

Town of Plainfield
Plainfield Select Board Meeting
December 12, 2016
Approved Minutes

PRESENT: Ross Sneyd (Select Board Member), Bram Towbin (Select Board Chair), Betsy Ziegler (Select Board Member), Keith Swann (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Michael Billingsley (Resident), Laura Ziegler (Resident), Michael Sabourin (Marshfield Resident), Jack McCullough (Vermont Legal Aid, Mental Health Law Project), Amos Meacham (Pathways Vermont), David Strong (Resident), Carol Smith (Resident), Andrea Day (Dufresne Group), Alice Merrill (Resident), Karen Kurrle (Washington County Mental Health Services), and Susan Ross Grimaldi (Resident).

Bram Towbin called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

AGENDA

- Announcements/Public Comment/Town Clerk's Report
- Discussion of Mental Health Resources
- Sidewalk Extension Project Discussion
- Update on Fire Department Budget
- Town Office Positions Available
- Update on Act 174, Energy Siting
- Minutes

Ross Sneyd requested that an update on the Cutler Memorial Library grant be added to the agenda.

Sneyd made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ziegler announced that there will be a Neighborhood Watch informational meeting on 12/14/16 at 6:30pm at the Cutler Memorial Library. Towbin noted that ideas were needed to help combat a number of incidents that have occurred in Town. Ziegler added that it was also an opportunity for the community to begin thinking in terms of how we can help out our neighbors.

UPDATE ON FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

- Towbin reported on a recent meeting with the Fire Department, the budget for which will be essentially level funded, but with some changes. Noting the tremendous increase in the cost of life-saving Fire Department equipment, the Select Board has decided, after obtaining voters' approval at Town Meeting, to initiate a designated fund for this type of equipment. Towbin cited several examples of increased equipment costs. The Town also needs to purchase a new firetruck, which is required for insurance reasons. The cost for a new firetruck will be approximately \$380,000; the trade-in for the old vehicle will be approximately \$100,000. Residents will be able to vote on a bond for this at Town Meeting.

DISCUSSION OF MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- Towbin welcomed Karen Kurrle, Intensive Care Service Director at Washington County Mental Health, who was present to lead a community forum about promoting mental health wellness, reducing mental health stigma, and identifying resources that are available to people. Stating that her main message was that people are not alone, Kurrle defined what is meant by mental health and emotional well-being. She stressed the importance of balance and that what may be one person's typical behavior might indicate a struggle in another, depending upon their outlook and ability to cope. She noted that variations in eating, sleeping, and mood are among the most important indicators in determining a person's mental state and gave examples of symptoms and warning signs that could potentially indicate mental health distress. Kurrle noted the value of various resources available that are beneficial to maintaining mental health, such as personal connections, wellness activities, individual and group therapy, psychotropic medications, and psychoeducation. Other resources include the Washington County Mental Health Services 24/7 crisis line, the Plainfield Health Center, the new crisis text line, the National Suicide Prevention Hotline, Another Way Community Center in Montpelier, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Pathways Vermont, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors, private therapists throughout Vermont, Central Vermont Medical Center, and Karen Kurrle herself if there are any problems connecting with any of the above.
- Amos Meacham, Intake Coordinator from Pathways Vermont, described the five main programs of the organization: 1) The main program, Housing First, operates in six counties around the State and provides independent housing and community-based support to individuals who are experiencing homelessness and have a history of mental health and other life challenges; 2) Support Services for Veterans Families provides short-term housing as a bridge to more permanent housing for veterans and their families; 3) The Vermont Support line, 888-604-6412, is a free, anonymous resource for all Vermonters who are looking for someone to talk to; 4) The Wellness Co-op is a peer-run community center in Burlington, similar to Another Way in Montpelier, where people can engage in activities and discussion circles, receive employment assistance, and come to a space to relax, use computers or WIFI, and feel at ease; and 5) Soteria, a residential program in Burlington, helps people who are going through early-episode psychosis.
- Discussion followed, including a question-and-answer session, that included the cost for various services, services that are imposed on people when seeking help, training opportunities for lay people in the community to learn how to be supportive without necessarily having to use the typical mental health service model, and how to prevent triggering unintended events when a person initiates certain kinds of services. Towbin will post online Kurrle's PowerPoint presentation and information from Jack McCollough, Director of the Mental Health Law Project at Vermont Legal Aid, for the benefit of those who could not be present.

SIDEWALK EXTENSION PROJECT DISCUSSION

- Towbin introduced Andrea Day from the Dufresne Group and explained where the proposed new sidewalks would connect to the existing sidewalks in the Lower Village, including the improvement to the sidewalk going up to the Park and Ride from the Fire Station on Main Street. Day noted that this is the second public meeting, the Alternatives meeting, required as part of the VTRANS process for the Sidewalk Scoping Study. The first meeting, or Local Concerns meeting, was held last June. Tonight's meeting is to review and approve the Purpose and Needs Statement that was developed from comments received since the start of the project, review the alternatives that were developed

as a result of those comments, and obtain input on the preferred alternatives. Day reviewed the process thus far, including a summary of the public comments received; the Purpose and Need Statement; the project area; historic resources and environmental constraints; existing roadway characteristics; two approaches for the type of sidewalk (with and without a green strip); inner and outer loop options for both types of sidewalk; the four alternatives proposed for Brook Road and Creamery Street and construction costs for each; Main Street railing design types, installation, relocation of the utility pole, and associated costs. Discussion took place throughout the presentation and included the probable increase in the Town's share of the cost for the project in future years, who would be responsible for maintaining the green strip, houses that are within the right-of-way, how plans for bridge replacement on Brook Road correlate with sidewalk construction, and sidewalk storm water drainage. Day reviewed the next steps, which include identifying the preferred alternatives, formulating more detailed estimates for construction and total project costs, preparing a draft report, presenting the draft report at the next public meeting, finalizing the report, and submitting the report.

TABLING OF TWO AGENDA ITEMS

- Towbin stated that two of the agenda items—Town Office Positions Available and Update on Act 174, Energy Siting—would be tabled due to time restraints.

LIBRARY GRANT UPDATE

- Sneyd reported that the Cutler Memorial Library would like to submit its planning grant application this month to the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) so that the proposal can be considered at the State's February meeting. Three State-required actions need to happen for that to be possible. First, a public hearing needs to be held, which is scheduled for 12/19/16 at 6pm at the Municipal Offices. Second, the Select Board needs to pass a resolution authorizing the application to be filed. **Ziegler made a motion to pass a resolution authorizing the application to be filed. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.** Towbin stated that this did not commit any taxpayer dollars, but rather merely to submit the application. Third, the Select Board needs to apply formally via the State's Intelligrant program to submit the grant application. Sneyd will have the Cutler Library's consultant Lisa Ryan contact Towbin to walk him through the process. In addition, a letter to VCDP needs to be signed by the Select Board Chair stating that the project is in accordance with the Town Plan. **Sneyd made a motion that Towbin sign the letter stating that the project is in accordance with the Town Plan. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

MINUTES

- **Sneyd made a motion to approve the minutes from the 11/28/16 Special Select Board meeting as submitted. Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**
- **Sneyd made a motion to approve the minutes from the 11/8/16 Special Select Board meeting as submitted. Towbin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

OTHER BUSINESS

- Ziegler asked for an update on the Brook Road bridge replacement project. Towbin responded that because of the efforts to clean up Lake Champlain, monies are being diverted to that and there is nothing on the horizon for bridge replacement funding.
- Towbin noted that the Select Board will not hold its regular meeting on 12/26/16.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm on a motion by Ziegler. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff