

Town of Plainfield, Vermont
Select Board Meeting
September 14, 2020
Remote-Only Meeting Via Zoom
Draft Minutes

Electronic Participants: Tammy Farnham (Select Board Member), Jim Volz (Select Board member), Sasha Thayer (Select Board Chair), Ryan Christiansen (resident), Jesse Cooper (resident), Paula Emery (resident), Bob and Kathy Fancher (residents), Julie Hackbarth (resident), Serena Matt (resident), Alice Merrill (resident), Richard Rubin (resident), Alice Sky (resident) and Betsy Zeigler (resident).

Approval of/changes to agenda

Jim moved to amend the agenda to add two items after Alice Sky's update about the community composting project - these items include: A Resolution re Vermont General Election and approval of SB minutes from July 27, August 4 & 24, 27 / Community Conversation minutes from August 24, 26, 29 and September 1 and 3. This motion was passed unanimously.

Public Announcements:

Sasha announced free COVID-19 testing in Barre on September 17 and 24 and provided some further recommendations from the Vermont Health Department.

Sasha also mentioned that there would be drone flyovers re Emerald Ash Borer and follow-up to last year's tree inventory. Adam Zylka of University of Vermont Spatial Analysis lab would be doing this starting tomorrow on East Hill, will be joined by Joanne Garton who coordinated the Emerald Ash Borer inventory last Spring and Summer who has been such a resource to us, these would start with Sasha's property Tuesday, Serena Matt, a member of the Conservation Commission explained that the inventory done last summer was to inventory roadside ash trees, not just ones which are infected with the emerald ash borer.

Road Crew Hours:

Tammy suggested to change the road crew's hours during the summer to 4 10 hour days instead of 5 8 hour days as a request from a few of the road crew members. Tammy mentioned that in the winter months the road crew is on call pretty much all the time.

Tammy moved to change the road crew's hours to 4 10 hour days effective this week as a trial period with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Select Board Hearing re: updated Town Plan:

Tammy expressed making the meeting more available to community members by making time later than 5pm. Sasha advised that there could also be more than one public hearing to provide greater accessibility.

Pedestrian Bridge Project Update:

Tammy advised that the estimated budget is now over \$1,000,000, which is even greater than the highest bid initially received. This figure is quite shocking. Tammy inquired about going with the "major project" pertaining to the route 2 intersection and combining the two projects to reduce costs. The town is looking to move forward with an additional grant of \$400,000. The grants need an

acceptance/declination by the end of the month. The project has not been voted on, so it's difficult to move forward with the grant.

Traffic control is an estimated \$300,000, Ross explained that the uncertainty of the project might be why this figure is so large.

Alice reminded everyone that this is also relating to the improvements of the route 2 intersection project, and it's important to think of these projects together rather than separately.

The town would need to come up with 20% of \$400,000. Alice stated that the grant comes up annually. Tammy agreed, and said that the town may be able to put the whole project on hold for a year. Alice advised Tammy to discuss with Ross in their next meeting.

The cost estimate for the pedestrian bridge in June 2019 was \$518,872, at this point the resident engineering cost was \$29,000. The current estimate \$1,035,155 and the engineer cost has more than doubled to be \$65,000. Sasha indicated that if costs continue to go up, action should be taken sooner rather than later. Alice urged for this to be brought to vote as the financial impact has gotten very large.

Tammy indicated that we needed to look forward at how to handle the 20% cost of this project if the town chooses to move forward or to take the loss of \$127,000. She also said that she would ask Ross about combining the two projects to see if it would lessen the cost and if it's possible to put the project on hold for a year so that the town's people could vote on the project and move forward with a grant at a later time.

Tammy suggested to move forward with the engineering cost estimate from Dufresne for up to \$4,500 and sign the contract to formalize the agreement.

Jim moved to authorize Tammy to sign the contract with Dufresne, Sasha added that the contract was dated September 10, 2020 from Dufresne Consulting Group Engineer – with a unanimous approval from the select board.

Route 2 Intersection Project:

Tammy met with Claire to work out some questions for the survey. Claire recommended using Survey Monkey, as they have a subscription to the service. If the town decides to move forward with the major project, more federal money will be used to figure out the details (land owners, contractors), but the town is financially accountable if they choose not to proceed. Tammy intends to work on the logistics of the mailing and expressed that she would like feedback from the other select board members regarding finalizing the survey. Sasha proposed setting up a special meeting to discuss the grant and the survey on September 18th at 7:30am.

Richard Rubin and Jayne Israel Use of Right of Way application and approval

Request for power to be run underground to barn across the road (land owned on both sides of the road by Richard & Joyce). Tammy reminded the community that it is important to give the town clerk's office plenty of time before a project begins. Sasha agreed that the town has been very accommodating for these kinds of circumstances but it is not favorable, as there are a lot of hoops to jump through. Richard expressed gratitude for Carol and her promptness in putting all the pieces together to move forward.

Jim moved to approve the permit and authorize Sasha to sign it, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Meeting Minute Approval:

July 27, August 4, August 24, August 27

Community Meeting Minutes: 8/24, 8/26, 8/29, 9/1, & 9/3

Jim moved to approve the referenced meeting minutes, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Resolution re Vermont General Election:

Sasha urged the select board to oppose the lawsuit and support the plan to allow all registered voters get a ballot by mail. Jim suggested for this to be brought up at the special meeting on 9/18, Sasha & Tammy agreed.

Update on community composting:

Alice Sky provided an update on community composting. She stated that the compost grant proposal is for \$3,000, due on October 5th. The funding for the grant includes a shelter for the bin will be necessary to keep snow from building up on the pile and signage to help educate community members on how to effectively compost. Alice stated that she would hear back on the grant within a few weeks after submission. The compost bin will be at the edge of the parking lot at the rec field (between the parking lot and the road). Alice indicated that the two concerns include rodents/animals and smell, of which both issues have been minimized. Alice specified that one of the ways to minimize animals would be to combination lock the compost bin. Jim suggested for the combination to only be provided to individuals that understand the specifications of compost.

Jim moved to approve the second application for the compost bin with a unanimous approval of the select board.

Job Description for Road Commissioner:

Tammy & Jim indicated that the suggestions from Sasha were sent out too late for review. This topic will be taken up at the next select board meeting.

Approval of stray animal contracts with Cheryl McQueeney:

Cheryl stated that she would be willing to be a resource for animals to be taken to for confinement (\$15/day).

Sasha moved to authorized Cheryl McQueeney to receive animals for confinement under the terms of our animal control ordinance, with a unanimous approval of the select board.

The town is still searching for an animal control officer, town constable and planning commissioner.

October 12th SB Meeting:

October 12th is a holiday (Indigenous Peoples Day/Columbus Day), Tammy suggested to cancel the meeting as a result of all of the special meetings. Sasha mentioned that the town hall opera house management contract is on the agenda, but that could be changed to the last meeting in September or second meeting in October. Sasha also indicated that the updated town plan from the planning commission is tentatively on the October 12th meeting agenda. Tammy stated that October 5th will be the closure of the surveys for the route 2 project to analyze the surveys, so a special meeting will need

to be held at some point that week. The need for a special meeting will be established on September 28th.

September 18th at 7:30am – Special Meeting:

Pedestrian Bridge Project
Route 2 Intersection Project
Resolution re Vermont General Election

September 28th – SB Meeting:

Job Description for Road Commissioner
October 12th SB Meeting
Town Hall Opera House Management Contract(?)

Adjournment:

Jim moved to adjourn at 8:52 pm, with a unanimous approval of all Select Board members.