

Plainfield Select Board Meeting
August 22, 2016
Approved Minutes

PRESENT: Ross Sneyd (Select Board Member), Bram Towbin (Select Board Chair), Betsy Ziegler (Select Board Member), Linda Wells (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Joe Staab (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Eric Blaisdell (Times Argus), George Cushing (Constable), Michael Nolan (Road Foreman), Lloyd Farnham (Resident), Michael Billingsley (Candidate for Emergency Management Director), Robert Bridges (Outgoing Emergency Management Director), David Strong (Town Hall Opera House), Gary Graves (Resident).

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

AGENDA

- Announcements/Public Comment - - “Lean to” at Rec Field will be demolished in next few weeks due to bank erosion. Need volunteers for Old Home Day Sept 17. Need volunteers and materials for new cement pad for bus shelter on Route 2. Please Respond to Resiliency Survey.
- Town Clerk’s Report
- Road Report – Approve Permit Process for Running Cables Under Roads
- Discussion of Crime – Visit by Sheriff’s Office Bret Meyer
- Lead-in to Neighborhood Watch Discussion
- Letter to State Bank Regulators Regarding Foreclosed Homes
- Consideration of Redefining Emergency Coordinator Position
- Report on Town Forest Discussion with Neighbor
- Town Hall Opera House Management Renewal/Gallison Property Report (no plans for purchase at this time)
- Minutes

Betsy Ziegler added discussion of Old Home Days to the agenda. **Ziegler made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Ross Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

- Towbin announced that a strategic planning meeting for the Plainfield Co-op will be held on 8/26/16 at the Town Hall Opera House. He suggested that anyone interested in attending should check with the Co-op for the meeting time.
- Regarding the 9/17/16 Old Home Days event, Towbin and Ziegler noted that volunteers are needed for a variety of set-up tasks before the parade begins. Sneyd will be picking up the tent on 9/16/16 and plans to set it up that morning. Towbin noted the performance event at the Town Hall Opera House the evening of 9/16/16. Towbin stated that the lean-to structure will be taken down before Old Home Days and volunteers are needed for that effort. Ziegler noted that a letter was needed to get a better price for the handicapped-accessible portable toilet, which Sneyd agreed to draft and send.

- Towbin noted the need for volunteers to help pour a small cement pad for the old bus shelter that will be relocated to in front of the Post Office on Route 2, which he hopes can happen before the cold weather sets in. Towbin might ask local contractor Dave Diamantis for his expertise and enlist help from the Road Crew.
- Towbin requested that people please respond to the Resiliency Survey. Blank surveys are available at the Town Clerk's office, the Plainfield Co-op, and the Cutler Library, and completed surveys can be dropped off at any of the above locations.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

- Town Clerk Linda Wells noted that taxes were due on 8/17/16 and that collection was good. Wells will be submitting the names of those who did not pay on time to George Cushing, collector of delinquent taxes, who will send out letters.
- Wells noted that the Primary Elections went well with a 33% turnout. Voting for the General Elections in November will be held at the Town Offices. Information can found on the Town's website and absentee ballots will be available by request in the beginning of October.
- Wells presented the agreement for the Town Hall Opera House Event Management Services, which the Select Board will discuss later in the meeting.
- Wells noted that Paul's Trash from East Montpelier is interested in setting up a trash collection site in Plainfield. The company is currently in discussion with Black Bear Biodiesel and the Plainfield Zoning Administrator regarding siting the operation at Black Bear Biodiesel on Route 2.
- Wells reported that she has sent in an insurance claim for the recently stolen solar panel. After reviewing the nature of the theft, which appeared to be a professional job, Towbin noted a new policy going forward to record serial numbers specifically for security reasons. The police have been notified of the theft and are working on a lead. Wells noted the need to add the Electric Vehicle Charging Station, the Solar Array, and the streetlights to the insurance policy.

ROAD REPORT – APPROVE PERMIT PROCESS FOR RUNNING CABLES UNDER ROADS

- Towbin announced that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns is giving a Reasonable Suspicion training on both alcohol and substance abuse for those who supervise employees with commercial driver's licenses.
- Constable George Cushing stated the need for a sign on the bridge at Mill and Main Streets prohibiting swimming, noting his recent interaction with two youngsters who indicated that there were no signs banning swimming. The Select Board will further discuss where to post a sign.
- Road Foreman Mike Nolan reported that the Road Crew has been busy fixing washouts and cleaning culverts after the recent heavy rains.
- Towbin asked Nolan about the possibility of narrowing roads as a way to reduce speeding, citing problems on several stretches of roads in the Town about which residents have complained. Cushing stated that the problems will worsen with the new traffic light that will be installed during the bridge project in East Montpelier. Towbin agreed, noting that many drivers will reroute onto Plainfield roads due to the tie ups at the construction intersection.
- Towbin asked Nolan about the malfunctioning radar speed sign and directed Nolan to make the necessary arrangements for its repair.

- Towbin also asked Nolan to have Steve Hogan contact Dan Currier at Central Vermont Regional Planning to arrange a meeting regarding how to place photos of work on a map. Once Hogan has arranged the meeting, he should let Towbin know and Towbin will plan to attend.

DISCUSSION OF CRIME – VISIT BY SHERIFF’S OFFICE BRET MEYER

- Towbin introduced Lieutenant Bret Meyer and Deputy Andrew Bent from the Washington County Sheriff’s Office, noting two main issues of concern for discussion: 1) the drop in revenues and perceived increase in problems in terms of speeding; and 2) general problems with speeders and reckless driving. Wells noted that revenues from the Sheriff’s Office had dropped to 14% of the cost for law enforcement from revenues of 47% during the two previous years. Meyer explained that changes in legislative and judicial rulings account for the decrease in the monetary level of fines. Discussion ensued that included the lowering of fines due to amnesty policies, ticketing versus warnings during traffic stops, the deterrent effect resulting from the presence of police cruisers in the area, and the potential of private residents videotaping violations to present as evidence to authorities. Plainfield resident Lloyd Farnham recounted three different incidents over the past two weeks involving cars speeding on his road and endangering family members. More discussion followed on which entity to call, the State Police or Sheriff’s Office, when reporting various types of incidents; law enforcement personnel working construction sites versus patrolling the roads; and communications with the Sheriff’s Office regarding incidents as they occur. The discussion on starting a Neighbor Watch Program in Plainfield was tabled until the next meeting.

LETTER TO STATE BANK REGULATORS REGARDING FORECLOSED HOMES

- Towbin reviewed the issue of the foreclosed homes on Creamery Street and the adverse effect these vacant properties are having on the Town. The Select Board had decided at the last meeting to draft a letter to Cynthia Stewart, Deputy Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation’s Banking Division, which Sneyd read aloud. The letter seeks her help in resolving the inadequate foreclosure process by encouraging legal incentives with goals and schedules to speed the sale of such properties while also safeguarding the rights of both homeowners and lenders. Ziegler suggested a couple of changes, which Sneyd and Towbin agreed should be incorporated into the draft. **Sneyd made a motion to adopt the draft letter with the agreed-upon amendments to be sent to Cynthia Stewart, Deputy Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation’s Banking Division. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

CONSIDERATION OF REDEFINING EMERGENCY COORDINATOR POSITION

- Towbin read aloud the proposed definition of the Emergency Management Director (EMD) position revised by Robert Bridges, outgoing EMD, and Michael Billingsley, candidate for the position. Towbin cited the reason to formalize the position definition is due to the fact that the types of emergency situations cited in the description will become more prevalent going forward. Sneyd suggested that the description institutionalize a relationship among the EMD position, the Hazard Mitigation Committee, the Select Board, and possibly the Resiliency Committee. It was decided to include language stating that the position is appointed by the Select Board and coordinates with the Hazard Mitigation Committee and, per suggestion by Ziegler, that the position be called “volunteer” rather than “uncompensated.” Bridges noted that the position entails linking communications and training in advance of and during emergency situations, not replacing the responsibilities of other

emergency service personnel. Discussion followed on the possibility of reallocating budget funding toward the position. It was decided that Ziegler would generate an updated draft of the position description and send it back out to Bridges, Billingsley, and the Select Board, and that Towbin would discuss the budget reallocation matter with Wells before revisiting and voting on the issue at the next meeting. Bridges noted his strong support for Billingsley to take over the position when Bridges steps down on 9/1/16. Towbin thanked Bridges and Billingsley for their work.

APPROVE PERMIT PROCESS FOR RUNNING CABLES UNDER ROADS

- Towbin stated that the Select Board was in the process of developing a formal permitting process for running cables under roads, noting Road Foreman Nolan's concern that the required depth of the cables be adequate. Discussion followed on how to craft the permitting language to address both Nolan's concerns that the cables be buried far enough underground to allow for ditching and other road work while allowing for a property owner/contractor to present valid reasoning for a depth shallower than seven feet. It was decided that the requirement be stated that utility lines must be placed below the entire road at a maximum of seven feet and a minimum of four feet and must be approved by the Road Foreman. Sneyd also noted the need for a height requirement for the 4'x4' pressure-treated stake in Subsection 9 of the draft permit. It was decided that it be stipulated at a height of three feet. Sneyd will generate and circulate an updated draft of the permit language to be voted on at the next meeting.

REPORT ON TOWN FOREST DISCUSSION WITH NEIGHBOR

- Sneyd summarized his recent meeting with the Conservation Commission regarding a Maxfield Road resident's concerns relative to the Town Forest. The resident, Patrick Tibbetts, was not able to attend that meeting, but members of the Conservation Commission had proposed posting signs on both Maxfield and Gonyeau Roads reminding people that while the Town Forest is a public facility, there are neighbors living nearby. In addition, the Conservation Commission recommended that the hours of operation for the Town Forest be posted and follow the rules governing the hours of hunting: one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. The Select Board decided to pursue the plan recommended by the Conservation Commission.

TOWN HALL OPERA HOUSE MANAGEMENT RENEWAL/GALLISON PROPERTY REPORT

- Dave Strong gave an overview of the Event Management Services renewal contract for the Town Hall Opera House, stating that the lead person on the contract has changed from Sarah Lowry to Jade Walker. While most of the provisions in the previous contract remain the same, changes include general coordination with the recently formed Friends of the Town Hall Opera House and the development of a website specifically for promoting events. Strong noted that a goal of the Friends of the Town Hall Opera House is to develop systems and resources to reduce the amount of paid staff time in the future. **Sneyd made a motion to approve the Agreement for Event Management Services for the Town Hall Opera House. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- Strong stated that replacement of the Town Hall Opera House roof and repair to some of the building's exterior features will begin this week, a \$40,000 project funded by a Historic Preservation grant and the Town Hall reserve fund. Strong noted that a dumpster will be brought in and parked in the right-of-way to the left of the building while the old roof is being removed and requested that

Towbin notify the neighbors on that side of the building that the dumpster will be there for approximately 7-10 days, adding that the mediation meeting to address the noise concerns of those same neighbors is scheduled for 8/24/16.

- Strong provided an update on the Gallison house, a property directly across Route 2 from the Town Hall Opera House that the Town was considering purchasing to provide additional parking for events. After entering into a provisional purchase and sale agreement, inspections of the building uncovered roof and mold problems along with the presence of trash throughout the house, warranting an adjustment to the selling price to address the roof and mold concerns and setting up a \$10,000 escrow account to ensure that the trash was removed. In response to a letter from Plainfield Town Attorney Jim Jamele stating the above, the seller's attorney responded that it constituted a renunciation of the contract and the sellers are no longer interested in pursuing the sale. Despite the fact that no sale will take place, the inspections will provide useful information on the extent of the asbestos and a thorough assessment of the structural condition indicating what would be involved in fixing it up if someone is interested in doing so in the future.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

- Gary Graves stated the need for line painting on Towne Avenue, suggesting that a double yellow line on that street, which goes past the Post Office and turns left at a 90-degree angle, would alert drivers exiting the Health Center driveway to the fact that the street continues past the Health Center driveway. Graves noted a number of near misses due to cars exiting the Health Center thinking that cars coming from the left are either turning into the Post Office or the Health Center. Towbin agreed to include the work the next time line painting is scheduled.

OLD HOME DAYS

- Ziegler reviewed preparations thus far for the Old Home Days event, citing various activities being planned. There is a need for the following: someone to organize the 5K run, something to pull a wagon in the parade, additional people and animals to march in the parade, help in organizing games for the Kids Corner at the Rec Field, a pop-up tent/shelter for the band, people to move chairs and tents and tables, a bubblemaker, and a slack line. The Plainfield Co-op may be invited to set up a food cart for after the barbeque and into the evening, and Mo's Backyard BBQ might also come. Towbin thanked Ziegler for her work in organizing the event.

MINUTES

- **Ziegler made a motion to approve the minutes from the 8/8/16 Select Board meeting as drafted. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm on a motion by Sneyd. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff