

**East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting APPROVED (08/31/15) MINUTES
August 17, 2015 at the Town Office**

Selectboard members present: Carl Etnier (recording secretary), Casey Northrup, Steve Sparrow, Kim Swasey; Bruce Johnson (town administrator).

Others present: Gina Conn (*Times Argus*), Julie Potter (Capital Improvement Committee), Don Welch (Treasurer, Capital Improvement Committee), Tony Klein (East Montpelier/Middlesex state representative)

A. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-chair Casey Northrup called the meeting to order at 6:48 pm.

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

D. DISCUSSION WITH STATE REPRESENTATIVE TONY KLEIN

Focus on H. 40 and Renewable Energy Credits

The Selectboard requested State Rep. Tony Klein (D-East Montpelier) to explain the origin, function, and future of Renewable Energy Certificates, and how they affect the carbon balance of renewable energy projects built in the town.

Mr. Klein explained that other New England states have adopted a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). As an alternative, Vermont created the SPEED (Sustainably Priced Energy Enterprise Development) program. Under it, by 2017, utilities must get 25% of their electricity from SPEED-qualified projects, which are generally renewable energy projects, but also include combined heat and power production by natural gas. The utilities have no milestones to meet before the 2017 deadline.

Until 2017, or after 2017 if the utility has more than 25% SPEED-qualified electricity, they can sell Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) to utilities in a state with an RPS. This allows the utility to take credit on their portfolio for renewable energy generated in Vermont. Some of the RECs still go for 6 cents per kWh today.

Mr. Klein said that a bill passed last session, H. 40, gives Vermont an RPS. Two parts of the bill accomplish this:

1. By 2017, utilities must have 55% of portfolios in certified renewable energy. Most utilities are there already.
2. Create incentives for new RE development. If utilities exceed their targets, they will still be able to sell RECs.

A benefit of both efficiency and geographically distributed generation of electricity is that they lead to less need for importing electricity and for transmission lines.

Mr. Etnier asked about part of town plan, which reads, "The Planning Commission should provide guidelines for the siting and design of new energy projects including renewable energy projects." Mr.

Klein endorsed that as a good idea for gaining more control over where the projects are sited.

E. DISCUSSION WITH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

F. DISCUSSION ON ACQUISITION OF WINSTON/SILBERBERG PROPERTY

G. DISCUSSION ON CREATION OF BUILDING FACILITIES COMMITTEE

(Discussion runs together.)

On August 12 the town, through its Selectboard, was the high bidder for the Winston/Silberberg property (3035 US Rte. 2; 48 acres on the northeast corner of the Rte. 2/Rte. 14 north intersection in East Montpelier Village) at a foreclosure auction. The property is well situated to be used for a future expansion of the municipal building or the Park and Ride being constructed adjacent to the parcel. The East Montpelier Senior Living Initiative has also explored using the parcel for senior living. With these thoughts, the SB had decided at its previous meeting to purchase the property if it looked like the price would be significantly below its value, which was \$335,000 according to an appraisal the SB commissioned. The town secured the property for a bid of \$240,000. (The property is assessed on the town's Grand List at \$233,000.)

The liquidity for the purchase will come from the town's Capital Reserve Fund.

Julie Potter and Don Welch raised the question about what process to set up for the Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) and SB to work together for unanticipated capital expenses—e.g., a sudden property acquisition. They said they planned to raise the topic before the property acquisition, but the acquisition provides a good example to discuss.

Mr. Etnier asked whether they believed it was consistent with the mission of CIC for the SB to consult it on whether to make unanticipated purchases. Mr. Welch said the CIC was not to advise the SB on opportunities. But it can tell the SB how expending from the fund will affect other parts of the plan going forward. Ms. Potter added that there are tradeoffs—an unanticipated purchase could mean delays in repaving the roads. She said it's the CIC's job to make sure the town doesn't blow up the capital plan.

Mr. Etnier noted that the SB had made no commitment on the ultimate funding of the property purchase. While he isn't recommending it, the purchase could be made through a lump sum added to the budget for next town meeting. Using the liquidity in the Capital Reserve Fund is just what allows the town to make the purchase without calling a special town meeting.

Mr. Johnson said Planning Commission (PC) member Gene Troia would like to see a project-oriented committee set up, and we're talking about that tonight.

Ms. Potter noted the PC is putting together a planning grant application for village and wondered whether to tweak it to include planning for this newly purchased town property.

Mr. Johnson advised leaving the application directed at more general village planning and working out a separate, more specific process for this land.

The SB and Ms. Potter agreed not to change scope of work in the application, but it would be OK to change some language describing the village, to reflect the purchase.

The group discussed the order of planning: What to do first? Focus on the new 48 acres, or the need for a town office?

Mr. Etnier said he was interested in knowing the condition of town office and what is needed in future—and how realistic it is to do it on current site. That provides crucial information for the planning process on the 48 acres.

Ms. Potter, emphasizing she was speaking as a citizen, not a PC member, saw a need to start moving forward soon in some way on planning for 48 acres.

Mr. Johnson said one question that is key to planning on the 48 acres is the adjacent Park and Ride. He had not yet reached our VTrans project manager to learn whether the purchase might mean tweaks to the design.

Further discussion on the property was tabled until the September 21 meeting.

The discussion concluded with general agreement that the SB and CIC want to work together on a method for funding this property acquisition and on changes to the Capital Improvement Plan.

H. CONSIDERATION OF TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE APPLICATION

Mr. Welch said that the town needs to apply for a note in anticipation of taxes. He presented various options for how much to borrow and what timeframe to borrow in.

Mr. Etnier asked what the cost to the town would be for the various options.

Mr. Welch will undertake more research and report back to the SB.

I. DISCUSSION ON TOWN SALE OF USED CULVERTS

Mr. Johnson explained that Road Foreman Mike Garand often has used culverts on hand. These are of no use or value to the Town. In the past he has either given them to residents who ask or taken them to Bolduc's for recycling. He would like to have the board validate his procedure.

The town could charge a small fee to townspeople taking the culverts, as the town does receive some money from Bolduc's for their recycling value.

Motion: I move to make used culverts available to townspeople free or at low cost, depending on their recycling value, at the discretion of the Road Foreman. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Etnier. 4-0.

Mr. Johnson will put a notice of the used culvert policy on the town's web site.

J. DISCUSSION ON TOWN OFFICE BUILDING SMART METER INSTALLATION

The town chose not to install a smart meter two years ago when the issue was first presented to us by Green Mountain Power (GMP). GMP is once again offering (at no cost) to install smart meters; does the board want to revisit its prior decision?

The consensus was to allow the smart meter to be installed.

K. DISCUSSION ON LETTER TO F.W. WHITCOMB CONSTRUCTION CORP. REGARDING 2014 QUAKER ROAD PAVING PROJECT

There is concern that the Quaker/Vincent Flats Roads 2014 repaving is not holding up well; a letter

calling attention to the concerns and requesting Whitcomb's to review the current state of the pavement may be in order. The SB asked Mr. Johnson to draft a letter for it to review at next meeting.

L. DISCUSSION ON TOWN CREDIT CARD USAGE BY CEMETERY SEXTON

Sexton Elliott Morse makes numerous small purchases as needed for cemetery fence repair, equipment repair, etc. The town has frowned on opening new charge accounts with businesses for this type of purchase; town could add Sexton Morse to the town credit card (at present, TA Johnson and Road Foreman Garand are the two on the account) with a capped charge level to resolve this issue

Motion: I move to add Cemetery Sexton Elliott Morse to the town credit card, with a capped charge level of \$1,500. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Sparrow. 4-0.

M. DISCUSSION OF CVSWMD GRANT FOR AN ORGANICS RECYCLING EVENT

The town has a \$3,000 allocation from the Central VT Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) that can be used to provide reduced cost organics recycling supplies.

TA Johnson met with East Montpelier Elementary School Principal Alicia Lyford and CVSWMD's Chrissy Bellmyer to discuss an educational organics recycling event to be held September 17, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. up at EMES in conjunction with the school's annual open house.

CVSWMD personnel will conduct a half-hour class on composting and the state's goal to reduce organics in the solid waste stream. Green Cones (\$110), Soilsaver Compost Bins (\$50), and Kitchen Caddys (\$10) could be available for purchase; the town could purchase a certain number of the containers and offer them to residents at a reduced cost (taking advantage of the grant).

The SB would like to gauge townspeople's interest in purchasing the items before committing to the purchase. The September 17 open house can be used for showing the items and taking orders. One of each category of item will be given free to those who sign up, and everyone will get a discounted price.

Motion: I move to authorize Town Administrator Bruce Johnson to amend the original grant application to CVSWMD to an organics recycling event. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Sparrow. 4-0.

N. DISCUSSION ON CATERING LICENSE APPLICATION APPROVAL PROCESS

Liquor license applications for catered events come to the SB for approval, before being processed by the Town Clerk and sent to the state. The state requires five days lead time, ahead of the event.

How to handle an application that comes too late for it to be handled at a scheduled SB meeting? It seems too small a reason to call a special SB meeting. Mr. Etnier reported that a caterer told him other towns delegate the approval process. He would like the SB to delegate the approval process in this case to the Town Administrator, with the understanding that the TA will apprise the SB of the applications so that anyone who has possible objections can ask for a special meeting.

Motion: I move to authorize the Town Administrator to sign catering license applications if they are submitted at a time that does not permit the Selectboard to handle them at a previously scheduled meeting. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Swasey. 4-0.

O. ACCESS PERMITS

15-020 Bender, 1420 North St. Michael Bender applied for a second curb cut to his property,

referencing a state-issued handicapped sticker he has received because of a foot injury that prevents him from walking far or carrying heavy loads. The second curb cut would reduce the amount of walking and stair climbing he has to do when entering his house.

Motion: I move to approve the Access (Curb Cut) Permit 15-020. Made: Mr. Sparrow. Second: Ms. Swasey. 4-0.

P. WARRANTS

Signed.

Q. MINUTES

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of August 3, 2015 as submitted. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Sparrow. 4-0.

R. OTHER BUSINESS

Memorandum of Understanding with East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD) Regarding Town Use of Templeton Road Fire Station

Calais Selectboard Chair Denise Wheeler and member Scott Bassage both reviewed the document and saw no issues; Toby Talbot will present to EMFD board.

Update on Environmental Court Actions

In the Sanfacon/Pollock Cross Motions for Contempt for Failure to Follow Settlement Agreement, both parties were found to have not followed settlement. Mr. Sanfacon is expected to clad/screen trailer doors; Mr. Pollock must take down his website and stay off the Sanfacon property.

In the Wells Accessory Dwelling Summary Judgment Motions, the Court overturned the town's Development Review Board decision denying Wells application for an accessory dwelling; Wells will work with Zoning Administrator Johnson on the application.

Next DRB meeting will be on September 1, 2015

Continuance of Shanley (950 Sparrow Farm Rd) request for variance.

Final plan review of Heller (1912 VT Rte. 14 N) amendment to approved subdivision.

Biennial review of Casella's compliance with permit requirements for transfer station.

S. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: I move to adjourn. Made: Mr. Sparrow. Second: Mr. Etnier. 4-0. 9:35 pm.