

Select Board Meeting  
Monday March 4, 2024  
7 PM  
Nowak Room, Town Offices  
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Vice-Chair Molly Cowan, Clerk Julie Gilman, Dan Chartrand, Nancy Belanger, and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 7 PM.

2. Public Comment

- a. Anne Kenney of 3 Walnut Street read her own statement regarding paid parking. The parking situation in Exeter is not a shortage of spaces. She's never had a problem parking in Exeter. She would like to see the number of 2-hour parking spots increased and maybe add 1-hour spots. There would be negative impacts from introduced paid parking. It would be a burden to residents supporting local businesses and restaurants. It would change the aesthetics and quality of life for residents and visitors. Finding the staffing to monitor and ticket for parking violations would be difficult. It's unproven that parking kiosks actually generate revenue. She suggested parking decals for residents and employees instead of paid parking. She prefers the angled parking rather than losing spaces with parallel parking. Regarding a bike lane, there are other avenues than Water Street to bike on. The idea of a park in front of Town Hall is intriguing.
- b. Florence Ruffner of 5 Pine Street, a business owner downtown, said she is in favor of parking meters. She sees so many people park in front of businesses all day long. Her building has its own parking lot, but there has to be a better solution. She can't do parallel parking. A park is a lovely idea but we have a lot of lovely parks in our community and she can't see it happening. It was effective when Mr. Jones was an Officer and marked the cars.
- c. Paul Fredricks of 9 Newfields Road said he agrees with Anne Kenney. He likes coming downtown but if there were parking meters he would do it a lot less.

3. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. There were no proclamations made at this meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: February 26, 2024  
Approval of minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

5. Appointments/Resignations

- a. There were no appointments made at this meeting.

- b. J. Darden Rives resigned from the BRC

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to accept the resignation of J. Darden Rives from the Budget Recommendation Committee. Ms. Gilman seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

6. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Pairpoint Park Update

Mr. Chartrand recused himself from the discussion.

Mr. Papakonstantis said he would like the Board to consider moving forward with a formal motion to establish a committee.

Town Planner Dave Sharples said he met with Dave Short, Keith Whitehouse, and Nancy Phillips onsite. What they recommended was putting a fence at the retaining wall and filling in the hole, then opening it for public use. He had concerns about that plan. The ground is uneven outside of the hole, and there are rocks and depressions. When the fire happened, it burned down and the Fire Department called the DPW, who scooped the rubble out for disposal. The remainder was smashed down into the ground. There's not necessarily harm from chemicals - the environmental survey didn't find harm - but it's not good to be walking around on uneven ground with possible organic material. Regarding the retaining wall, he would like to have structural engineers take a look before we put a fence on it. There's a gas line and sewer line coming into the property which appear to be abandoned but should be dealt with. We came up with a concept to have the park visible but just have a little area by the sidewalk visible for now.

Ms. Belanger asked about the cost of the structural engineering review. Mr. Sharples said he would want a \$1,000 allowance for that. He wants them to check so we don't find out later that the wall wouldn't support a fence. Maybe there was structural analysis there when the dam was removed, but he hasn't found anything.

Ms. Gilman said what we would do for a "bump out." Mr. Sharples said we'd cut down about a foot from the sidewalk and build material up as it goes out. We could use a reclaimed asphalt type surface which would be accessible. It would extend maybe 12 or 16 feet into the site.

Dave Short of 1 Dewey Street said based on public feedback and the site visit, he thinks it's in everyone's best interest to not start anything immediately. The process that was discussed at the last meeting was to have town staff and engineers come up with a plan for the park, and then form a committee, but he thinks they should form that committee now. It should include members of the public and the group that has gotten together, including Jen Martel. He thinks design-build with a Designer/Contractor is the way to go. You get the work for significantly less than if designing it separately. We shouldn't do anything to the site for the moment but should gather data and start the design process. There is some boring data for the site which will give us a better idea of what's underground. The goal should be to minimize or eliminate the use of tax dollars.

Mr. Papakonstantis said there was a fire on the site, so he would like to make sure it's safe. The town has only had the property for 67 days. We're not looking to turn away from anyone who wants to donate time or money. There are policies and

procedures for a reason. We need to establish a committee, put together a mission, and put out a call for volunteers.

Ms. Belanger said the boring report was done for a private person. Can we accept a private report from 2018? Is it important to have our own analysis done? Mr. Sharples said he hunted down a plan set of the Great Dam removal which shows a boring of this site, but he hasn't gone further. It was 15 feet up from the retaining wall in the center of the property. The report he saw was from 2016, so it may not be the same report. Ms. Gilman said the previous owners had a design for a substantial property on that site. The HDC approved it. Mr. Sharples said he will continue to research. Ms. Belanger asked what the turnaround would be for a Structural Engineer. Mr. Sharples said he has a couple of guys who could probably come. It could probably be done in a couple of weeks.

Ms. Gilman said she would rather have an open fence than a closed one. She added that it could be a good spot for a pollinator garden.

Mr. Papakonstantis said he doesn't know how safe it would be to keep it open right now. We should run it by Primex. When we accepted the donation, the Town Manager's office started looking for new fencing. Ms. Roy said Greg Bisson said there's enough money in the impact fees to put in the new fence. It would probably be either at the waterfront or at the sidewalk, not both. Ms. Gilman clarified that she wanted a fence you can see through rather than stockade fencing. Mr. Short said he thinks you'd have a hard time erecting a fence with the cellar hole there. You could do a four foot high fence that people could look over the top of. Ms. Gilman suggested having a fence with murals on it.

Keith Whitehouse of Westside Drive asked how long it will take before the public can go down into the park. Mr. Papakonstantis said we don't know. We need to establish a committee, come up with a mission, ask for applications, interview volunteers, etc. Ms. Gilman said if it costs money we'll have to wait until next March for that to be approved. We'll also want some public comment on the design. Mr. Papakonstantis said this will probably be done in phases. We first have to find out what we have there and what the community wants there.

Paul Fredricks of 9 Newfields Road said he wants to open up some kind of vision towards the river so people can get excited about it. This will help with fundraising. The fence today is not something you could paint a mural on, it's slatted and falling apart. He would like to see a little fence with a sign that says "This site is going to be developed."

**MOTION:** Ms. Belanger moved to establish and implement a Pairpoint Park Stakeholders Committee with a mission to be presented at the next Select Board meeting on March 18th; and immediately upon acceptance, the Town Manager's office will accept applications and the Board will commence interviews. Ms. Gilman seconded. Mr. Chartrand did not vote. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Sharples said he's working on the shoreland conditional permit.

## 7. Regular Business

### a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

**MOTION:** Ms. Gilman moved to approve a tax abatement for 110/2/82 in the amount of \$107.12 for tax year 2023. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

### b. Permits & Approvals

- i. There were no permits or approvals at this meeting.

### c. Town Manager's Report

- i. Ms. Roy said last Tuesday, the DPW and our partners facilitated the Pickpocket Dam public meeting. The questions that were asked will be put together and released online in a few weeks.
- ii. She joined Riverwoods to discuss the warrant articles.

### d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Belanger attended the Pickpocket Dam discussion. The Conservation Commission is sponsoring herring monitoring. The program is 10 minutes 7 days a week and will start in early April to late May.
- ii. Ms. Gilman went to the Pickpocket Dam presentation.
- iii. Ms. Cowan had no report.
- iv. Mr. Chartrand attended the Facilities Advisory Committee meeting. They discussed the process of building a new building if the Public Safety complex passes. There's a great depth of knowledge on that committee. They did some planning for the Facilities Committee's work for the coming year.
- v. Mr. Papakonstantis attended the Pickpocket Dam meeting. Our consultant did an excellent job. Testimony can continue to be given by the public until March 21st, the date of the next River Advisory Committee meeting. He thanked Riverwoods for inviting town staff to visit them. Folks had a lot of good questions and comments.
- vi. Ms. Belanger said the Police and Fire Departments are having a presentation on Wednesday March 6, 7-8 PM, to answer questions about the warrant article.
- vii. Ms. Gilman gave an update on State Legislative issues.

### e. Correspondence

- i. A memo from MRI with a copy of the Department of Revenue's memo to the Board, indicating the median ratio for 2023 is 62.9%.
- ii. The NHMA legislative update
- iii. Several emails regarding Pairpoint Park.

## 8. Review Board Calendar

- a. There's a second public hearing this Friday March 8 at 8 AM on the Planet Playground property; there's another hearing March 18. Next Tuesday is voting.

The next Select Board regular meetings are March 18, April 1, April 15, and April 29.

9. Non-Public Session

- a. There was no non-public session at this time.

10. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Mr. Chartrand moved to adjourn. Ms. Belanger seconded. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanna Bartell  
Recording Secretary