking on both sides to slow traffic. He added that eliminating traffic on the parkway could have the effect of preventing people from accessing it, because the parkway is ½ mile long.

Jim Faber asked if this issue would be added to a future agenda. Ms. Gilman said she wrote it down on a list of things to be discussed in the future. Ms. Corson also suggested using the expertise of the town planner. Mr. Clement added that maybe the board could ask the safety department to study the parkway road safety.

Mr. Thompson asked if other events were under an MOU. Ms. Gilman said that it was not a list that guarantees approval, and that it doesn't limit the area of use for the events.

The board is okay with the road closures for the planned events and decided to ask the safety department about studying the safety of the parkway and the feasibility of the suggestions that were brought up.

c. Lincoln Street Phase 2

Jennifer Perry, public works director, said that the American Excavating Corporation in Derry, NH bid \$2,633,156, which is over the construction budget by \$183,156. The Select Board has three options that public works is suggesting. Option A is to apply additional funding to the project amount using partial funding from the DOT SB-38 highway grant funding. Option B is to reduce the scope of the project by eliminating some streetscaping such as changing sidewalks to asphalt, changing bollards to unlit, removing benches, etc. Option C is to send the project out to bid again. Public works had conversations with other planholders about why they didn't bid and were told that many had scheduling issues or were too busy. However, rebidding would prolong the project more and they would not be able to guarantee receiving a cheaper bid. DPW is recommending going with option A and applying some of the SB-38 grant funding. The department is also open to combining A and B together.

Mr. Dean said that the construction schedule would begin at the end of May or early June if the board approved it. Ms. Gilman asked if there were other projects to use the DOT grant money for. Ms. Perry said that potentially sidewalk work could be done, but there have been no formal discussions. She also said that there is no contingency for this project right now, so they would want to wait until the project is complete to use the remaining grant money. Mr. Dean added that a lot of the elements of this project have come from public opinion. Ms. Corson thinks it would be a shame to not follow all aspects of the plan, because it would create a new public space.

Mr. Clement expressed disappointment that the project was overbudget. He wanted to bring the scope of the project down and bring it back to the voters. He also did not want to use the grant money for this because it is an already approved project. He asked how long it would be to rebid. Ms. Perry said it would be an 8-week process. Ms. Surman expressed her disappointment too and agreed that the grant money should not go towards this project.

Mr. Dean said that another issue with rebidding is that the bid amount is already out there. He worried that a new bid could come in even higher. Also, people have been waiting for the Lincoln Street improvements for a while. He thought that it would be in interest to do project as well as possible. Ms. Corson pointed out the money spent from time lost on the project.

Mr. Thompson asked if all the improvements could be done at once so as to not interrupt the businesses more than necessary. Ms. Perry said this is phase 2 of the project, and the intention is to have all the utilities completed in this project and also to complete the sidewalks to Front Street. The challenge is that the season is getting shorter and shorter. Ms. Gilman asked if the state would find this

use of the grant acceptable. Mr. Dean said that the town does not think there would be any concern from state about that.

MOTION: Ms. Corson moved to approve Option A for the Lincoln Street Phase 2 Project which is to award American Excavating the bid of \$2,633,156 and to use the Highway Block grant to cover the \$183,156 that is overbudget. Ms. Cowan seconded the motion, and it passed 3-2-0 with Ms. Surman and Mr. Clement voting nay.

d. Recreation Advisory Board

Greg Bisson from the parks and recreation department talked about the new recreation advisory board, which would advise the recreation department for viable and sustainable projects based on what the public wants. The charge was included in the board's packet. There are 14 people interested in being on the board from a variety of backgrounds. The board will have 7 members appointed by the Select Board, 1 Select Board representative, and 2 non-voting alternates. Each member would have no more than two 3-year terms. Mr. Clement asked if the terms would be staggered. Mr. Bisson said that they would. He also added that there was no written charge for the previous recreation advisory board.

Ms. Corson suggested that after 6 years, the voting members can go to an alternate position instead of having them removed from the board. She said it would be a good way to keep dedicated members because finding new people can be difficult. Ms. Gilman suggested also including the parks and recreation director on the board official membership. Mr. Clement asked about incorporating the conservation commission in their charge. Mr. Bisson said he would like to do that, because the commission has been wanting to collaborate on their programming. Ms. Corson asked about incorporating the YMCA as well. Mr. Bisson said they would like to work with everyone, and that the advisory board could be a good way to all work together. He would like the first meeting of the advisory board to be at the end of May or beginning of June.

MOTION: Mr. Clement moved to adopt the charge as provided, with the three amendments above. Ms. Surman seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Bisson also promoted the Picking the Parks event on 4/21, and they are looking for volunteers to clean-up the parks to make them more aesthetic.

e. Board/Committee Appointments

The board received responses from people on the different boards and committees about if they were planning on continuing their terms. Mr. Clement asked about the vacant voting position on the zoning board, and if the Select Board needed to recommend moving an alternate to voting. Ms. Gilman said that the individual boards would do that. The Select Board decided to wait for more responses before making appointments.

f. Article 27 Review

The board had previously questioned whether or not this RSA was binding and if they should contact DRA for review. The town attorney reviewed the article that was officially voted on. The attorney did not contact DRA, because as a citizen's petition it was left to the town. He wrote about the additional language that was added and determined that the warrant article is partially binding. The estimated tax impacts are to be put on the warrant/ballot, but the flexibility is left up the board to determine how this is done and the wording.

Nicholas Gray, who sponsored the article, said that his intention was to create transparent documentation for what each article would cost each homeowner. This would provide an annual tax impact for any article involving nominal dollar amounts. He suggested that at top of article, the median homeowner's value and the annual nominal dollar impact to that individual would be stated. He thought that nominal dollar amounts are the simplest way to help people understand the impact of projects.

Ms. Corson said that the tax rate might be easier to include, because then people could calculate it based on their exact value. She also was concerned about the added length to the ballot. Ms. Gilman suggested taking a sample ballot and seeing what it would potentially look like. Mr. Gray said that the fact sheets at deliberative session already have the language that could be used. He did not think it would make the ballot too much longer, and that it would not confuse voters.

Ms. Corson said she was surprised about the number of voters who didn't finish the ballot because it was too long. Mr. Gray suggested cutting some of the other verbiage from the ballot to address this but emphasized that the voters wanted the tax impacts on the ballot. Mr. Dean pointed out the disconnect between the way the town has to legally write articles, versus what the average voter wants to see. Ms. Surman encouraged people to go to deliberative session, which would help them to understand the articles.

Jim Faber said he thought it was the responsibility of the Select Board to make the voting process transparent. He supports the comments that were made and thinks that the cost of the articles should be prominent on the ballot.

Mr. Thompson said he would like common-sense language and asked the Select Board to do a better job at getting the information out to help people understand the articles. Mr. Dean alerted people that the explanatory information is on the website and also at deliberative session. Mr. Thompson said that it needs to be on as many channels as possible.

Mr. Gray said that his personal belief is that the article's language is totally binding, and thinks it should be implemented in full because over 60% of voters were in favor of the article.

8. Regular

a. Tax, Water/Sewer Abatements and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the yield tax for map 5, lot 2 for \$1600.61. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the veterans credit for \$500 for: map 95, lot 64, unit 321; map 79, lot 25. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following elderly exemptions for \$152,251: map 95, lot 64, unit 356; map 87, lot 8, unit C-23; map 73, lot 130; map 70, lot 84; map 32, lot 12, unit 16; map 95, lot 64, unit 90; map 95, lot 64, unit 198; map 72, lot 108; map 71, lot 30; map 104, lot 79, unit 232; map 64, lot 105, unit 6; map 73, lot 2201; map 104, lot 79, unit 1001; map 95, lot 64, unit 286; map 104, lot 79, unit 123. Ms. Corson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following elderly exemptions for \$183,751: map 63, lot 28; map 95, lot 88; map 104, lot 79, unit 132A; map 81, lot 5; map 65, lot 8; map 95, lot 64, unit 376; map 104, lot 79, unit 207; map 70, lot 126; map 95, lot 64, unit 170. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following elderly exemptions for \$236,251: map 73, lot 68, unit 1; map 96, lot 64, unit 268; map 63, lot 220; map 95, lot 64, unit 206; map 64, lot 105, unit 1A; map 80, lot 6, unit 36; map 104, lot 81, unit 1; map 104, lot 79, unit 802; map 104, lot 79, unit 138; map 65, lot 75; map 73, lot 69; map 104, lot 37; map 64, lot 105, unit 48; map 68, lot 6, unit 147; map 32, lot 12, unit 17; map 63, lot 102, unit 21. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following elderly exemption for \$109,500: map 73, lot 125. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following elderly exemption for \$121,350: map 74, lot 10. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following disability exemptions for \$125,000: map 65, lot 124, unit 27; map 95, lot 64, unit 349; map 90, lot 11; map 95, lot 64, unit 347; map 95, lot 64, unit 298; map 104, lot 79, unit 1004; map 95, lot 64, unit 77; map 103, lot 13, unit 17; map 64, lot 105, unit 97; map 65, lot 82; map 103, lot 13, unit 1; map 65, lot 1; map 51, lot 6; map 63, lot 102, unit 59; map 95, lot 64, unit 57. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following discretionary preservation easement: map 62, lot 57. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following abatement settlement for \$6,385 in 2015: map 48, lot 5. The motion had no second, so it failed.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following abatement settlement for \$6,560 in 2016: map 48, lot 5. The motion had no second, so it failed.

MOTION: Ms. Cowan moved to approve the following abatement settlement for \$6,692 in 2017: map 48, lot 5. The motion had no second, so it failed.

These abatement settlements were a topic of discussion above, where the property owner had appealed the valuation of the property and was going to settle for these amounts.

b. Permits/Approvals

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve the use of the town hall and bandstand on April 5th, 2019 for TEAM Exeter's First Friday event. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Corson moved to approve the use of the town hall on April 6th and April 7th, 2019 for the Exeter Literary Festival by the Exeter Arts Committee. Mr. Clement seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Corson moved to approve the use of the town hall on April 24th and 26th, 2019 for jump rope practice by Extreme Air of NH, and to approve a fee waiver for this event. Ms. Cowan seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Dean attended the Seabrook nuclear drill last Wednesday. The planning department created a GIS map for the 79E district. He worked with the chair of the housing committee on their charge. He also attended a meeting with the chair of the energy committee, to bring different communities to talk about group needs converting streetlights to LED.

He wanted board to know about the requests for electronic signboard, and that the town is getting more reluctant to use it. He believes that it should be limited to regulatory use and other warnings. He reminded the board of their goal setting session on next Monday in the arts committee room. Also, the master plan was put online for people to access freely. He also testified in the statehouse on SB-438, and expressed concerns that Exeter had about keeping voting municipal. Also mentioned the use of the bathrooms in town hall during first Friday events, trying to remind people that they are not supposed to use that bathroom. The town cannot prevent people from accessing the space because they are not allowed to lock the elevator.

He had a request to the board about the String Bridge project, and recommended that instead of bonding those amounts of money, they use some water/sewer reserves for those remaining components. 80% of participating costs would be paid by the state. Ms. Gilman asked if it would be equally beneficial if they bond for the full amount and pay early. Mr. Dean answered that it will depend on the terms of the bond. Mr. Clement suggested getting the water/sewer board's opinion on it.

c. Select Board Committee Reports

Ms. Surman attended an E-911 meeting which she found interesting to learn about their process. She also attended the arts committee Spring reception. Ms. Gilman went to an energy committee meeting about using LED streetlights, and thanked Mr. Clement for attending the Seabrook nuclear drill. She also said that the heritage commission would go on a sitewalk on April 18th.

Ms. Corson asked about the advertisement outside on the new COAST bus stop. She was concerned that the ad looks like it is associated with or endorsed by the town because it is so large and prominently placed. She wanted to add the bus station to a future agenda. Ms. Surman said that she was originally opposed to the bus station being built, and was surprised that it passed.

d. Correspondence

There was no correspondence at this meeting.

9. Calendar

There will be a goal setting session at 6:30PM in the arts committee room on April 16th. The next regular meeting will be on April 23rd.

10. Non-public session

There was no non-public session at this meeting.

11. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Surman moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00PM. Ms. Corson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by recording secretary Samantha Cave.