

SELECTMEN'S WORKSHOP
Minutes of 05/08/06
4:00 p.m.

Selectmen: *Peter Miller, Chairman*
Peter Brothers
Miller Lovett
Frank Michel
Colette Worsman

Town Manager: *Carol Granfield*
Administrative Assistant: *Wynette DeGroot*
Recording Clerk: *Karin Landry*

Roll Call at 4:00 p.m. Open Workshop by Peter Miller, Chairman

Invited Guests: James Commerford, Town Assessor; John Edgar, Town Planner; Attorney Stephan Nix on behalf of Vatche Manoukian

W 06-15 Acceptance of Workshop Minutes of May 1, 2006

Miller Lovett motioned to accept the minutes of the 05/01/06 Workshop, seconded by Colette Worsman. The motion unanimously carried 5-0.

W 06-16 Police Station Authorization

Carol Granfield presented an overview of the Police Station Bond Issue that was unanimously passed at the February 13, 2006 meeting. The Town is seeking reconfirmation from the current Board to borrow \$1.5 million for a 10-year term. The Town Manager is in favor of the Board reconfirming the commitment.

Miller Lovett motioned to reconfirm the commitment that the Town of Meredith will borrow \$1.5 million for a 10-year period to finance the new police station. Peter Brothers seconded for discussion purposes.

Peter Brothers inquired about the term used when the bond was budgeted. Brenda Vittner explained that a 10-year term is being used but because payments will not begin until 2007, there is no impact on the 2006 budget. If the paperwork is completed before the end of June, the rate will be at less than 4%.

On motion made by Selectman Lovett, seconded by Selectman Brothers, the motion unanimously carried 5-0.

W-06-17 Revaluation/Assessing – Discussion on website information

At the request of the Town Manager, the Assessor made his recommendations as to what information to include in the on-line database that will allow taxpayers, as well as others, easy access to assessment information. Mr. Commerford recommended the inclusion of all information with the exception of the owner's mailing address. He stated that the public can obtain an owners' list on a CD that includes mailing addresses or access mailing addresses at the Town Hall. The Assessor does not recommend the use of a password.

A discussion ensued among the Selectmen regarding the information to be included on the website.

Members of the public expressed concerns with the method of evaluation and safety issues involved with including sketches of the structure and the owner's name and mailing address on the website. It was noted by Attorney Stephan Nix that the mailing address is included on most websites and that the information is useful in identifying abutters in legal proceedings.

The Selectmen continued with a discussion regarding costs and privacy issues related to the database. Assessor Commerford noted that if need be Vision can track users of the website.

Following discussion it was proposed that the motion be modeled from the Concord and Bow websites and read as follows:

“The following information does not constitute a complete compilation of the Meredith Assessing Department records, information is furnished by the Meredith Assessing Office, and must be accepted and used by recipient with the understanding that the data received was developed and collected for the purpose of developing property tax assessments according to New Hampshire law. As such, the Meredith Assessing Office makes no warranties, expressed or implied, concerning the accuracy, completeness, reliability, or suitability of this data for any other particular use. Furthermore, the Meredith Assessing Office assumes no liability whatsoever associated with the use or misuse of such data. The information furnished is for the convenience of the user and is not the official public record of the City of Meredith. The official public record is kept in the Assessing Office at 41 Main Street, Meredith, New Hampshire and is available for inspection and copying during normal business hours.

“We hope you enjoy the convenience of this website, and that it will enable you to gain a better understanding of your property valuation and how it is determined. If you believe any data provided is inaccurate, or if you have any

questions or comments about this site, we would like to hear from you. Phone calls or personal visits to the Assessing Office are always welcome.”

Miller Lovett motioned that a password not be required for entry into the system, seconded by Peter Brothers, all in favor, motion passed 5-0.

Miller Lovett motioned to include all data on website including the mailing address, seconded by Frank Michel, motion opposed 3-2, does not carry.

Peter Brothers motioned to approve all items with the exclusion of the mailing address and the password, seconded by Colette Worsman with a write-up equal to Concord’s language with the addition of Bow’s language, all in favor, motion passed 5-0.

W 06-18 Status of Disposition of Town Owned Property

Carol Granfield began with an overview of three town-owned parcels:

Bear Island Map/Lot 107-6

There is a conservation easement on the land locked interior of this portion of Bear Island that the property abuts. A title abstract was conducted by Lee Mattson. Carol Granfield stated that based on review, the Town may want to keep this now for access rather than sell. (.43 acre with \$85,000 - \$100,000 value)

In response to Chairman Miller’s question, Assessor Jim Commerford affirmed that the estimated market value assumes the parcel is buildable. Chairman Miller stated that the acquisition of the parcel through tax deed leads him to wonder if the parcel can be built on.

Conservation Commission Chair John Sherman informed that the conservation easement is managed by the Society for the Preservation of New Hampshire Forests. Miller Lovett suggested that the Town inquire whether the Society is interested in taking title to the piece of property. Selectmen Brothers stated that the matter appears to need further dialogue and recommended to the Board that the matter be tabled.

Colette Worsman motioned that the Bear Island Map/Lot 107-6 parcel be tabled pending further investigation, seconded by Frank Michel, all in favor, motion passed 5-0.

Westbury Road (Neal Shore) Map/Lot U01-1A

The Town is still exploring the option of a group such as Habitat for Humanity building a small house for a young family to support affordable housing. The Town would partner

with such a non-profit. If not, seek authorization to sell based on time frame. (.27 acre buildable lot with sewer, \$70,000 value)

Miller Lovett motioned that the Town Manager proceed with the possibility of parcel being used by Habitat for Humanity and that Town Manager clarify whether the Town can legally donate the lot, seconded by Frank Michel for discussion purposes.

Discussion ensued regarding the mission of Habitat for Humanity and whether restrictions can be put on the use of the property. Selectmen Michel suggested that Habitat make a proposal to the Town for the property.

Jim Hughes gave a brief overview of his involvement with Habitat for Humanity over the past 20 years and recommended that the Selectmen ask for a presentation.

The Selectmen discussed the value of the land and the possibility of interest in the land by abutters.

Upon withdrawal of motion by Miller Lovett, Peter Brothers motioned that the Town Manager or agent explore the option of affordable housing on Map U01-1A and that they come back to the Selectmen with proposals to review for decision making purposes, seconded by Frank Michel. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

Off Edgerly Road Map/Lot R35-3

This was previously voted to sell however based on a recent Conservation Easement of adjacent property; the Town may now want to gift this for conservation management. (13 acre landlocked parcel, abutter value \$10,400)

Discussion ensued regarding the conservation easement on abutting land held by New England Forestry Foundation (“NEFF”). Having served on the Conservation Commission, Chair Miller presented an overview of preserving open space and the possibility of the Foundation requesting stewardship donations to support monitoring activities from the Town. Frank Michel suggested that the Foundation be approached to see if the monitoring fee can be waived in this instance. The Selectmen went on to discuss the value of the land and issues regarding access.

Chair Miller suggested that NEFF be approached to initiate conversation regarding the parcel. The preservation of the land could be effected in two ways: (1) The Town would retain ownership and approach NEFF to see if they would accept the land without a donation to the stewardship fund, or (2) gift the land to the abutter with the understanding that the land would be included with the existing conservation easement.

Public comment was opened and Mike Faller of the Department of Public Works reminded Selectmen of the timber value of the property. Chairman Miller identified that

timber management is a priority of NEFF and that some of the proceeds of a timber harvest might be paid to the town if the town retained fee ownership.

A suggestion was made by Jim Hughes to retain the land for use when the Town is required to replace land as a result of taking land for purposes such as road construction.

Peter Miller motioned that the Town Manager explore two possibilities with regard to preserving this parcel as open space: (1) Direct approach to NEFF, if they accept gift of an easement what conditions, if any, would they attached to it?; (2) Town Manager to explore gifting parcel to abutter who has 50-odd acres under easement to see if they will accept this gift of land with understanding the parcel would be included in the easement, seconded by Colette Worsman, all in favor, motion passed 5-0.

W 06-19 Road Items – Happy Homes

Chair Miller opened by informing the Board of the extremely complex nature of the Happy Home road items on the agenda for the May 15 meeting. He turned the discussion over to John Edgar of the Planning Department who explained that Attorney Stephan Nix on behalf of Vatche Manoukian has requested a meeting to discuss the possible “layout” of a Class V highway (a public ROW maintained by the town) over an existing Class VI highway (a public ROW not maintained by the town). The purpose of the reclassification is to facilitate a proposed re-subdivision of Tax Map U-32, Lot 11 on Meredith Neck. The applicant has met with the Planning Board on a pre-application basis to discuss the possible layout and related subdivision. He went on to describe the property and the opposition to the reclassification from the Happy Homes Road, Harris Road and Evergreen Place neighborhoods. He discussed the two ways in which a reclassification can occur together with a third, more involved option suggested by Attorney Nix . He recapped the complex history of the subdivision, separate but related road classification matters, and outstanding subdivision matters that need to be settled in order for the applicant to proceed with subdivision. The Planning Board recommends that due to the legal complexities of the situation, it is essential to first obtain assistance from Town Counsel so that questions can be answered and the necessary determinations be made. The Planning Department, Planning Board Chairman and Assessing Department should be part of this session.

Due to the complexities of the matter, the Board expressed the desire to thoroughly review the Staff Report, meet with Town Counsel and schedule a drive around before the next meeting. Attorney Nix suggested that he meet with Attorney Bates, John Edgar and Carol Granfield prior to Attorney Bates meeting with the Selectmen in order to “bring him up to speed.”

The Selectmen will consult their calendars in an effort to schedule these items prior to the May 15 Selectmen’s meeting.

W 06-20 Discussion of how and when to proceed with the Fire Station Charge

Chair Miller opened the discussion expressing his preference to schedule this as a major item at the meeting on June 5. Miller Lovett questioned whether a workshop needs to be schedule before the matter is opened for discussion at a Selectmen’s meeting, and that he has unanswered

questions regarding the Fire Station Charge. Chair Miller responded that this is a matter of great interest to the public and that any discussion and public comment can take place at the meeting. Discussion ensued regarding the extent of the matters to be discussed and Chair Miller advised Chief Palm to be prepared to make the absolute best case for the Department at the upcoming meeting. Lt. Kloetz pointed out that it is in the best interest of the Town to study the existing facilities in a timely manner so it will have all the tools necessary to make an informed decision when the need arises.

On motion made by Frank Michel, seconded by Peter Brothers, the workshop was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

Peter N. Miller, Chairman

Peter .F. Brothers

Miller C. Lovett

Frank S. Michel

Colette Worsman

Karin Landry, Recording Clerk