

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

March 2, 2015 Meeting

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

Public Attendance: Town Treasurer Don Welch; Conservation Fund Advisory Committee members Brian Lusignan, Charles Johnson, & Michael Dworkin

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Additions to Agenda: None

Public Comment: Mr. Lusignan expressed concern regarding the effect of heavy vehicles on Lyle Young & Templeton Roads during mud season. In particular, a maple sap hauler with agriculture plates wreaked havoc last year. Chair Gardner explained that the board knew the perpetrator and would try to more effectively control his actions this year.

Conservation Fund Advisory Committee: Presentation of Ormsbee Project Recommendation

Conrad & Anne Ormsbee have offered to donate a conservation easement on their 172-acre Center Road property to the Vermont Land Trust (VLT). Included in this proposal is a trails easement for East Montpelier Trails that will provide a vital component in the effort to connect the Mallory Brook trail system with Powder Horn Glen. VLT has requested \$15,000 from the East Montpelier Conservation Fund to help cover the costs of the project.

The Conservation Fund Advisory Committee recommends that the Selectboard provide the requested funding:

All three members of the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee met, reviewed the proposal, and discussed its merit, as well as reviewing the current balance in, and expectations for the funds in the relevant account. We note that the property is well located to support continued greenery in our town. The land itself is a healthy combination of woods, agricultural, and streams and wetlands, strongly contributing to the environmental health of our town, overall. The offer to allow a trail-easement is particularly pleasing, since it could connect well with existing and potential trails in our community, and the requested financial assistance is both small in relation to the overall value of the property and well within the current balance in our town's conservation fund. Indeed, the proposal seems to be exactly the kind of project for which the fund was designed and approved, and for which it should be used.

For reasons such as these, we unanimously recommend that the Selectboard state its support for the project and provide the requested financial assistance.

[Excerpt of the March 2, 2015 Memorandum from the Committee to the Selectboard.]

The Conservation Fund currently has a balance of approximately \$20,500, leaving only \$5,500 for future use if the board follows the committee's recommendation. Committee and board members discussed the purposes of the Conservation Fund, the large amount of land already conserved by VLT and others, and what's next for land conservation in East Montpelier. The consensus was that this project is worthy of town support, but that the land conservation concept is an excellent issue for discussion at 2016 Town Meeting, both in the context of the benefits & costs of continued land conservation and on the specific topic of appropriating funds to augment the Conservation Fund.

Motion: To support the Vermont Land Trust's conservation of the Ormsbee Center Road property and to provide \$15,000 from the East Montpelier Conservation Fund to facilitate the conservation project. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Consideration of Credit/Debit Card Acceptance Options

Treasurer Welch described a credit card payment system offered by Noble Payment Technologies LLC that he has researched and found to meet the town's needs. This particular system offers both an online portal for citizen credit/debit card tax payments and an in-office methodology for the town to process over-the-counter credit/debit payments for taxes, animal licenses, and other fees. There is no cost to the town for this service. The cost to users varies depending on the specific card, with fees ranging from about 2.5% to 4%.

Motion: To authorize Treasurer Welch to sign the user agreement with Noble Payment Technologies LLC. Made by Mr. Sparrow; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Discussion on Town Highway Mud Season Restrictions

The town will post, in two public locations (post office and town office), the annual State of Vermont Transportation Board notice regarding vehicle weight restrictions during mud season. The town has already updated the VT Agency of Transportation's online database of road restrictions and Road Foreman Mike Garand will post the town roads with restriction notices in the near future.

Liquor Licenses

The Chair presented the annual liquor license applications for Dudley's Store and Plainfield Hardware as well as a one-day catering (beer & wine only) approval for a St. Patrick's Day event at Twin Valley Senior Center.

Motion: To approve the 2015 liquor license application for Dudley's Store. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the 2015 liquor license application for Plainfield Hardware. Made by Mr. Sparrow; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

Motion: To authorize Chair Gardner to approve the March 17, 2015 one-day catering license for the St. Patrick's Day event at Twin Valley Senior Center. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Work Session for 2015 Town Meeting

Board members refined various talking points for the Selectboard report during 2015 Town Meeting based on citizen concerns/questions raised at 2015 Town Forum, held February 28, 2015 at East Montpelier Elementary School.

Excess Weight Permits

The Chair presented excess weight permit applications from Allen Lumber, Camp Precast Concrete, Jack F. Corse, and United Natural Foods.

Motion: To authorize Town Administrator Johnson to sign the excess weight permits for Allen Lumber, Camp Precast Concrete, Jack F. Corse, and United Natural Foods. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Mr. Sparrow. Passed unanimously.

Warrants

Members reviewed and signed the warrant.

Minutes

The Chair presented the minutes of the February 16, 2015 Selectboard meeting for consideration.

Motion: To approve the February 16, 2015 Selectboard meeting minutes as presented. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

Other Business

Town Administrator Report:

Last June, the Planning Commission presented a series of amendments to the zoning regulations for Selectboard consideration. After review in July, the board requested that the PC rework two of the amended sections. The PC has now completed that work. The board will undertake further review of the entire series of amendments at its March 16, 2015 meeting with an eye toward holding a hearing on the proposed amendments in the near future.

One of the highway department's 2008 International 10-wheelers needed to be towed to Green Mountain Diesel due to a compressor failure. The expectation is that the repair will be relatively straight-forward and the truck should be back in action by Wednesday, March 4th.

Zoning Administrator Report:

Permit activity remains virtually non-existent in 2015. No Development Review Board meetings are scheduled.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Sparrow. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

Approved: March 16, 2015 East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting