

**East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting APPROVED (11/07/16) MINUTES  
October 17, 2016 at the Town Office**

**Selectboard members present:** Carl Etnier (recording secretary), Seth Gardner, Casey Northrup, Kim Swasey, Gene Troia; Bruce Johnson (town and zoning administrator).

**Others present:** None.

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

At 6:40 pm, Chair Seth Gardner called the meeting to order.

**B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Possible response to the Department of Public Service Draft Energy Planning Standards

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**D. DISCUSSION ON NEXT STEPS AFTER LAND CONSERVATION SUMMIT**

The October 10th conservation and housing summit was well attended and generated significant support both for land conservation in general and for an effort to realign/modernize the goals/guidelines of the town's conservation program to meet the needs to the community in the coming years. Where do we go from here?

Points and questions from the SB's discussion:

- Do we change criteria for Conservation Fund Advisory Committee?
- Do we know the effect of large amounts of conserved land on the town's tax rolls?
- There is a distinction between affordable land for building houses and affordable housing.
- What do we want town to look like in 30 years?
- A Master Plan would help us target areas for development, prevent conservation of land we'd target for development.

The SB will hold a meeting to flesh out what everyone heard, draw conclusions, and sketch the next steps. It will be in lieu of the regular SB meeting on Monday, November 21, at 7 pm at the village fire station. The Planning Commission and the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee will be invited.

**E. CONSIDERATION OF 2017 EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE BENEFIT OPTIONS**

The new enrollment period for health care plans is in November. The Town now offers employees to cover premiums up to 90% of the cost of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BC/BS) Platinum plan, with access to all BC/BS plans. The cost of the Platinum plan has increased 4.59%. The question is what to offer for next year.

**Motion: I move to continue paying 90% of the premium for the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Platinum plan, with all BC/BS plans available to employees. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Northrup. 5-0.**

**F. DISCUSSION ON DISSOLUTION OF EAST MONTPELIER FIRE DISTRICT #1**

The Fire District's Prudential Committee has recommend dissolving the district, as they have been unsuccessful in negotiating a purchase of the Crystal Springs water system at what they believe is a

reasonable price. The SB needs to determine if it is interested in moving forward with the “merger” of the Fire District back into the town; this will require a charter amendment which, in turn, requires attorney time.

The SB authorized TA Johnson to look into what it would take to merge the EMFD #1 back into the town.

### **G. DISCUSSION ON TOWN PLAN ACTIONS AND GOALS**

The SB began its review of board-centric actions and goals from the 2013 Town Plan. The review began at the beginning and continued through the section "Townspeople." Many of the items have been accomplished or are in process. One that the SB had not yet acted on was appointing a Welcome Coordinator for the Town.

**Motion: I move to appoint the Town Clerk as Welcome Coordinator to identify newcomers to town, distribute informational material, and extend an invitation to participate in town activities. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Swasey. 5-0.**

The SB will continue to review the document at the next meeting when the agenda looks lean.

### **H. DISCUSSION OF UPCOMING HOLIDAY & MEETING SCHEDULES**

There will be no change to regular SB meetings in November and December, other than the Nov. 21 meeting at the village fire station starting at 7 pm (see item D, above). There will be a special meeting with Calais and the East Montpelier Fire Department to review the EMFD budget on December 1.

The Town Office will be closed December 26-30.

The Town Volunteer Appreciation Party is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 16, 5-7 p.m. at Town Office.

### **I. UPDATES ON TOWN COMMITTEES**

#### *Charter Committee*

Mr. Johnson reported they accepted SB comments positively. They are talking to people with skin in the game. They expressed interest in continuing after December 1 to explore some additional issues they found. Mr. Etnier said they had passed a motion to work on ways to appoint a Delinquent Tax Collector through the charter.

#### *Old LaPerle Farm Property Committee*

Mr. Gardner reported the results of a day of soil tests. The final report is being worked on at Stone Environmental. Acceptable soil for onsite wastewater treatment was found around the building—acceptable for a municipal building, not a restaurant. Soil was not acceptable in other areas tested, until they got to the very top and turned left on the ridge; possibilities were fantastic there. Stone Environmental is preparing a report.

### **J. APPOINTMENTS**

**Motion: I move to appoint Bruce Howlett to the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0.**

### **K. POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE DRAFT ENERGY PLANNING STANDARDS**

Mr. Etnier said the Department of Public Service had drafted standards for evaluating whether town

and regional plans had sufficiently considered siting of renewable energy projects to be consistent with the state energy strategy of achieving 90% renewable energy by 2050. Meeting the standards will be optional; however, only town plans that meet the standards will receive "substantial deference" in Public Service Board hearings on renewable energy projects in the town. The deadline for comments is October 20.

The standards are 16 pages long, most of which is a checklist for evaluating the plan. The SB has neither the desire nor the expertise to comment on the checklist in detail, but it would like to support a principle that some other towns oppose: that towns only receive "substantial deference" if they have done the work to consider where to put renewable energy projects in town and how that is consistent with 90% renewable statewide by 2050.

The SB authorized Mr. Etnier to write a letter to the PSB describing that position and authorized chair Gardner to sign the letter.

#### **L. WARRANTS**

Signed.

#### **M. MINUTES**

**Motion: I move to approve the minutes of October 3, 2016 as amended. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Mr. Northrup. 5-0.**

**Motion: I move to approve the minutes of October 10, 2016 as submitted. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Mr. Northrup. 5-0.**

The board also discussed amendments to the minutes of the meeting of the October 10 Land Conservation Summit.

#### **N. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

#### **O. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: I move to adjourn. Made: Ms. Troia. Second: Mr. Northrup. 5-0. 9:15 p.m.**