

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECTBOARD MEETING

June 14, 2017
Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas, Heather Chase, Ben Whalen; Dan Cote; Lee Gustafson;
David Pisha

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Kelly Arrison; Claudio Veliz; Shawn Cunningham; Gail
Stewart; Randy Miles; Mary Jane Miles; Barre Pinske; Mary Semones;
Richard Jewett; Roy Spaulding

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Arne Jonynas.

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Randy Miles came to the Selectboard to discuss the process that he has gone through on this permit. He recommended that the town purchase decibel meters for the Development Review Board to use during hearings. Discussion ensued regarding the new performance standard relating to sound. Randy Miles stated that his concern is that there is not consistency between the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board relative to the Unified Development Bylaws. Arne Jonynas stated that he is sorry that this process has been difficult for him.

Randy Miles asked the process for filing a complaint against a board member. Julie Hance stated that the complaint should be in writing and submitted to the Town Manager who will filter to the Selectboard and legal counsel.

Mary Jane Miles stated that she has found that there is inconsistency with how the Development Review Board is handling each permit. Some applicants are required to do more than others. She restated that there needs to be guidelines established for the sound measurement. Mary Jane Miles also stated that she feels that there are behind the scenes conversations taking place and she has concerns about this. She expressed her concern that the Selectboard is pro-business, however it does not appear that the DRB is.

Barre Pinske stated that he was present at the last DRB meeting where the sound issue is being addressed. He gave his opinion that there is a lack of understanding about how sound works. Barre Pinske stressed that there be training provided to the DRB relating to sound. He also stated that he believes that the DRB is concerned about the lack of enforcement and is therefore requiring remediation up front instead of waiting for there to actually be a problem. Barre Pinske believes that the decibel level should be used as an enforcement measure instead of a pre-requirement.

Heather Chase stated that sound is more than a decibel reading. She stated that the DRBs were reviewed for several years and that this is now out of the jurisdiction of the Selectboard. She would like to wait for the DRB to come out Deliberative Session before any discussion continues. Heather Chase also stated that it is unfair for the DRB to be expected to be sound experts.

Barre Pinske stated that he feels that the rules provide no flexibility and he would like the rules to be used more like a speed limit. He does not feel that applicants should be held to a standard that they have not failed yet.

Mary Jane Miles stated that she was most upset about the comments that have been made to the applicants which are unprofessional in her opinion.

Dan Cote stated that he wants this discussed at this meeting as he feels that this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed immediately.

2. CHESTER SNOWMOBILE CLUB REQUEST:

Richard Jewett from the Chester Snowmobile Club was present to request permission to repair a section of Wymans Falls Road. This request was approved a few years ago.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to sign the Landowner Permission Form pending the approval from Graham Kennedy. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

3. BIKE/PED GRANT APPLICATION:

Julie Hance presented a grant application that she is requesting permission to submit. The project would include the renovation and upgrade of the existing sidewalk beginning across from Town Hall, continuing along Depot Street and ending at the intersection with Bargefrede Road. The entire section is approximately 2500 feet. In addition to upgrading the sidewalks, the project will include the creation of a green strip between the road and the sidewalk and will include the installation of pedestrian style street lamps.

Julie Hance explained that the project will also include correcting several transportation related issues along this strip of land and will solve many complexities. There are 3 sections along this strip where there is no existing sidewalk. This project will create these sidewalks and provide the continuity in the sidewalk system that is needed. This project will resolve the safety issues at the intersection where Depot Street/First Avenue/Coach Road all come together. This intersection is not defined and is a hazardous situation for both vehicles and pedestrians attempting to cross at this location. In addition, the intersection of Depot Street and Maple Street is a large sea of asphalt and again, is not set up in the most ideal way. This project will enlarge the sidewalk in this area and clean up this intersection to improve safety.

Julie Hance also explained that this project will be used to create a positive relationship with the Green Mountain Railroad which runs through Depot Street and will have an

impact on this project. Following the master plan, the town has a desire to create a working relationship with the railroad to make it part of the community, not a separate entity. This relationship would benefit both the railroad and the town.

Julie Hance explained that at this time, the estimated project cost is approximately \$1.2 million. There are still adjustments to be made to cost estimates so this may decrease at the time of submission. The town's contribution will be 20% of the total project cost.

Kelly Arrison stated that he is very much in favor of this project. This is much needed in Chester and will enhance Depot Street as the gateway to the village.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to authorize Julie Hance to apply for the Bike/Ped Grant for the Depot Sidewalk Improvement project. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

4. VTRANS GRANTS IN AID:

Julie Hance explained that there is a pilot program being established through VTrans. In summary, the program would provide those towns involved with a sum of money to be used to make improvements to hydrologically connected road segments. This program will work similarly to the Better Backroads Grant but the town will not have to wait for grant approval.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to sign the Letter of Intent and become a part the Pilot Program. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

5. FEASIBILITY STUDY DECISION:

Arne Jonynas questioned the reference to communication with a steering committee. Claudio Veliz stated that if a steering committee is established they would be utilized closer to the end of the process. If the Board chooses to have a steering committee involved, his company would provide a report to the steering committee. Claudio Veliz stated that he will be collecting data from the department heads and the department staff.

Claudio Veliz stated that in a casual conversation with the Police Chief, it was indicated that the Police Department does want to be a part of this study and perhaps part of the new building. He stated that his firm has agreed to cap the cost of the study as presented even with the addition of the Police Department. The not to exceed number is \$23,000.00.

Arne Jonynas questioned the amount of time needed. Claudio Veliz stated that they will be coming back with updates approximately every 2 weeks. He indicated that he can also keep the Board up to date on the cost. Arne Jonynas clarified that at the end of the process, the town will have all information needed to make an informed decision relative to moving forward with the EMS building. This will also include a cost range.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to accept the proposal for a Feasibility Study from Claudio Veliz. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

Lee Gustafson stated that he would like to have conversation relative to the complaints that were issued this evening regarding the inconsistencies between the Boards in town. He indicated that this is more of a philosophical discussion. Discussion ensued. It was agreed that this would be on the agenda for July 5.

Heather Chase stated that she has concerns about the intersection near the Homan Farm on Green Mountain Turnpike. She does not feel that the railroad intersection is safe. David Pisha stated that he will work with the railroad on this.

7. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen
Clerk of the Select Board