

Select Board Meeting
Monday September 13, 2021
7 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Julie Gilman, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Niko Papakonstantis, and Town Manager Russ Dean were present at this meeting. Molly Cowan and Daryl Browne were not present. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 7 PM.

2. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

3. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no proclamations or recognitions at this meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: August 16, 2021

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve the minutes of August 16, 2021 as presented. Ms. Oliff seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

- b. Regular Meeting: August 23, 2021

Mr. Papakonstantis said Ms. Oliff was not present at the August 23 meeting, so they don't have a quorum to vote on these minutes.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to table the minutes of August 23, 2021. Ms. Oliff seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

5. Appointments and Resignations

- a. Dick Matthews's appointment to the Rec Advisory Board

Mr. Papakonstantis said he typically abstains from voting on Rec Advisory Board matters, as his wife chairs the committee. He asked Ms. Gilman and Ms. Oliff if they would like to table the motion. Ms. Gilman said she supports him voting on the appointment.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to appoint Dick Matthews as a full member of the Rec Advisory Board, with a term to expire April 2023. Ms. Oliff seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

- b. Don Clement's resignation from the Budget Recommendations Committee

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to accept Don Clements's resignation from the Budget Recommendations Committee. Ms. Oliff seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

6. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Bower Land Donation Public Hearing

Mr. Papakonstantis said this is regarding land being donated to the town.

The Conservation Commission and Planning Board have both recommended accepting the donation.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to open the public hearing on the acquisition of the Bower land as a donation to the Conservation Commission. Ms. Oliff seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked for public comment, but there was none.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Oliff seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

There will be a second public hearing on Sept 27.

b. 10 Hampton Road Building Land Purchase

Mr. Bisson was present to discuss the potential purchase of land for the Rec Park. The town has entered into a Purchase and Sales agreement for 10 Hampton Road. This proposal did not make it into the CIP. They just approached the owner, who agreed on the acquisition.

This property is 1.64 Acres directly abutting the Rec Park at 4 Hampton Road. They believe they can add 60 - 80 parking spots here. It will also give a new access point for the park. It includes a 6,000 square foot building, with offices, bathrooms, and multipurpose rooms. There's also a detached garage with office space. This purchase would allow them to expand parking and relocate their offices to a site with more parking. They could use the building in its current state, with minimal renovations. The building could be accessed by the summer camp, so they would no longer need to cram kids into the bath house on rainy days. The Court Street building has 1,800 sq feet, vs this building's 6,000 sq. feet. In the future, programming could be expanded.

Regarding renovations, they will need to create an ADA entrance to the building and get the bathroom up to ADA compliance; reconfigure some downstairs offices; tie into the town's network; and set up parking. They're looking to finalize a renovation budget, but it will be no more than \$100,000.

The proposal will go to the Facilities Advisory Committee, Planning Board, and BRC. This acquisition will minimize the current Parks and Rec asks in the CIP: they will remove the athletic field project for \$4.5M, and eliminate the accessibility assessment of 32 Court Street, since they would be moving the offices. The original \$6.5M proposal would be reduced to \$2M to \$3M 6 - 8 years out for the multigenerational center, with the additions of a gym, programming space, meeting space, and access to bathrooms.

Mr. Dean thanked Darren Winham, who helped with the purchase and sale agreement. Mr. Bisson mentioned that Mr. Winham negotiated the cost from \$1.35M to \$1.15M. An expert real estate person said the fair market value is \$800,000 - \$1.3M, so it's right in that price range. This is an opportunity that they will only get once, otherwise the property will be sold and developed. Mr. Dean said regarding preliminary tax impacts, they would likely have a ten year bond of

\$1.25M, which is \$.06 per thousand, or \$19 for a \$300,000 home. That estimate also doesn't take into account avoided costs.

Ms. Oliff asked whether there would be enough offices for current staff in the new space. Mr. Bisson said yes; there are 12 offices, 5 of which would be key for customer service. There are also several on the 2nd floor that they'd be turning into programming space. This building could be adapted into a multigenerational center down the line. It's double the size of what they currently have. It would also allow those playing softball and soccer not to cross Route 27 from the parking lot across the street. Mr. Dean said that this property is between two commercial properties, so the residential impact is far less than building in other areas.

Ms. Gilman said she sees a lot of benefits to this proposal. A second parking lot would be good for the grandmother who wants to see the grandkids play.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked Mr. Bisson to reach out to the Facilities Committee, Planning Board, and BRC, as well as the two abutters, and the immediate neighborhood as well. Mr. Bisson said he's already drafted the emails to those groups to send once it's official.

Mr. Papakonstantis said he likes that they can gradually build up with this opportunity, since they heard feedback that the other Rec Center plans were too much, too fast.

Mr. Bisson said the new building is much more efficient than the current building, and has potential for additional energy efficiency initiatives such as solar panels. There's forced hot air throughout, so it would be a healthier atmosphere than the current building with radiators.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the land may be worth more than the price. The owner wanted the community to have this opportunity. Mr. Bisson said the owner reimagined his own business model and wanted to do something good for the town. This property was not available previously.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked if this would affect Planet Playground. Mr. Bisson said the proposed purchase of that area is still in HUD limbo, so they're talking about relocating it.

Mr. Dean said that for full disclosure, the property owner's name is Phil Dean, but he is no relation.

c. Andrew Elliott re: Washington Street

Mr. Papakonstantis said earlier in the summer, Mr. Elliott approached the Board members with his concerns and ideas for Washington Street. In late June, he came forward at public comment and submitted a citizen's petition looking to raise and appropriate \$260,000 for the design and construction of road and sidewalk improvements on Washington Street.

Mr. Elliott said in May, he started talking to Dave Sharples about how to slow down traffic on Washington Street. This is a very busy street with lots of people and young kids, and people go fast. If a person is hit by a car going 40

MPH, there's an 80% chance of the person dying; as you reduce those numbers, the chances of death go down. At 20 MPH, the chance of death is only 6%. Motorists tend to go as fast as the road allows. Following the change to the Brentwood Road intersection, he talked to Detective Bruce Page, who did a radar speed survey. The max speed seen was 50 MPH, and there were 1,200 people going more than 24 MPH. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the days of the speed study, there was a Police presence on the street. They need to consider how development is going to impact the streets handling the traffic.

Mr. Elliott proposes road or lane diets to make Washington Street thinner, or other traffic calming measures. He knows of 11+ kids under 10 on that street, and they are taking their life into their own hands.

Sandra Angelone of 84 Washington Street said there's a bus stop on Brentwood, so parents with little children are walking up Washington, which has no sidewalks in that area.

Mr. Elliott described chicanes, which jut out in the street to make the road feel less wide, to make motorists slow down. He's parked his car on the street to make the road smaller, and it works. The cost estimates on chicanes are \$2,500 to \$16,000 each, so not very expensive. He doesn't want his own car to get damaged. These islands could accommodate new trees providing natural shade and replacing the aging trees on Washington Street. Highway Department Supervisor Jay Perkins said the town would donate trees. Another potential option is a choker, which is a bump-out on both sides of the street. Or they could consider a "complete streets" program with road narrowing, finishing sidewalks to the end of Washington Street, and adding a bike lane.

Mr. Elliott said he was working with DPW Director Jen Perry, but she hasn't been returning his emails, and the project needs to move along.

He would also like the Board to look into updating the town ordinances to change the speed limit to include 25 MPH for Washington Street.

The sidewalk plan needed to be done in 2014, but the yearly sidewalk budget is \$120,000, while the estimate for Washington Street is \$130,000, which means it will never get done.

There are other CIP projects moving forward, such as Westside Drive and the School Street area, but neither one of those is a through street or sees the volume of traffic that Washington Street does. They should start with the one with 2,500 cars a day on it. He's surprised that School Street will be \$345,000 for design work. It's only 2,200 feet for those three streets, which means it would be \$160 per foot to design the improvements.

Mr. Elliott mentioned that he has emails from Tom and Rebecca Bergeron and a resident named Denise, which he will forward to the Board.

Chief Stephan Poulin said they have stepped up patrols of that area. Regarding the posted speed limit, he's willing to work with the Board on updating the town ordinances. There are other roads in town that are posted improperly.

Mr. Dean said Paul Vlasich from Public Works talked about Sewer issues on Washington Street. They did a water rehab project on that street 4-5 years

ago, but need to replace Sewer Mains at some point. They try to lump together water, sewer, road reconstruction, and sidewalks. He would like to get more detail from the DPW. The citizen's petition warrant article that Mr. Elliott submitted is valid and will go to the voters in the spring.

Ms. Oliff said regarding bump-outs and chicanes, there's a question of plowing, street cleaning, parking, etc. She would like to figure out why it was listed as "not appropriate" in Portsmouth. She likes the idea of extending the sidewalks. She would like to find out why Washington Street is not the #1 priority of the DPW and to be more transparent.

Mr. Elliott said regarding traffic calming not being recommended in Portsmouth, Portsmouth has designated types of streets as having different requirements. A Connector Road in Exeter is like a City Core Connector in Portsmouth, where curb extensions are appropriate in limited circumstances.

Mr. Elliott said that with off-street parking, there's room for wider sidewalks. They shouldn't wait for the sewer to be replaced. The recent Front Street project was done without touching the sidewalks, so they could do the sidewalks on Washington Street without touching the street. Ms. Perry said they needed to find out if the town has easements to put in sidewalks. Officer Page has offered to do another speed survey in the future. They should check speeds again without Police or signboards on the street.

Sandra Angelone of 84 Washington Street asked if they get a vehicle count when they do the speed analysis, and is there a way to go back and see what the increase is from a year ago? Chief Poulin said they get a vehicle count, but they'd have to look if there were speed surveys from a year ago. Regarding a new survey, the residents should tell them when they want it done.

Mr. Dean said he will get the answer to the question about the easements.

Mr. Papakonstantis said the next steps are for the Board to work with the Police Dept on this street and other streets that need to be revised. He would like the DPW to come before the Board to comment on Mr. Elliott's ideas and their feasibility in the near future, and he will let Mr. Elliott know the date. There's a long-term plan for sidewalks, and he would like to hear from the DPW where this falls in the plan. He would also like to hear why the other DPW projects cost so much.

7. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve a Solar Exemption for 91-25 in the amount of \$10,500 for 2022. Mr. Papakonstantis seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

b. Permits & Approvals

There is a financial report that the Board needs to sign. The DRA is a requirement at the end of each fiscal year. It's a submittal of voted appropriations vs actual expenditures.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to accept the NH DRA Financial Report of the 2021 Budget. Ms. Oliff seconded. The motion passed 3-0.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. They had a leak at the pool. Mr. Bisson is in the process of getting repair estimates. There was a \$20,000 bill for the water at the Rec Park, so the Board should consider whether they'd be willing to abate that.
- ii. Negotiations for SEIU, Fire, and Police are underway. They've had several meetings which have gone pretty well.
- iii. He's had several budget meetings with the Dept heads.
- iv. It's time for tax deeding. They're encouraging people to pay those.
- v. He recognized Dave Sharples for his work on the Public Safety study. Out of the \$100,000, Lavallee Brensinger is going to do most of the work for \$80,000. Mr. Sharples will be before the Board with a contract at the next meeting.
- vi. The Board will get a draft budget on Sept 27.
- vii. Mr. Papakonstantis said Swasey Park has reopened to vehicular traffic, and it seems to be incident free. Mr. Dean said he hasn't heard of any incidents.
- viii. Mr. Papakonstantis said he, Mr. Dean, and Ms. Roy attended the 9/11 Ceremony at the Public Safety building. There was a new dedicated wreath and statues. It was a wonderful ceremony. He thanked Police, Fire, and Public Works, and Parks and Rec for the work they put into that area.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Oliff attended an Arts and Culture Committee meeting, where there was continued discussion about the Exeter Cultural website, and a possible public art/sculpture display. Anne Kenney has since stepped down from committee. Does the Board need to vote on a new member or does it automatically go to an alternate? Mr. Papakonstantis said the Committee can determine which alternate to make into a full member, and make a recommendation to the Board. Ms. Oliff said she also had a Housing Committee meeting on Friday Sept 10. Ms. Gilman was there as the Rep from the State, and they discussed workforce housing and alternative solutions.
- ii. Ms. Gilman had a Heritage Commission meeting, where they discussed a demo at 10 Wadley Street. They decided that the building should be preserved and rehabilitated, but they can only give advice, they can't stop a demo. The demo review subcommittee will also look at 7 Wadley Street.
- iii. Mr. Papakonstantis said the Sustainability Advisory Committee met; he had a conflict, but he talked to the Chair prior to the meeting, and the one big agenda item was a proposal for the BRC to increase the hours of a

part time employee currently reporting to Mr. Sharples to full-time, and to assign the Sustainability Coordinating initiative to that person.

e. Correspondence

- i. A memo from the Exeter Fire Department stating that Covid numbers are continuing to climb steadily. 8 residents tested positive in the past week, 4 during Labor Day weekend. Since March 2020, Exeter has had 1,018, with 10 active cases. NH had 2,200 positive tests last week. There have been 10 Covid deaths in NH in the past week, 2 from Rockingham County. The FD is becoming more active with the Public Health Network, and has identified areas to give vaccines. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if Chief Wilking or Mr. Murray could come monthly to discuss Covid updates.
- ii. A request for Exeter to consider becoming a Purple Heart Community. Ms. Gilman said she would support it because the Independence Museum has an original purple heart medal. Mr. Dean said they'll draw up a proclamation for the next meeting.
- iii. An email referencing Swasey Parkway.
- iv. A thank you note from Family Promise of Seacoast NH for a recent donation.
- v. A memo from Darren Winham regarding HB154 and SB102. Ms. Gilman said HB 154 would develop housing opportunity zones, which give tax incentives for developers to reuse existing housing stock 40+ years old. Now it's been signed by the Governor, but the question keeps coming up of how to know that the affordable housing policy continues after the tax incentive has ended.
- vi. On October 16, The Public Works garage will host a waste collection event.

8. Review Board Calendar

- a. The next Select Board meetings are September 27 and Oct 4 and Oct 18. There's a BRC meeting on September 29th.

9. Non-Public Session

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to enter into non-public session under RSA91-A3:II(e). Ms. Oliff seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 3-0. The Board emerged from non-public session. Selectwoman Gilman moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session until the matter is settled. Selectwoman Oliff seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Adjournment. Selectwoman Gilman moved to adjourn. Selectwoman Oliff seconded. The motion carried and the Board stood adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary