

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

January 4, 2016 Meeting

SB Attendance: Chair Seth Gardner, Casey Northrup, Gene Troia, and Kim Swasey; Town Administrator Bruce Johnson

Public Attendance: Planning Commissioners Jean Vissering and Julie Potter; Conservation Fund Advisory Committee members Charles Johnson and Brian Lusignan; Recreation Board members Kathy Richardson and Phillip Heinz; East Montpelier Trails members Nona Estrin, Richard Brock and Mary Stone; Center Road Area Resident Steve Justis; Town Treasurer Don Welch

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Additions to Agenda:

- Rutland Town Resolution on Municipal Input into Solar Facility Siting

Public Comment: None

Consideration of Letter to EMFD Regarding Expansion of Ambulance Service to Other Towns

The Calais and East Montpelier Selectboards decided to craft a joint letter of concern to the East Montpelier Fire Department regarding the possibility that EMFD might contract to provide ambulance service to additional neighboring towns (it already has a contract for service with Plainfield). The Calais board approved an edited version of the letter at its December 21st meeting. The EM board reviewed and accepted the Calais-approved version.

Motion: To authorize Chair Gardner to sign the joint letter of concern to EMFD. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Mr. Troia. Passed unanimously.

Discussion with Conservation Fund Advisory Committee

Last March the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee met with the Selectboard to request funding for the now-completed Ormsbee Center Road property conservation. At the time the two groups agreed to meet prior to 2016 Town Meeting to discuss two concerns: augmentation of the town's depleted Conservation Fund (currently sitting at just above \$5,000); and, whether the time was ripe for a reevaluation of the town's land conservation principles and priorities given the great success in conserving properties over the past 25 years. Planning Commission and Trails Association members were invited to participate in this discussion.

After a spirited debate on the merits of further conservation, the potential to combine conservation efforts with targeted development, the limited amount of land available in East Montpelier for potential development, and how to make better use of zoning regulation to effectuate the desires of the community, the group agreed on a straight-forward approach: to have a funding article of \$10,000 to benefit the Conservation Fund on the 2016 Town Meeting Warning. Discussion on the funding article will be used to facilitate debate on the broader issue of what the town wants from its conservation program in the future and how we might get there.

The committee will come to the February 15th board meeting to continue the general discussion and develop talking points for presentation at 2016 Town Meeting.

Discussion on Options for Center Road Speed Limit Issue

Board members and Mr. Justis discussed possible traffic calming options, including speed tables, improved signage, raised crosswalks, better enforcement, and a lowered speed limit. The current plan is to continue investigating options, increase VT State Police patrols in the area, and provide speed monitoring using the Calais-owned portable unit when available. The Planning Commission intends to examine the issue from a town and regional plan perspective at its January 7th meeting. The Selectboard will revisit the issue at its February 1st meeting.

Discussion with Recreation Board

For a number of years the town's auditors, both internal and external, have been requesting that the town bring the Recreation Board's finances under town management. Currently the Rec Board, which is a Selectboard-appointed town committee, has its own bank accounts and management practices. Late last spring the Recreation Board presented the Selectboard with another option: to cut the Rec Board loose from town control and allow it to establish itself as a non-profit entity that would provide recreation services to the town. The Selectboard determined that since town voters ordered the creation of the Rec Board, the correct procedure would be to bring the question to the voters at 2016 Town Meeting and put off a final decision until the 2016 Warning was being developed.

Mr. Heinz and Ms. Richardson, representing the Rec Board, explained that the full board was still very much in favor of the non-profit concept, as it would both resolve the financial management issue and allow the Rec Board greater flexibility to work with other communities to improve the offerings to East Montpelier residents. The Selectboard agreed to include the following article on the 2016 Warning: **Shall the Town disband the Recreation Board with the board's responsibilities transferred to an independent non-profit organization.** Once the voters have had their say, the two boards will work together to effectuate the voters decision by July 2016.

Development of Selectboard Report for 2015 Annual Report

Board members brainstormed a variety of topics for inclusion in the Selectboard report. TA Johnson will provide a draft for review at the January 18th board meeting.

Discussion on FY2017 Budget Development

Board members continued work on the FY2017 budget with a focus on highway operations. An increase in the vehicle repair line will be offset by a decrease in the winter sand line. Otherwise projected expenses remain relatively stable for FY17.

Discussion on 2016 Town Meeting Warning

Board members continued work on the 2016 Town Meeting Warning. No new articles were proposed, although the article order was shifted to move the Recreation Board issue earlier in Town Meeting.

Warrants

Members reviewed and signed the warrant.

Minutes

The Chair presented the minutes of the December 21, 2015 Selectboard meeting for consideration.

Motion: To approve the December 21, 2015 Selectboard meeting minutes as presented.

Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

Rutland Town Resolution on Municipal Input into Solar Facility Siting

The Town of Rutland has been circulating a resolution calling for the state legislature to alter the Certificate of Public Good process for Public Service Board approval of renewable energy projects to allow municipalities a meaningful role in the process and to require compliance with municipal facility siting standards. Selectboard members discussed the resolution, but decided to table the issue until January 18, 2016 due to the absence of Mr. Etnier and to allow our state representative Tony Klein the opportunity to provide input on the resolution.

Other Business

Town Clerk Report:

- Increase in Dog Fees:
 - The State increased the dog fees \$1.00 as of July 1, 2015
 - Effective January 1, 2016, our dog license fees are:
 - \$9.00 for spayed/neutered animals
 - \$13.00 for unsprayed/unneutered animals

Town Administrator Report:

- Betsy Catlin's Passing:
 - Just prior to the end of the year the town was notified of the death of DRB member Betsy Catlin. Chair Gardner and Ms. Swasey represented the town at Ms. Catlin's funeral. A town donation in memory of Betsy was made to the Vermont River Conservancy.
- Closing on WEC Garage Property:
 - Closing on the WEC garage property that will be the site of a town-owned park 'n ride facility has been rescheduled to January 7, 2015.
- January 5th Nature Walk on Winston/Silberberg Property:
 - Mr. Etnier has scheduled a nature walk on the town-owned property for January 5, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.
 - The Selectboard is conducting an inspection of the property on January 9th, 10:00 a.m.; the public is encouraged to attend.
- Potential 500 kW Solar Array on Cassani Property in East Montpelier Village:
 - BDE East Montpelier Lazar Solar, LLC has submitted an application to the Public Service Board for a Certificate of Public Good for a 500 kW net-metered group solar

array on the Cassani property across US Rte. 2 from the East Montpelier Home Center.

- The Selectboard will review the application at its January 18th meeting.
- The VT Veterans' Home is Requesting a Link on the Town Website:
 - Board members agreed to provide a link to the Bennington facility on the website.
- The VT Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is Requesting a Statement of Support:
 - **Motion: To sign and display a Statement of Support for the National Guard and Reserve.** Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Troia. Passed unanimously.
- Upcoming Meeting Schedule:
 - January 9th 10:00 am Site inspection of Winston/Silberberg property
 - January 18th 6:30 pm Regular SB meeting
 - January 25th 6:30 pm Special SB meeting

Zoning Administrator Report:

- 40 total permit applications for 2015, a record low number of applications
- Next DRB meeting is scheduled for February 2, 2016

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Mr. Troia; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned 9:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

Approved: January 18, 2016 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting