

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2020

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Tom Schnabel, Pat Harvey (absent)

Guests: Nancy Woolley, Terry Severy, Joan Allen, Mason Wade, Susan Morse, Eric & Ginny Bowman, Lois Bond, Walt Wells, Lizzy Shackleford, Harland McKirryher, Martha Slater, Bruce Flewelling, Rob and Char Gardner

Doon called the meeting at 6:15 pm

Doon confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Additions to the Agenda: Harland- missing book. Mason-add to next agenda: Discussion about potential policy on Public records discussing cell phone usage and handling of personal information. Susan Morse-Bingo Road and Sidewalks in town.

Doon tabled the approval of the minutes until the next meeting noting that he was not present at the last meeting and with Pat absent for this meeting they will have to wait till the next selectboard meeting to approve.

Doon invited Lizzy Shackleford to speak about presenting information on the Emergency Climate Declaration. Lizzy noted a small group of residents have joined in a voluntary group to look into what they could do here in Rochester. She informed us that there is a petition circling for signatures to be put on a ballot for Town Meeting in March for a vote on whether the Town of Rochester should adopt a Climate Emergency Declaration. She said it would not do anything required by the town just that the bottom line is recognizing there is a climate emergency in the World that is affecting us here and what they are asking the town planning and leadership to do is consider climate impact decisions that are made here in town. She noted that the group will be scheduling something public in February to further discuss. Doon noted that as part of his activities working with the regional planning commission, there was a presentation that Vermont, itself is trying to go 90% renewable by 2050. He noted if you go to the Vermont Energy dashboard online it has very detailed information about specific municipalities and what is being done right down to who has solar panels on their house. He noted that transportation is the biggest challenge and contributor to greenhouse gases, followed by efficiency in home and heating. Doon noted he will share a copy of the information and leave at the Town Clerks office for others to browse through.

Doon invited Mason to share his ideas about creating funding for so many of our projects. He noted that with taxes rising we need to be cautious of how this burdens the taxpayers. He noted specifically Recreation and Parks. He noted that in the last 15-20 years we have seen a huge increase in non-profit 501(C)(3). He noted maybe we should step away from the format we have and encourage the community to create a 501(C)(3) group. He noted that by doing so we could remove the line item and shift the responsibility over to these non-profit groups. He noted that the organization would have greater ability to do funding through their non-profits to move forward with that. He noted that by taking other items from the budget and creating a non-profit group that could be added to the annual Town Meeting appropriations as other non-profits do asking the citizens if they would like to contribute to the effort. He noted that anything that requires maintenance would become a burden to the taxpayer and shifting this responsibility over to a non-profit 501(C) (3) would lessen this burden. Bruce spoke that

discussion in this format may be a little premature. He suggested to Mason to go to the Recreation committee and get the ball rolling there to toss around these ideas and then come up with some solid proposals to bring to the selectboard for further discussion. Doon noted that the Town is already a non-profit and so creating another non-profit organization to take over any aspect of the town seemed a little redundant. He noted that he is not seeing the practicality in that, unless you are just suggesting you are shedding the responsibility of the town. Doon noted that he finds this a little disingenuous when Mason, personally, is responsible for almost \$60,000.00 of expense to the town by suing the town claiming that town property is not theirs. Tom noted that he feels Mason is trying to push the responsibility from one organization essentially to another organization. Tom noted it sounded to him like Mason is suggesting that it was not necessary to spend money on this organization and put it into something else. Tom noted it sounded to him like Mason was saying that we don't need to spend all this money on Recreation, let's put it in something else. He noted that he is shifting funds from one location to another and he doesn't feel clear about what reason unless it were personal or something he would be in favor of. Tom noted that it is not right to do that. Tom noted that everything in the budget is important. These are all important things and recreation is important. He asked if Mason was suggesting to not fund recreation anymore and fund that money someplace else, noting that is ok, but that it would suggest that there is another agenda here and we need be careful about that. Tom noted that the discussion is good but would hate to see that game being played. Susan noted in comparison to other non-profits, why couldn't this be a non-profit with concern to how people spend their taxes. She noted that if it reduces the taxes why not look to a non-profit. She noted that if there are other non-profits in Rochester it seemed a legitimate question to her. Nancy spoke about the Recreation department. She noted that it is primarily for the children of this town and how we have lost children to other towns. She noted that the Recreation department spends a great deal of time on youth sports. She noted that the parents can't afford the added expense in this town and the Recreation department helps to give the children a place to go to play sports. She noted that the kids can use the SkateSpace and noted that the SkateSpace was largely donated money, with donations and labor continuing to come in. It was established in memory of a deceased student, Kate Dougherty, about 15 years ago and requires maintenance. Martha spoke on behalf of the Recreation committee noting that the decisions made are largely for the children in the town. She noted that it is a way to congregate the children of the town. She noted that currently, the Recreation Committee is funding the Elementary Basketball program. She noted that there are many children that use the facilities. Discussion ensued. Doon noted there was initial grant money to fund the tennis courts. Nancy noted that the tennis courts were taken out by Irene and replaced by FEMA. She noted that very little town money was used. Doon noted it might complicate things with the money given to the town specifically and then created as another entity creating possible complications there. Terry noted that down by the tennis courts located where the septic system was put in, they had to go through the federal government to get permission. He noted that the Town doesn't have final say over the tennis courts or the ball field. Mason noted that the appreciation is there but to look at new structural ideas to make it work for all taxpayers. The tennis courts and Recreation committee were debated ad nauseam.

Joan Updates: Joan noted that she is continuing to compile all the FEMA and Federal Highway stuff. She noted that she is compiling all the documentation necessary for both agencies for reimbursement to the Town.

Highway Updates: John noted he will be attending a Road Posting Seminar on February 4, 2020 hosted by the DMV. Doon noted he observed the Highway crew working on the sand screen. John noted they will need to reinforce the back wall because it had blown out.

Utilities Update: Terry noted all is going well. He noted someone is running a sump pump that is dumping into the Site 4 sewer, which inflates water running through the system. He is hoping whomever it might be could let him know so that he could help with a better solution.

New Business: Doon noted we have a couple 2020 liquor license renewals for Maple Soul. One is for inside and one for out on their porch. Doon moved to approve. Tom seconded. All in favor, so voted.

Doon noted that before him is a contract for the SE group for the paper contract to sign. He noted it was the SE group that is doing the economic impact study on behalf of the Towns of Rochester, Granville and Hancock for the Velomont Trail Project. Susan asked if the town would anticipate contributing anything to the Trail project. Doon noted that he didn't anticipate the Town incurring any.

Harland: Update to the missing book information. Doon asked Harland if he had any updates and Harland did not. Doon noted that Nancy had done some research at the Vermont State Archives looking at microfilms and had no luck yet.

Susan: Bingo and sidewalk discussion. Susan wanted to thank John and the road crew for the hard work they put in to make Bingo roads wonderful this year. She asked about the sidewalks along the park and was concerned for the conditions on a day she was at the Library. Doon noted that there was an equipment breakdown which led to a lapse in clearing the sidewalks that day. Doon noted that the equipment is now repaired and in working condition. Walt added to the conversation that in front of the Library, where the sidewalk ends and the distance from that to where the road gets plowed. He asked if that is the State or Town responsibility. He was concerned that it needed to be attended to. Doon noted that the matter had been attended to and rectified.

Doon motioned to end the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith