

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 7, 2024 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Allison Knab; Joe Anderson.

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator David Moore, Finance Administrator Christiane McAllister, Town Planner Mark Connors, Police Chief Anthony King

At 7:08 pm Mr. Houghton opened the public meeting and began the swearing in of two new police officers. Ms. Knab swore in Toni Migliore and Eric Knight as patrol officers.

Mr. Houghton moved to the draft minutes. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes from September 16 and 18, 2024. Ms. Knab had requested some changes be made to the draft. Mr. Anderson motioned to approve the minutes from September 16 and 18, 2024 as amended. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized resident Steve McGuinness, 13 Mason Drive, who came before the Board to request use of the Morgera Room in order to teach his disabled son life skills by using the kitchen. He has aged out of other programs. His hope is that it will be a short term rental. Mr. Anderson asked if he had investigated other places. Mr. Houghton recalled requests from others had been denied for intensity of use. It wouldn't be fair to others to allow his use and deny others. Ms. Knab agreed, it's a lot of use for one person. The Board expressed a desire to help, but said that approving his request does not adhere to our policy. They offered one week a month. Mr. McGuinness said that wasn't enough, his son needed consistency and asked why his request is different than Easter Seals using the room. Mr. Moore replied Easter Seals is a group, not a private individual use. They discussed the additional usage of the room. Mr. Houghton noted single family use is not the intent of the use of the room and felt we needed to maintain the integrity of the facility. However, he said he would support a six month trial in order to give Mr. McGuinness time to find other accommodations as he transitions out of the Blue Hawk Program. Ms. Knab felt that if we make an exception to the policy, we no longer have a policy and expressed concern over wear and tear of the room. Noting that it would only be a transitional location, Mr. Anderson sought to understand how it would help his son as it wouldn't be consistent. Mr. McGuinness said it helps. Mr. Houghton motioned to allow Mr. McGuinness and his son Ryan to utilize the Morgera Room at the Stratham Fire Station and the kitchen on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:00 – 2:30 for a period not to exceed six months. Mr. McGuinness will work with the Town Administrator to complete the appropriate documents and coverages as required in the policy. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton recognized Mark Connors who discussed the revision of the permitting fees. Mr. Connors explained that the revised permit fees are based on the cost of the project (as most towns do), not square footage. The aggregate impact of this change will be that fees collected will increase. He has made an effort to ensure the fees collected are not out of proportion with the cost to do business. He reviewed some of the fees and the reasoning behind them. He gave examples of how the current permitting fees are sometimes disproportionate to the projects. Mr. Moore said a public hearing would be required to adopt the changed fees. The Board had previously requested to know costs for providing services. Ms. McAllister explained how she

and Mr. Connors arrived at the cost and felt that over the course of multiple years, the increased fees would cover the costs to operate. Mr. Moore said that we need to have a relationship between actual costs and how much we raise in revenues.

Mr. Connors noted that fees to homeowners will decrease for most projects. The Board sought to obtain alignment between fees and cost before moving ahead to a public hearing. Ms. Knab recognized that it is not possible to have an exact correlation and favored alignment with surrounding towns. This will be brought to the next Select Board meeting with an analysis between fees and cost.

Mr. Houghton called attention to the zoning articles and amendments. Mr. Connors reviewed them all, focusing on the most complex. He explained a change made last year placed a limit on wetlands in open space areas, so developers responded by moving them to the residential lots, resulting in homeowner having more wetlands on their property. Another Article makes adjustments to accessory dwelling units, capping them at two bedrooms and 1 ½ stories. One of the bigger Articles is regarding changes to wetlands in the conservation district. Currently, we allow agricultural uses in the wetlands. A current application in front of the ZBA is creating a controversy. Mr. Connors suggests making a small amendment to address the issue. Article 6 addresses sign ordinances changes. Article 7 extends protections to historic buildings in heritage district to the whole corridor. In the Gateway and Town Center, he seeks to apply minimum standards for siting and architecture. The last Article is re-zoning approximately a dozen parcels.

Mr. Connors noted that the Town has taken steps over last several years to be more solar friendly. SolSmart is a program that recognizes towns that are taking steps in that direction. By meeting certain requirements, a certification can be obtained. Stratham is already meeting most of them so it made sense to submit the application. There are no fee to maintain the certification. It gives us technical assistance if we need it on solar projects. Mr. Connors has gained the support of the Energy Commission on the application to this program and would like Select Board endorsement. Ms. Knab motioned for support of the SolSmart application. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Connors moved to road naming which was discussed at a July Select Board meeting. He returned with further guidance as to when a road is a Lane, Avenue, etc. Stratham has a few that go against the guidance: Tucker's Trail, Pheasant Run, Dumbarton Oaks, the Meadows, etc. He presented the policy. After discussion, the Select Board decided to have a policy for private roads and one for public roads. They wanted to keep the private road naming policy as written but change the public road naming policy to limit the developer's ability to veto their suggestions. The Select Board would make the final decision. Mr. Houghton motioned to adopt the policy as amended. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion [this policy subsequently placed on the October 21st agenda for confirmation of the edits discussed, but no action was taken at that meeting, the policy was not finalized or adopted at the October 21st meeting]. All voted in favor.

Mr. Connors discussed the ongoing issue regarding Aberdeen. The abutter continues to file appeals. Attorneys are having difficulty finding consensus on a new hearing date. Mr. Connors said that he will go to the hearing regardless of where he is working.

Mr. Connors reported that the Treat Farm subdivision has a few minor items they need to address. The Town can use the bond to complete the work if they do not do it.

Mr. Moore praised Mr. Connors for his work in wrapping up outstanding projects. He then explained the transition from Mr. Connors to the interim planner, Carol Ogilvie. Ms. McAllister asked if there was a contract through MRI or a professional services contract with her individually. It was unclear to Mr. Moore at this time. Mr. Houghton requested to be kept informed.

Mr. Connors and the Planning Assistant, Susan Connors, have made tremendous progress with the MS4.

Mr. Houghton motioned with regret to accept Mark Connors resignation as Director of Planning & Community Development. Ms. Knab seconded the motion also with regret. All voted in favor.

At 8:35 Mr. Houghton motioned to go into a non-public session to discuss personnel matters in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II (a). Ms. Knab seconded the motion. Roll call: Houghton-yes; Knab-yes; Anderson-yes

At 10:21 pm Mr. Houghton motioned to come out of the non-public session Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore gave a brief update on miscellaneous items. Election preparations are underway. Mr. Moore said the Gifford Barn Roof project will need an additional \$16,700 over the appropriated amount. Ms. Knab motioned to expend an additional \$16,700 from the Building & Grounds Maintenance Trust for the Gifford Barn roof project. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Ms. Knab motioned to accept the donation of \$2,500 from the Stratham Hill Park Association for the Gifford Barn roof repair. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore reported that the Website Steering group has been appointed. Ms. Knab spoke about the event to honor Scott Poteet. Mr. Moore explained that he had been requested by Fair representatives to address the future of the Stratham Fair/Stratham Fire Department Trust. The affected parties will be meeting this week. Ms. Knab suggested putting information about the Seacoast Shipyard in the SB newsletter. Mr. Moore said the NHDOT Squamscott Road culvert work will happen in 2025. Ms. Connors compiled the street map. They briefly discussed the status of the Stuart Farm conservation project.

RESERVATIONS

Ms. Knab motioned approval of the Seacoast Beekeepers use of the Sewall Room with the fee waived on the dates requested. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Knab motioned to appoint Doug Simmons to the Conservation Commission to fulfill the vacant 3 year Alternate position for a term to end at Town Meeting 2025. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Houghton motioned to appoint Terri Grijalva to the Wiggin Memorial Library Board of Trustees to fulfill the vacant unexpired Alternate position.

At 10:30pm Mr. Anderson motioned to adjourn. Ms. Knab seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary