

Town of Plainfield
Plainfield Select Board Meeting
January 23, 2017
Draft Minutes

PRESENT: Ross Sneyd (Select Board Member), Bram Towbin (Select Board Chair), Betsy Ziegler (Select Board Member), Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Laura Zeisel (Plainfield Representative to the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District Board of Directors), and Sarah Albert (Conservation Commission).

Bram Towbin called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

AGENDA

- Announcements and Public Comment
- Town Clerk's Report
- Road Report
- Brief Comments: Town Report/Budget/Town Positions - Filled and Vacant
- Central Vermont Solid Waste Management's Laura Zeisel - Appointing Alternate
- Conservation Commission Sarah Albert - New Tree Policy
- Review of Neighborhood Watch Meeting
- Michael Billingsley Hazard/ Emergency Mailing Request
- Brief Summary of the Act 174 Regional Energy Planning Meeting
- Minutes

Towbin moved discussion of the Act 174 Regional Energy Planning Meeting to earlier in the agenda. Betsy Ziegler added an update on the Sidewalk Study Committee. **Ziegler made a motion to approve the revised agenda. Ross Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

- Towbin announced that a meeting on Act 46 will be held on 1/25/17 at 6:30pm at the Twinfield Union School Library.
- Towbin and Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells noted that School Taxes 2 are due on 2/8/17. If using the drop box at the Town Offices, payment must be left before 4pm on 2/8/17 to be considered on time.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

- Wells presented for Select Board review and signature a stream authorization permit request from Ruggles Engineering Service for the Bean Road project. Towbin briefly explained that an undersized culvert where the Mskaskek Brook crosses Bean Road is continually washing out and is in need of replacement. He noted that signing this permit does not commit to doing the project, but simply approves the permit. **Sneyd made a motion to authorize the permit for Ruggles Engineering to work in the stream at the Mskaskek Brook/Bean Road culvert. Ziegler seconded the motion. The**

motion was approved. The Town will be applying for State funding to implement the project. If funded, Wells noted that the project might begin in the fall of 2017 or the spring of 2018. The Town has also applied for a grant to cover the engineering work, which is approximately \$12,000.

- Wells presented a reimbursement request for Staff Sterling Management's cost for the Main Street Pedestrian Bridge project. **Ziegler made a motion to approve the reimbursement request of \$727.38 for Staff Sterling Management's work on the Main Street Pedestrian Bridge project. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Ziegler noted that the Federal share is 90% of the cost of the project.
- Wells presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) and the Town of Plainfield regarding the cost of the archeological resource assessment that was done for the two bridges in the Village. The MOU commits CVRPC to covering 50% of the cost of a required archeological assessment that was not budgeted for in the project. The Town will be paying \$1,448.65, half of the \$2,891.35 cost of the assessment, and CVRPC will pay the other half. **Ziegler made a motion to authorize the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Plainfield and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to split the cost of the \$2,891.35 archeological assessment. The Town's portion will be \$1,448.65. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- Towbin presented the Certificate of Highway Mileage for Select Board review and signature, explaining that it needs to be submitted each year to receive funding. The figure remains the same from the previous year at 41.698 mileage count of the roads and breaks down as follows: Class II roads = 13.22 miles; Class III roads = 26.33. State Highways = 2.148. **Sneyd made a motion to sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage for the year ending 2/10/17. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- Towbin presented a fleet permit request for Newport Sand and Gravel. **Ziegler made a motion to approve the fleet permit request for Newport Sand and Gravel. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- Wells reminded the Select Board of the 1/24/17 budget meeting at 4:45pm.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE ACT 174 REGIONAL ENERGY PLANNING MEETING

- Towbin reported on the recent Act 174 Regional Energy Planning meeting, explaining that the act calls for towns to be more proactive in terms of their energy goals and incorporate into their planning where they would like energy development sited. Towbin noted that an online energy planning survey from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission will be coming out in the next couple of weeks for the Select Board, Conservation Commission, and Planning Commission to complete. Towbin stated that while the focus is primarily on wind and solar energy, he also thinks that hydro and biodigester projects should be considered, noting that the Town currently trucks excess sewerage to Montpelier and that Cabot Creamery generates a lot of waste. Sneyd noted that the towns need to participate in the energy-planning effort otherwise they are open to the vagaries of Act 248, which supersedes zoning regulations. Towbin added that non-participating towns might be vulnerable to energy projects being sited in their areas. Towbin also noted that the Conservation Commission should be involved in terms of weighing in on such issues as deer habitats. There will be public meetings that Towbin urged people to attend. Ziegler stated that people should know that the effort is about making recommendations and not a private land taking.

- Ziegler asked about the progress of drafting new zoning regulations for the Town. Towbin responded that he would ask a representative from the Planning Commission to provide an update at the Select Board's next meeting.

UPDATE ON THE SIDEWALK STUDY COMMITTEE

- Ziegler reported that at its recent meeting, the Sidewalk Study Committee reviewed the alternatives presented in December 2016 by the Dufresne Group, the engineering firm tasked with recommending options for new sidewalks connecting the existing sidewalks in the Village. The committee decided that the Dufresne Group should further investigate the option where the proposed sidewalk would be constructed on the inside of the loop. The sidewalk would be placed on the west side of Creamery street and continue right around the corner to the north side of Brook Road. The committee had concerns about how this configuration might work with the proposed new bridge on Brook Road, thus the project might include only the Creamery Street stretch with the Brook Road portion being addressed at a later date. The Dufresne Group recommended that the Town itself fund the Park and Ride portion of the sidewalk project, estimated at approximately \$27,000 depending upon what type of railing was used, rather than through State funding due to increased costs if the State were to be involved. An additional cost would be for moving the utility pole, which hopefully might be relocated at no cost to the project. The Dufresne Group will provide cost estimates to do only Creamery Street, Creamery Street and Brook Road, Creamery Street up to Hudson Avenue, and the stretch from Brook Road to the Recreation Field. Ziegler noted the possibilities of reducing the width of the sidewalk to accommodate the barn at the corner of Creamery Street and Brook Road and/or moving the center line over a bit because the street in that area is wider than it needs to be. Dufresne will also provide an estimate on restoring the short distance of sidewalk on the east side of Creamery at the corner of Main Street. Ziegler reported that due to maintenance issues and additional space required, the proposed green strip was no longer being considered. The Dufresne Group will provide additional detail and cost figures that will cover the above options in the final report. Towbin commended Ziegler on the committee's work.

BRIEF COMMENTS: TOWN REPORT/BUDGET/TOWN POSITIONS - FILLED AND VACANT

- Towbin and Wells reviewed the Town positions, both appointed and elected, that are still vacant.
- Wells noted that there were a few department budgets that need to be submitted and reviewed.
- Towbin asked whether the purchase of a new fire truck will be on the warning for Town Meeting, which Wells stated she has drafted. Towbin briefly reviewed the issue regarding the need to purchase a new firetruck to maintain the Town's insurance rating since the existing fire truck is more than 15 years old.
- There is also the need to purchase a new sand sifter, for which Towbin will get a cost estimate from Road Foreman Mike Nolan. He will also find out about the cost of purchasing a sander for the sidewalk tractor.

OTHER BUSINESS: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT MEETING

- Ziegler and Towbin reported on the recent follow-up meeting to the inventory of species that was funded by the Conservation Commission and Planning Commission. Emphasis was on the importance, through zoning, of maintaining connections between natural areas to allow for migrating populations of wildlife to move through developed areas.

CENTRAL VERMONT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT'S LAURA ZEISEL - APPOINTING ALTERNATE

- Towbin introduced Laura Zeisel, who was present to discuss the possibility of appointing an alternate to her position as the Town's representative to the board of directors of the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) and Policy Oversight Committee. Zeisel stated that it would be in the Town's interest to have an alternate involved to provide continuity when, for example, she is not able to make meetings. She described the meeting schedule and her role in the position, which includes trying to keep the CVSWMD board informed about available grants. She noted that the bylaws allow for each town to appoint an alternate. Due to scheduling conflicts she has had, she has missed two or three meetings this year, thus is asking the Select Board to consider soliciting for an alternate representative. Towbin agreed to post the need for an alternate on social media. Zeisel offered to provide more information to anyone interested in the position.
- Ziegler noted that she had discussed with Cassandra Hemenway at CVSWMD the idea of holding a composting workshop, but a sponsor is needed. Zeisel noted that CVSWMD offers two kinds of composting devices at cost to individuals.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION SARAH ALBERT - NEW TREE POLICY

- Conservation Commission member Sarah Albert asked whether the Select Board was putting on the warning the \$2,500 for the Conservation Commission Fund. After checking the proposed budget, it was determined that it was now part of the budget.
- Albert explained that the Conservation Commission has planted about 50 street trees in the Village, including the Recreation Field, Mill Street Park, along Route 2, and on Main Street. To protect these trees going into the future and educate residents, the Conservation Commission would like to institute a tree ordinance or policy. The preference is for an ordinance, which is more enforceable, but which needs to be adopted. Working with the Tree Warden, the Conservation Commission would like to conduct an outreach program to both find out what residents would like to see in the future in terms of tree plantings as well as educate people about the existing trees in the Village. Albert noted that the Conservation Commission has stockpiled some funds and is looking for input on how best to spend that money. Through the process of formulating policy or drafting an ordinance, people will be more aware of the issue. **Ziegler made a motion to ask the Conservation Commission to work with the Tree Warden to explore the possibility of either a tree ordinance or policy and develop a draft. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

REVIEW OF NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEETING

- Towbin reported on the second Neighborhood Watch meeting, noting the rise, if not statistically than perceptually, of petty crime in the community that has been mostly fueled by the opioid epidemic. Two representatives from the Sheriff's Department and the Assistant State's Attorney Office were present. Towbin described the paperwork involved when making a formal statement to authorities that will be productive to the law enforcement community and confer standing in evidentiary proceedings. He will post the pertinent documents to social media. Towbin noted the importance of contacting 911 rather than trying to manage a situation by oneself when witnessing something suspicious. Ziegler added that, if possible and without being too obvious or putting yourself at risk, one should take a picture to provide authorities with photographic evidence.

Neighborhood Watch communities can identify leaders, or captains, who can be notified of any questions or concerns. The next meeting is scheduled for 2/15/17 with the topic: Be Prepared for Anything. Towbin encouraged the community to attend. Ziegler noted that Dan Caddy has agreed to set up a Facebook page through which community members can be in contact. The Select Board voiced support of the creation of the Facebook page, however, Towbin will contact Town Attorney Jim Jamele for guidance about whether a legal disclaimer should be made noting that the page is not an official initiative of the Town. The Select Board thanked Dan Caddy for his efforts.

MICHAEL BILLINGSLEY HAZARD/ EMERGENCY MAILING REQUEST

- Michael Billingsley, secretary of the Plainfield Hazard Mitigation Committee (HMC) and Emergency Management Director (EMD), was not present. Ziegler and Sneyd outlined the details of both the HMC and EMD budgets, noting that Billingsley's revised request for two mailings and travel expenses would increase the amount that had been originally requested. Sneyd noted that the mailing out of emergency contact numbers could be accomplished by including the information in the Town's annual report, and additionally, most people know to dial 911 in emergencies, where dispatchers would have those numbers. While stating that though it has merit, Sneyd was not sure that he would be willing to spend a lot of Town money on a mailing. Towbin stated that Billingsley had thought that a direct mailing would reach more residents than if published in the Town's annual report. The second proposed mailing, which would include a survey of vulnerable individuals and the locations of hazardous materials in the community, was also of concern to Sneyd. He noted that it had been discussed as a pilot project that could be circulated at Town Meeting. Sneyd questioned how the information would be compiled and what would be done with it. Billingsley had stated that the information would go to FEMA, which Sneyd also questioned in terms of what FEMA would do with it and what the Select Board's role would be. Because the proposal for a mailing is for next year's budget, it was decided that the Select Board would look further at the issue. Sneyd stated that, in general, the conducting of surveys and handling of private information should be a policy decision made by the Select Board and needs to be addressed.

OTHER BUSINESS: TOWN MEETING WARNINGS

- Towbin noted two petitions that have come before the Select Board to be included as warned articles at Town Meeting: 1) the idea of Plainfield becoming a sanctuary city; and 2) the Cutler Library's request for increased funding from last year's amount. Towbin stated that there may be possible adverse effects on Plainfield's ability to get federal grants and federally funded State grants, e.g., if it were to declare itself a sanctuary city. Discussion followed on the Select Board's role in approving warned petitions and the possibility of added language to the petition voicing the Select Board's concerns as well as other ways to address the petition that would not be binding. Regarding the second, Towbin noted dismay at the Cutler Library submitting a petition for increased funding to be considered on the floor of Town Meeting without Library representatives coming to the Select Board prior to submitting the petition. The decision was made to further discuss the issue at tomorrow's special Select Board meeting.

MINUTES

- Sneyd noted that minutes from the last Select Board budget meeting were not ready. He will submit them as soon as possible for approval.

- Sneyd made a motion to approve the minutes from the 1/9/17 Select Board meeting as amended. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53pm on a motion by Sneyd. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff