

Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting March 26, 2019

Members Present: Lynn Sweet, Chairman, Bryant Scott and Scott Young

In attendance: Ruth Swasey, Ethan Swasey, Jack Lagasse, Lynn Lagasse, Eric Almanzan, Dan Duffy, Tax Collector Judy Dupré, Building Inspector David Copeland

The Selectmen's Meeting was called to order at 5:29PM.

The Selectmen reviewed and approved payment of bills and payroll. Board members read and approved minutes from the March 19, 2019 Selectmen's Work Session. Notices of pay rate were signed.

The first order of business was the reconsideration of a previous decision by the Board to deny permission to the Town of Barrington for the temporary use of Class V Old Canaan Road in Strafford as an alternate route for residents on Old Settlers Road in Barrington while a bridge is being rebuilt. All agreed, that, in a spirit of cooperation and assistance to Barrington, the Board of Selectmen would cooperate fully with the project and allow the temporary use of the Old Canaan Road, providing that the Strafford land owner most impacted by the temporary road was in agreement with the plan. The Selectmen's Office will notify the Town of Barrington by letter.

Having signed a contract with Dubois & King for the scope and fees portion of the engineering for the Barn Door Gap bridge, Mr. Durfee will meet with Road Agent Greg Messengers and Board members after the spring high water flow is down to discuss plans for the Barn Door Gap bridge repairs.

An update on internet service to the Parsons Hill Road/Evans Mountain Road area of Town was noted. Atlantic Broadband expects to make service available to residents of Parson's Hill Road within the next several weeks.

Staffing for the lifeguard positions at the beach this summer was briefly discussed. There is at least one position available. Information is posted on the website.

The meeting adjourned to the Conference Room at 6:02PM to conduct the scheduled 911 Public Hearing and to accommodate a larger group of attendees.

The Selectmen's Meeting reconvened at 6:27PM in the Selectmen's Office.

Selectmen will make a decision about the naming of the road at a future meeting, taking all comments and concerns they heard under advisement.

Eric Almanzan was in attendance to speak to the Board about the monthly availability of a Police, Fire, and Ambulance Log. He and the Board discussed what this might look like. Mr. Almanzan is not looking for a major expenditure of time or money, just a simple reporting of the number and

type of calls being handled. The Selectmen will discuss this with the Police and Fire Chiefs, as whether or not to implement this suggestion is ultimately their decision.

Mr. Almanzan also expressed his support to have the School and Town and School District Meetings on a single date. The Selectmen shared their support for his idea and stated they have pursued this in the past. A combined meeting date does present some logistical difficulties. Working with the School District on benefits and salaries is an entirely different situation. The School District is a different governing body; their salaries and benefits are negotiated through collective bargaining and the Town has no part in that process.

Jack and Lynn Lagasse and Ruth and Ethan Swasey were in attendance to discuss the “abandoned” property near their homes on Deer Lane. They are concerned that the property continues to deteriorate and the absent owner is not actively pursuing improvements or repairs. Likewise, the Town is not bringing any enforcement to bear on the situation and they believe this adversely affects their property values. Mr. Lagasse cited several portions of the Town’s zoning ordinances, including the Town’s stated duty to protect property values. Ms. Lagasse stated that she didn’t believe the Town’s inspection and enforcement agents had done their job in this situation, and that the neighbors are now bearing the consequences.

The Selectmen acknowledged their concerns. They pointed out that the zoning ordinances do have a stated purpose of protecting property values, but there is no enforcement language, penalty, or mechanisms for enforcement written into them. The Selectmen recommended that the Lagasses and Swaseys complete an abatement application if they believe that their assessments adversely affected by the situation.

Ethan Swasey asked about Mr. Janvrin’s work with the building inspector and the extent of the building inspector’s authority. Building Inspector David Copeland told them Mr. Janverin had a building permit to repair some interior damage, but that has expired. He has contacted him, and reported that the owner wants to fix the home, but has no money. Some scrap metal and firewood have been removed from the property. The property is posted with No Trespassing signage, but the question was raised as to whether that has been done “properly”.

Ms. Sweet Lynn had read to those assembled the counsel of the Town attorney, and she will have another conversation with him.

The status of the property’s tax lien situation was briefly discussed. The property owner is not making payments on the 2017 lien and, without any payments, in December he will be full 3 years behind. This will enable the Town to “take” the property and resell it. That process was briefly described.

A question was raised about the possible involvement of the Health Officer as the property “stinks” on warm days. The Selectmen will research the authority of the Health officer. Ms. Lagasse put forward a formal verbal complaint that “noxious odors” are emanating from the house.

Dan Duffy, Parker Mountain Road, was in attendance as a party interested in this situation because of a similar one in which he finds himself. The Town has ordinances which are meant to protect

property values, but, as previously stated, do not provide for enforcement. With property taxes the main revenue source for the Town, he believes it is prudent for the Town to do all it can to protect those values. He finds it frustrating that some residents tear down the value of another's property as they carelessly disregard the established ordinances.

Ms. Dupré discussed with Board members homes with 2017 property tax liens and the process and timeline of tax deeding a property. Some suggestions were made concerning payment plans for properties with the 3rd year lien and adjusting the time table.

There being no further business to bring before the Board, it was moved by Mr. Scott and seconded by Ms. Sweet to adjourn the meeting. By unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 7:35PM.