

**Board of Selectmen Meeting  
Minutes of 10/15/07**

**Selectmen:**

*Frank S. Michel, Chairman  
Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman  
Robert C. Flanders  
Miller C. Lovett  
Colette Worsman*

**Town Manager:  
Recording Clerk:**

*Carol M. Granfield  
Karin Landry*

Call to Order: Chairman Frank Michel called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

The Chair made announcements regarding fire exits, listening assisted devices, and the use of microphones. He asked that all comments and questions be directed through the Chair. He introduced the Board, Town Manager, and Recording Clerk.

**ACCEPTANCE AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:**

**07-49 Minutes of September 24, 2007 Workshop and May 21, 2007 Non-Public Meeting**

*Selectman Brothers motioned to accept the minutes of the September 24, 2007 Workshop and the May 21, 2007 Non-Public Meeting. Seconded by Selectman Flanders. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

The Chair announced a change to the formal agenda, and opened the floor for a motion on Fund Balance and Overlay.

*Selectman Worsman motioned that a Fund Balance of \$650,000 and an Overlay of \$75,000 be used. Seconded by Selectman Brothers.*

*Selectman Lovett amended the motion to change the Fund Balance used to stabilize tax collection to \$400,000. Seconded by Selectman Worsman.*

Selectman Lovett is not in favor of using fund balance to the extent it has been used for a number of years. He feels it is bad public policy. It is done to give money back to taxpayers, but does not consider that if the money is left to build up the fund balance, the Town would be able to take care of some major capital expenditures. He is in favor of not using any fund balance this year, and is proposing \$400,000 as a compromise. He would like the Town to end the practice of using fund balance over the next two years. Selectman Flanders pointed out that the Town has been prudent in saving taxpayers money by utilizing expendable trust funds. Expendable Trust Funds were used to close the landfill and to purchase two fire trucks; and will be used to order a ladder truck in 2008. Although Selectman Worsman is in favor of Selectman Lovett's proposal, she does not want to see an increase in taxes.

The Question was called by Vice-Chair Brothers.

The Chair called for public input. Resident Jim Hughes is in favor of the recommendation to use \$650,000 for fund balance. He believes the voters have used the expendable trust funds together with the fund balance prudently and wisely in the past. The taxpayers have shown faith in the Selectmen through their votes.

*4-1. Selectman Lovett dissented. Motion passed.*

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

- A drop off box is now located at the front of the Town Hall. It can be utilized after hours and is emptied every morning.
- A meeting is scheduled this Thursday, October 18, at 7 p.m. at the Meredith Center fire station pertaining to improvements to the Meredith Center intersection. Public input regarding improvements to the intersection was heard at a prior meeting, and the State has a variation of the plan that they wish to present. The Department of Transportation, Town staff and Town officials will attend. The public is encouraged to attend.
- Public Works administration, Building & Grounds, and the sign shop are in the process of moving to the old police station this week. The move will be completed by the end of next week.
- Residents are encouraged to visit Hamlin Forest and Waukewan Highlands and take advantage of the commendable work that has been done by the Conservation Commission.
- A newsletter is being composed that will go out with the tax bills. The Board should inform the Town Manager of anything they would like to include.
- The foundation and flooring for the Waukewan bathhouse is being laid this week. The project is expected to be completed soon.

The Town Manager will provide the Board with a draft of the newsletter before it is mailed to residents.

## **VISITOR'S AND RESIDENT'S COMMENTS:**

Resident Jim Hughes will not be present during the budget season, and asked the Board to act wisely and prudently during the budget process. He commended the work of the Town staff. In order to maintain the services people of the Town have recommended, the staff must be paid according to past promises. He encourages the Board to consider the recommendations of department heads, as residents are more likely to approach them than the Selectmen.

## **SELECTMEN COMMENTS:**

Selectman Flanders reported on the Waukewan Watershed Committee. The Committee is meeting twice a month. They have accomplished a number of goals set forth in the report they issued over a year ago, and continue to move forward.

Selectman Flanders reported on the Recreation Commission. The Commission is meeting monthly. Selectman Flanders recommends changing the name from Recreation Commission to Recreation Committee. The entity is not a statutory commission, and there has been confusion over its jurisdiction that could lead to members leaving the Commission. The Chair's understanding is that it is not a statutory commission, and he directed Selectman Flanders to work with the Town Manager on a staff report to the Board.

Selectman Lovett reported on the Capital Improvement Committee. It is looking at capital outlays over the next 10 years, with particular attention to what they will bring before the Board at a meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 18, at 8 p.m. at the Community Center. He urges residents to pay attention to the capital side of the budget. A copy of the report will be available prior to the meeting in the Community Development Department.

Selectman Worsman reported on the Planning Board:

September 11, 2007:

- NDN 2005 Realty Trust and Northview Drive Trust of 1995 presented a Proposed Site Plan Amendment and associated site improvements, and Architectural Design Review of a proposed 3,328 sq. ft. office building on Northview Drive in the Central Business District. A site walk will take place on October 13 at 8:30 a.m. The matter was continued to October 23, 2007.
- MSS Realty Trust of 1995 came before the Board with a continuation of a public hearing held on July 10 and 24, 2007 for a Proposed Site Plan and related site improvements, and Architectural Design Review of a proposed 85-Unit Senior Living Facility located on Upper Mile Point Drive in the Shoreline and Route 3 South Districts. The matter will be continued on October 9, 2007.

October 9, 2007

- Bruce and Janelle Vaal and Satchels Realty Trust presented a Proposed Boundary Line Adjustment and Proposed Major Subdivision into two lots located on Sanctuary Lane and Collins Brook Road in the Shoreline District. The matter is scheduled for public hearing on October 23, 2007.
- Deep Water Marine Management, Inc. presented a Proposed Site Plan Amendment to create a family recreation facility in an existing building for boat slip customers located on Lovejoy Sands Road in the Shoreline District. A site walk will take place on October 27, 2007 at 9 a.m. The matter will be continued on November 13, 2007.
- B&N Designs, LLC came before the Board with a continuation of a public hearing held on August 28, 2007 for a Proposed Major Subdivision into 5 lots located on Waukegan Street in the Residential District. The matter was continued until November 13, 2007.
- MSS Realty Trust of 1995 came before the Board with continuation of public hearings held on July 10, July 24 and September 11, 2007, for a proposed Site Plan and Architectural Design Review of an 85-Unit Senior Living Facility, located on Upper Mile Point Drive in the Shoreline and Route 3 South Districts.

The Town Manager answered questions from Selectman Worsman:

- The Town Manager sent the Selectmen preliminary increases of 12% on health insurance and 4% on dental insurance. The rates will be sent by Local Government Center this Wednesday and incorporated into the budget.
- The citizen survey is being finalized and will be available next week.
- The minutes of the Management Team have been discontinued. The Town Manager intends to incorporate the information in her updates. The Chair directed the Town Manager to include the matter in an upcoming Workshop.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **07-54 Community Center Fees**

The Town Manager introduced the topic. The Staff Report is available for the public. The Board held three workshops to evaluate the Community Center fee structure. They recommend increases in fees to cover additional costs. The policy will go into effect January 1, 2008. This meeting will allow for public comment. The Town Manager acknowledged Vint Choiniere and his staff for their excellent work in compiling information for the Board.

Chair Michel set forth the recommendations of the Board for two new impact fees. The recommendations are based on an operating cost of \$50 per hour. \$15 per hour will be charged per staff member for all private groups renting space at the Community Center outside normal operating hours. A clean-up fee of \$50 will be charged for private groups of 20 or more that serve food. In addition, a request for voluntary donations, in money or kind, will be made to Meredith nonprofits utilizing the Center.

*Selectman Flanders moved to adopt the recommendations as presented. Seconded by Selectman Lovett.*

No public comment from audience.

Chair Michel read a letter from Carl Johnson, Jr. who was not able to attend the meeting. He is not in favor of asking local nonprofits for a donation. The policy would go against all planning decisions made by the volunteer boards which led to the construction of the Center. He supports a no-fee policy to local nonprofits.

*5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

### **07-55 Page Pond and Forest Project**

The Board has met in two Non-Public sessions to discuss the Project. The Town Manager introduced the agenda item.

Conservation Commission member Peter Miller opened the presentation. The Commission became aware of the opportunity for the conservation opportunity several years ago and

approached The Trust for Public Land to act as an intermediary in attempting to conserve the land. The property consists of 567 acres on Meredith Neck that is currently owned by The Wilds of New England.

Roger Krussman, Project Director with the Vermont/New Hampshire chapter of the Trust for Public Land ("TFPL"), presented an overview of the Page Pond and Forest Project. The Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit land conservation organization. Its mission is to conserve land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. The TFPL works as an intermediary between private land owners to put land into permanent stewardship, conservation, and management. He highlighted past conservation efforts of the organization. There is an Option Agreement to purchase the property from The Wilds of New England once contingencies are resolved over the next month or so. The four major anticipated uses of the property are pedestrian recreational use, wildlife habitat protection and enhancement, water quality protection, and sustainable timber harvesting.

Don McFarlane, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, and John Sherman, Commission member, described the natural and cultural features of the property. Commission member Peter Miller spoke of the parcel's recreational potential and preexisting network of trails. The projected cost of the Project, including soft costs, is \$2.5 million. Two appraisals have been completed and another is in progress. It is anticipated that the appraisal will confirm the market value of the land equals or exceeds what the TFPL has contracted with The Wilds to pay for it. Soft costs include a title search, Level One environmental assessment, and the TFPL staff time. TFPL is absorbing virtually all the costs at this time. If the Project goes to closure, they will be reimbursed. A grant proposal has been submitted for 20% of the costs (the one known grant opportunity for the Project); the Town's projected costs are 30% of the Project (\$750,000: \$350,000 in existing savings accounts and \$400,000 in a bond issue); and the remaining costs will come from private donations. The Capital Improvements Committee supports the Project and recommends a bond issue of \$400,000 as opposed to the \$600,000 that was originally requested by the Commission. Assuming a 4.5% interest rate and a 10-year term, the tax impact of the Project is 26¢ per thousand. The Conservation Commission recommends that funds that would be allocated to the open space expendable trust fund during the life of the bond be used to pay the debt. Peter Miller set forth the anticipated closing schedule and its effect on upcoming budgets. The Commission will come before the Board on November 14 to present them with all the data that is available to enable them to make a wise decision regarding payment on the project.

Betsy McGean of the TFPL introduced herself as the fundraising expert for the New England Region. The main goal in campaigning at TFPL is to raise public awareness about conservation values and opportunities. The fundraising goal is approximately one half of the project, or \$1.25 million. She introduced the volunteer Leadership Campaign Committee and gave a campaign overview. The Committee's goal is to raise \$1 million by 2008 year-end. A mass public appeal will begin with a kick off event where all residents are invited to participate in the project to help close the final fundraising gap. She invited the public to join them in an exciting opportunity for the Town.

A presentation was made that was developed by John Edgar and Michelle Therrien on a hypothetical build out analysis of the property. It has significant development potential, desirable attributes, and is located in a desirable location of the community. The soil could potentially support 185 units, or one unit per 1.4 acres. As many as 84 non-waterfront lots could have access rights to the Pond. John Sherman and Peter Miller are available to give tours of the property by prior arrangement.

Public comment was taken:

Bruce Claflin and his wife Betsy, members of the Leadership Campaign Committee, support the Project. The property has been on the market a number of times since 1969. Anyone interested in purchasing the land today, would do so with the intent of recouping their costs by development. The property must be acquired now. He believes that the Leadership Campaign can work with private individuals to raise \$1.25 million.

Resident Carl Johnson, Sr. recognizes and appreciates the joint effort and hard work of the Page Pond and Forest Campaign Committee. He pointed to Moulton and Longridge Farms as examples of Meredith citizens coming forth to preserve open space, farm land and the Town's rural character. He urged the Board to do it again.

Chair Michel read resident Carl Johnson, Jr.'s letter in support of the Project. The Campaign Committee has demonstrated a strong desire to steward the property well beyond the initial purchase. This management plan may include active forest stand improvement measures in concert with the identification of sensitive ecological areas which should be preserved in their natural state. The location and size of the parcel make it a critical component to the future balance of development and land preservation in east Meredith.

Resident John Moulton complimented the team working to preserve the property. He offered his support for the Program and encouraged the Board to consider it.

Justin Van Etten and his wife Courtney, members of the Leadership Campaign Committee, have not found anyone who is opposed to the Project. The impact to the tax rate is approximately \$10 per family in Meredith. The money that historically has been allocated to the Conservation Commission will be reallocated for this specific purpose. It is a phenomenal opportunity that he hopes the Board will consider.

Resident Dave Keither expressed concerns about increased traffic if the property were to be developed. Developing the property would become a source of liability for the Town as opposed to a source of tax revenue. He is in favor of preserving the property.

Resident Larry Schultz agrees that the property is a jewel for Meredith. With minimum maintenance, the Town will get a maximum return. The Town cannot afford to let the opportunity pass.

Resident Paul Eldridge cannot think of a better use of the land and encouraged the Board to give serious consideration to the Project. He complimented the team and expressed his confidence in their abilities.

Chair Michel spoke on behalf of the Select Board. They are in support of the program and Project. It is an important part of preserving the quality of life in Meredith. The private partnership is critical to the Project. The fiduciary duty to taxpayers is to make it happen in a fiscally responsible way. The final commitment will be made once another presentation is made in November. Chair Michel endorses the project wholeheartedly. The remaining Board members agree that a successful private fundraising campaign is crucial. The Chair directed Peter Miller to meet with the Town Manager on housekeeping items.

### **07-56 Zoning Board of Adjustment Appointments**

The Town Manager recommends the appointment of Frank Merino and Brian Flanders to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as alternates, with terms to extend through March 2008. The applicants have attended several meetings and their appointments are agreeable to the current Board Chair.

*Selectman Brothers moved that the Board approve the appointment of Brian Flanders and Frank Marino to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as presented. Seconded by Miller Lovett. 5-0 (Frank Marino). All in favor. Motion passed unanimously; 4-0-0 (Brian Flanders – Selectman Flanders abstained). Motion passed.*

*Selectman Brothers motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Worsman. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

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Frank S. Michel, Chairman

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Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

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Peter F. Brothers, Vice Chairman

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Robert C. Flanders

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