

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECT BOARD
August 5, 2020
Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Heather Chase; Lee Gustafson; Leigh Dakin; Jeff Holden; Julie Hance

VISITORS: Ralph Falanga; Tim Roper; Steve Mancuso; Carol Lighthall; Ginger Roper; Zachary from Liberty Players; Bob Flint

Meeting was held via Zoom and at the Town Hall.

1. APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 10, 2020 SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING; JULY 15, 2020 SELECTBOARD MEETING; AND JULY 23, 2020 SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Minutes of the July 10, 2020 Special Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Minutes of the July 15, 2020 Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Minutes of the July 23, 2020 Special Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS/ANSWERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Ralph Falanga addressed the Select Board with concerns over lack of policing on Andover Road. He feels the speeding on this road from Vermonter's and people from out of state has been out of control. He would like this discussion to continue with Chief Rick Cloud and Town Manager Julie Hance and possibly add it to the next agenda. Julie Hance stated this will be discussed at this meeting during the speed limit reduction agenda item number 7.

Tim Roper discussed his concerns about the way the flags are displayed in town. He feels the flags hung on the poles near the Green are not being displayed per the rules set by the government. He believes the flags being in disarray reflects poorly on the town. The flags are being flown on town property making it the responsibility of the town.

Jeff Holden, in speaking as a concerned citizen of the community, asked Tim Roper why he thought the flags were being flown improperly. Tim Roper

explained he stopped and picked a flag up off the ground by the old Jiffy Mart and now has it in his car. He finds it to be a matter that should be taken care of as soon as possible. He suggested only flying the flags on holidays or on days where events would be happening in town. Jeff Holden said he thinks Tim Roper should have approached the board with a solution to the matter not just a complaint. Jeff Holden has taken some flags down and tried to fix the issue. Being a member of the American Legion, Tim Roper is willing to help come up with a solution.

Heather Chase pointed out this should be added to the next Agenda. Julie Hance would like Tim Roper and Jeff Holden to work together with the American Legion on a solution. She will follow up with them to see what process they have decided on. Tim Roper would like the town to adopt an ordinance pertaining to this matter. Julie Hance will research it further and add it to the next Agenda.

3. OLD BUSINESS/LAST MEETING

Public Safety Building: All the contracts have been signed and construction will begin the week of August 17, 2020. A very small ground breaking ceremony will take place on August 13, 2020. The local press, Select Board members, Building Committee, and Russell Construction will be in attendance.

Gravel pit: The project is still on hold waiting for a response from Act 250.

School Street Pocket Park: This project has been completed and people are being encouraged to go check it out. Scott Wunderle built a granite table and benches from the town pit and old cell tower. A chess board has been etched into the top of the table. Chess pieces can be borrowed from the pie shop.

Pinnacle: The sign has been put up at the Pinnacle and more work will be complete soon.

4. COVID UPDATE

The FEMA grant program for COVID expenses will be accepting application soon. The town has approximately \$5,000 worth of expenses related to COVID that will hopefully be reimbursed by the grant. Julie Hance is working on getting a quote from Atomic Sound for equipment to make meetings run smoother. She feels the combination of in person and Zoom will be around for a while. The equipment the town has now is not adequate to handle both. She is hoping this expense will be covered by the grant from FEMA as well.

A grant to help towns digitize land records is also being offered by the state. This will allow title searches to be done online instead of in the office. The land records will be digitized as far back as 50 years.

Masks are now being required per the Governor's orders. The town office staff has been wearing them when in the presence of others. The employees of the Highway Department wear theirs when appropriate. Lee Gustafson feels Vermont is doing well with the lowest rate of transmission in the nation of COVID.

5. REQUEST FOR USE OF GREEN; LIBERTY PLAYERS

Liberty Players asked to use the Green for a free theatrical production of Vermont during the Revolutionary War era. The date has not been narrowed down yet but they are asking to use the Green on a Saturday in August. The club will practice social distancing and follow COVID guidelines.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to allow Julie Hance to work with Liberty Players on the details of their proposed event on the Green. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

Heather Chase would like the details of the event to be advertised on the town's website and Facebook page. She hopes everyone will follow COVID guidelines during the production.

Zachary from Liberty Players joined the meeting late and thanked the Select Board for approving their request to use the Green for this event.

6. REQUEST FOR FUNDS FROM DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR MARKETING STRATEGIES

Bob Flint spoke about marketing and concepts to attract people to Chester for tourism or to attract people to live here. Carol Lighthall approached the Select Board with ideas for marketing Chester through social digital brochures. The brochures will help direct people to the website and social media platforms Chester utilizes. This will help people get an idea of what Chester has to offer.

Julie Hance asked the Select Board for \$10,000 from the Economic Development Fund to support a 2-3 month marketing campaign focused around the town of Chester. A video ad will be created of Main Street, the disc golf course, and other areas around town with copy rights made available to the town. This footage will be made available to the town for future purposes as well. Leigh Dakin suggested hiring Tuckerman Wunderle to capture the footage. Julie Hance stated she would like to involve local people for the campaign as much as possible.

Jeff Holden asked when they would start the project if the money was approved. He also asked how effective they believe the campaign will be considering COVID-19 is still ongoing. Carol Lighthall stated some things need to be approved first, then she would like to start the project as soon as possible. Bob Flint said they will

track how many people have utilized the campaign through social media and other platforms and report the findings to the Select Board.

Steve Mancuso feels Chester is more than a tourist trap and is concerned about the focus of this campaign. He thinks Chester should support small business instead of using tax dollars to attract tourism. Bob Flint responded by saying the efforts in this marketing effort is to make Chester appealing to everyone, including people moving here.

Heather Chase pointed out the money in the Economic Development Fund is not tax dollars. Julie Hance stated the marketing efforts in the past have been geared towards people not just visiting Chester but moving here as well. The goal of the town is to draw people here for many reasons. Lee Gustafson said a few people in town have drone footage that could be utilized for this. He feels these people should be contacted to see if their footage could be used. Scott Wundere has footage from the new building site that the town may be able to use. Jeff Holden voiced his concern over Chester's marketing campaign being used to advocate for and benefit Ludlow. Carol Lighthall said this idea is geared for Chester and wants each town in the region to prosper. Julie Hance stated that she reached out to Bob Flint and Carol Lighthall for assistance and feels this project is Chester specific. Lee Gustafson said businesses can utilize the town's website to advertise for free. Tim Roper was previously in sales and marketing and thinks marketing the Green will attract people and generate a trickledown effect for the other business owners in town. Shawn Cunningham owns the rights to chestervermont.org and is willing to give these rights to the town.

Lee Gustafson would like this to be kept up to date and managed well as time goes on. He would like businesses not on the Green with less exposure to be included in the approach as well. Julie Hance plans to gather community members to help draft a plan and grow it each year. She will contact Steve Mancuso for his input.

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to allow Julie Hance to take \$10,000 from Chester's Economic Development Fund to pay for marketing strategies for the town. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

7. SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION; GRAFTON ROAD, RIVER STREET, HIGH STREET, DEPOT STREET AND ANDOVER ROAD

Leigh Dakin has identified some roads in town for the Select Board to consider changing the speed limit on. Grafton Street to Popple Dungeon Road has a problem with speeding. Also, River Street and High Street are a concern due to not having sidewalks for pedestrians. Depot Street all the way through town has a lot of traffic. Leigh Dakin said residents in town have approached her with the

same concerns about traffic speeding on these roads. She stated there is a lot more traffic on Chester's roads than in the past.

Ralph Falanga spoke about the traffic on Andover Road and would support a reduction in speed limits. He agrees with Leigh Dakin that there is a lot more traffic on the roads in Chester. He feels the Police Department should monitor these roads better. He would like a study done to find out where the Police Department is writing the most tickets and possibly adjust where they are patrolling.

Julie Hance has spoken to Regional Planning and Chief Rick Cloud about performing an engineering study to determine if the speed limits need to be adjusted. Regional Planning has speed clocking strips that will track numbers and speed limits of cars. This study can be done in house without hiring an outside company. The Police Department will have to designate one person to help with the study. The designated officer will need to run radar in the suggested areas. Julie Hance will work with Chief Rick Cloud and Regional Planning to gather the information from the study. If speed limit changes are needed, then the town's Speed Ordinance will need to be updated.

Penelope Tinkaus, which lives on Andover Road, gave Julie Hance a letter stating her concerns related to speeding on Andover Road. Ginger Roper, also from Andover Road, approached the board about the increase in traffic. She is concerned about the walkers, dogs, and children on the road. There has been an increase in dump trucks, campers, and other traffic recently. She is requesting the speed limit be lowered and signs be added to make people aware of their speed. Heather Chase would like Chief Rick Cloud to enforce the 40 MPH limit in the area until the changes can be considered. Lee Gustafson would like a traffic study to be completed to make an informed decision on how to move forward. He also would like speed limit enforcement in the areas where there has been an increase in traffic. Jeff Holden says there must be a traffic study done to warrant a speed limit change. The suggested speed limit would need to be presented to the State for their approval, which cannot be lower than 25 MPH. After the study is complete, Julie Hance will approach Andover about doing their part to change the speed limit on Andover Road. This will be added to a future Agenda.

8. PICNIC TABLES ON THE GREEN; UPDATE

Julie Hance explained the picnic tables on the Green are being used a lot more than expected. Not just by the two businesses that approached the board for the approval. The two businesses have trash cans for use in front of their buildings, and the town just added another as well. Public works is having to empty the cans more often than before. Jeff Sheldon has been keeping up with this and does not have an issue doing so. If this continues in future years, the discussion will have to

take place again. Leigh Dakin is pleased people are using the Green and getting outside. Lee Gustafson stated this was the intention of the tables on the Green. He asked if the trash cans are being abused. Julie Hance replied yes and said Scott Blair has watched people throw trash from their car into the cans. Jeff Holden does not like that the town has more duties but sees the benefit in keeping the cans for now. Heather Chase agrees and likes that people are getting outside.

9. VERMONT ARCHAEOLOGY HERITAGE CENTER DEED OR GIFT; SOLAR FIELD SITE

When the solar farm near the Jeffry Barn was constructed two pieces of fire cracked rock, a piece of quartz, and other items were taken from the site. A request has been made for these items be donated to the Vermont Archeology Heritage Center to be added to their museum. Julie Hance changed the terminology on the deed from "property" to "artifacts". Lee Gustafson asked what they plan to do with the items after they receive them. He would like to see the artifacts for himself. Julie Hance will ask if the town can have them on display for a while. Heather Chase would like the center to give credit to the town after the donation.

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to give ownership of the artifacts to the Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

10. ERRORS & OMISSIONS

The Listers submitted two Errors & Omissions to the Select Board for approval.

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to approve the two Errors & Omissions submitted by the Listers. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

Julie Hance will need signatures.

11. FIRST CLASS LIQUOR LICENSE; HERITAGE DELI

The Select Board signed the First Class Liquor License for the Heritage Deli.

12. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA

Jim Carroll will be at the September 2, 2020 meeting

A letter from the softball league has been submitted to the Select Board addressing the recent activity at the field. The letter stated they are working on following COVID guidelines and creating a better plan for future use of the field. Julie Hance has this on file for review.

13. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to adjourn. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Amie O'Brien
Secretary of the Select Board

Lee Gustafson
Clerk of the Select Board