

SELECTBOARD MINUTES – September 29, 2010

Present: Dave DeHerdt, Norm Russell
Doug field – absent

Minutes: September 9 minutes were accepted as written; September 15 minutes were accepted after discussion of a question about a bill received for the Ford Explorer.

APPOINTMENTS:

Planning Board - Present: Mike Fitzgerald, Alan Rice, Ken Miller

The board was present to explore ways in which the two boards might work cooperatively to design a wind energy siting by-law that will meet the Town's needs.

Fitzgerald said a month and a-half ago the PB voted to begin research with the goal of creating a good by-law with teeth that would establish local control. At this point the PB has not established a special committee to work on this project.

The PB has looked at two sample by-laws provided on the state web site. One model utilizes the Special Permit process, where towers could be erected anywhere in town and the PB would consider each application individually. The second would be to create a zone that would be suitable for siting of wind towers.

He presented a copy of the existing Town's Open Space Plan, saying it could be used as a starting point. Harry Dodson has offered to prepare an overlay showing a wind resource zoning plan. He thought the Conservation Commission could be involved on a case by case basis or could participate in developing the by-law. He has been looking at a study prepared for the state of Vermont, an area similar to western Mass. Language from that plan could be adapted for Ashfield.

Fitzgerald said the role of the PB is to recommend changes to by-laws, when needed which could then be accepted by vote of the Town. The first step was to recognize the need for a by-law change. Failing that, a petition signed by ten (10) people could force the board to respond to a request for a change.

Russell said the proposed committee would be just an advisory committee. There is a lot of conflicting information out there about wind turbines. He felt an advisory committee could sort through this information to learn what is fact. This would be a great help in understanding what should be included in the by-law. Fitzgerald thought a carefully worded survey of townspeople would be useful. He recommended questions like: "Should wind turbine towers be allowed on Cape Street? Or S. Ashfield."

DeHerdt asked how this advisory committee could best help the PB. After a moment Fitzgerald said the advisory board could do the research, thus permitting the PB to go back to working on other things. He made reference to a re-drafting of the by-laws twenty

years ago, when a lot of work had gone into the process and it wasn't until a public hearing near the end of the process that will of the Town became clear. DeHerdt said the SB wanted to do what was in the best interests of the Town. And since both boards have lots of other things to do, forming this committee seemed like a good way to gather information quickly.

Alan Rice asked how the advisory committee would be formed. He thought this could be a politically charged issue. DeHerdt agreed that we were looking for good advice based on fact, not interested in personal opinions. It was agreed that this needs to be a well balanced committee. Fitzgerald thought health professionals, environmental, engineering, and other professionals would be good choices for members of the committee. Ken Miller thought the committee could be composed of some PB members or it could be made up of representatives of several town committees (Conservation, ZBA, PB) plus others in a 3 or 5 member board. DeHerdt concluded that some time would be allowed for interested persons to come forward before appointing the committee.

Assistant Administrator Russell reported that three candidates for the position will be interviewed on Friday. Final interviews will be held with the SB on October 6th. The board would like a chance to review material on the candidates before the meeting.

Special Town Meeting Potential dates for a STM were discussed, taking into account time needed for review of articles by appropriate committees and posting times. Russell plans to meet with the accountant to see if there are any financial issues that need to be addressed. There will be an article to accept the donation of a generator, plus funding for its installation.

Recovered emails DeHerdt reported that he has the recovered emails on a flash device. He had copies for Field and Russell. There are 1,800 emails. There have been public records requests for copies of emails. Emails will be discussed again on Oct. 27th.

NEW BUSINESS:

General election - State elections are scheduled for November 2nd. Prior to that time a mailing has to go out to all registered voters advising of the change of location for voting. It will be at Town Hall. It'll cost about \$500.00 in postage. The official warrant for the election will have to be signed by the Board. Ck with Town Counsel to see if action by the legislature is needed to validate the election. The ADA machine worked well at the last election. A new disc will be needed for the upcoming election. The cost is \$1,000. Anybody can use the machine.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) At an earlier time the Town prepared a wish list of things that it would like to do if funds were available. The list, read by DeHerdt, was lengthy. It included items to make several areas in town ADA compliant, housing rehabilitation, affordable housing, etc. The SB needs to set a date for a public hearing, the minutes of which are to be included in a completed update by October 10th. A public hearing will be held October 6 @ 6:45 PM. Requirements for the

hearing are that there be an attendance sheet and that minutes be taken. The final version needs to be submitted by October 10th.

Emergency Services

Fire Department – Fire trucks will be inspected tomorrow. Notice has been received that minors (junior) fire fighters are covered under the town’s insurance.

Police Department – The Chief will be interviewing a potential reserve officer tomorrow.

Highway Department – Nothing to report.

Town Office - A letter is being prepared for sending to registered voters.

Space needs to be found for the new Assistant Administrator, also a computer and a phone.

Town Hall Building Committee – The committee will meet on Monday to fix the rails.

Wayne Gardner reported Alan Taylor will provide some welding service for the project.

He also reported that the Town has tax exempt status on file at several businesses including Home Depot, Leaders, and Aubuchon.

P olice Chief Search Committee – The search is nearing an end. Background checks are being conducted.

Posting policy – Present: David Kulp

Kulp presented a draft policy for use by all departments in meeting the new Open Meeting posting requirements. He spoke of concern that posting on the web did not necessarily mean that the information would be posted outside Town Hall. He urged that someone be assigned the task of posting notices on the outside notice board. He would like to see posting on the web 72 hours in advance and that notice for posting on the notice board be taken from the web posting. He was reminded that most times the agenda for meetings is not set until 48 hours before the meeting date. Responsibility for seeing that notices are posted in time will continue to be that of the committee holding the meeting.

Warrants – Warrants # _____ totaling \$_____ were reviewed and signed.

New Sewer Connections - Permitting for 2 new sewer connections on Buckland Road are in the works. A letter has been received from DEP- Western Region stating it is in receipt of a design plan by SK K_____ Engineering for connection to the Town’s sewer system. The purpose of the letter was to advise that DEP can’t approve the request until several matters outlined have been addressed.

Delinquent Dog owners – This issue will be revisited at the October 13th meeting.

FRTA Representative

A motion was made, seconded, and voted to adjourn at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla Phelps