

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 28, 2017 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

MEMBER'S PRESENT: Board Members Bruno Federico and Mike Houghton and Town Administrator Paul Deschaine. Board Member Joe Lovejoy was absent.

At 7:33 Chairman Federico opened the general meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Town Treasurer Deb Bronson reported that the current balance was \$8,689,748.73.

MINUTES:

Mr. Federico moved to approve the minutes of 8/21 as amended. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Daniel Siller, a resident from Stratham Heights Road, appeared before the Board to discuss his concerns regarding the Breslin Farm development. His first concern was that he feels he should've been notified. Mr. Federico explained that NH statute mandates that only abutters need to be notified. He and Mr. Houghton further explained that notices of meetings are physically posted at the Municipal Center and on the website. Mr. Siller's second concern was that the new homes would lower the value of his home. Mr. Houghton disagreed, stating that other homes in the area were of the same value as the new homes. Mr. Federico said that new developments tend not to negatively impact the surrounding homes. Town Assessor Andrea Lewy stated that Stratham was a desirable town in which to live and inventory of available homes is low, therefore people are paying top dollar to live here. Mr. Siller's third concern was that services in town would be impacted. Mr. Federico said that services have not been maxed out therefore there is no impact. Mr. Siller believes traffic will increase and negatively impact his home. He was concerned about heavy trucks using the road. Mr. Federico said that 20 homes, or approximately 40 cars, is not a significant number in regards to a traffic impact. Mr. Deschaine added that road bonds were in place for any damage that may occur and that we receive state grants from the gas tax to assist in normal wear and tear activities. Mr. Siller wanted to know when the development would end. Mr. Federico said that there is a limited amount of developable land. Mr. Deschaine continued that to build on that land you must meet very specific criteria. Mr. Houghton said that the Planning Board is in the process of updating the Master Plan which will provide a vision and guidelines for the future of the town. Regulations that effect development may or may not be changed in order to maintain alignment with that vision. The Planning Board operates as an independent body in the town and must follow the town's subdivision regulations and the State RSA. Mr. Siller's final request was that the Town obtain people's email addresses so that they could receive notices when development is occurring within a certain radius of their property. Mr. Houghton said that there are not systems in place that would seamlessly enable that. Mr. Deschaine had two concerns. The first was that he was unsure if notifications in excess of the statutory requirement, and requirement of applicants to pay, would be outside the bounds of our authority. The second concern was how it would impact development and the possibility of added litigation costs to defend the ordinance.

Mr. Houghton said that they will work on ways to better communicate with the residents.

ASSESSING DEPARTMENT

Town Assessor Andrea Lewy reported that Kings Highway Realty (Job Lots) accepted the counter offer and gave the Board the paperwork to sign. Mr. Houghton made a motion to accept the abatement settlement of \$8,000,000 for Kings Highway Realty Ltd. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy noted that she had two Veteran's Credit applications and that she recommended approval of these. Mr. Houghton made a motion to approve the veteran's credits for Michael Gabrielson and Sean Wagner effective for the 2018 tax year. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Ms. Lewy presented the MS-1 Report to the Board for their review. This is a state form which is a statement of assessed values that the town will use to set the tax rate. The report contains the values of property in town, how many exemptions and credits we have, what utility values are and conservation and farm preservation easements among other things. For the 2017 Tax year the net valuation is \$1,260,707,559. There is an increase in value of \$7,211,842 from 2016. Ms. Lewy said she expects an increase next year because of the new developments, both commercial and residential. There was discussion about various properties and market trends, in general. Mr. Houghton made a motion to accept the MS-1 Report as presented. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Lewy gave an overview of the 2019 re-valuation process. The Assessing Dept. reviews all the properties in town over a 5 year cycle. Not including the new subdivisions, we have 3,352 parcels in town; 319 is vacant land. Assessing has approximately 1,000 properties remaining to be seen before April 1, 2018. Ms. Lewy reviewed the assessing process. She hopes to hire a commercial appraiser sooner than past years because she wants to review the properties with them. She will do the residential portion. She continued to review the assessing process.

Mr. Federico asked Ms. Lewy if we have reached a resolution with the telephone company. Ms. Lewy said the tax representative said he'd get back to her next week. She wants to review the calculations with him. Mr. Deschaine gave a background on the telecommunications tax.

MEETINGS: The Chair then reviewed the meetings scheduled for the coming week and reviewed the meetings held this past week. Mr. Deschaine said that the Conservation Commission recommended Bill McCarthy to be on the Pedestrian and Cyclist Advocacy Committee. Mr. Houghton made a motion that Bill McCarthy be assigned to be the Conservation Commission representative to the Pedestrian and Cyclist Advocacy Committee. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At the Route 108 Corridor Study Committee meeting, Mr. Deschaine reported that the committee strongly recommends that the Board pursue creating a TIF in the commercial gateway district. Mr. Deschaine went over the steps that need to take place to initiate that process. Mr. Federico made a motion that we enter into a contract with ADG for TIF development resources. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Deschaine gave an update on the tax deeded property, reviewed the process and asked for the Board to allow him to proceed with the next steps.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Deschaine said that Joe Lovejoy had reviewed the contract for the Bartlett-Cushman House and had some questions. He will forward them to the Bean Group for answers. There was discussion regarding who might lease the house, what changes would be allowed and how much of the land would be included in the lease.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Deschaine presented to the Board for consideration an email regarding the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks. After some discussion, the Board decided not to get involved with the issue.

At 9:32 Mr. Federico motioned to go into non-public to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Houghton seconded the motion which passed unanimously. At 10:00 Mr. Houghton made a motion to come out of the non-public session and to seal the minutes. Mr. Federico seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At 10:01 Mr. Houghton moved to adjourn. Mr. Federico seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary