

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes  
Monday, July 9, 2018

At the Selectmen's Meeting held at the Whitefield Public Library on Monday, July 9, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. the following people were in attendance: Peter Corey, Stanley Holz, and John Tholl arrived at 6:35 p.m.

The following members of the public were in attendance: Sondra Brekke, Dick Harris, Tom Ladd, Rick Wright, Valerie Yelton, Bob Stiles, Marsha Lombardi, and Edith Worcester.

Peter said that the Board thought it might be worthwhile to move the meetings around to see some of the municipal and private buildings in the town and for the community members to get to see it as well. For future meetings, we have spoken about going to the Public Works building, the fire station, the Summit meeting room, Mt. View Grand, Inn at Whitefield. That is the plan and watch the announcements and you will see meetings at other locations rather than the town hall.

Bob Stiles attended the meeting. Bob said we are trying to do something with Jim Gozzo who owns the yellow Fiske House barn in the back of the municipal parking lot. They met with him today and went through the building and got some ideas what we would like to do. Bob would like to see it as a senior center, historical society center or maybe some room for kids to come in after school. It is a large building. Bob said we want to try to get a grant to do this. Bob said if we could do something for the youth and the older people it would be a good move because we would have a place to go. Did the building owner offer a willingness to sell the building? Bob said for twice what it is worth. Bob said maybe we could get a grant to help buy it. Bob said twice the value is too much. He wants \$80,000, and he wouldn't negotiate. Bob told him was that all he can do is bring it to the powers to be and Bob offered to kick in \$30,000. It depends how bad we want it and if we could come up with the other half. Stanley said given the amount of work the building needs, as it does not have sewer or water, no heat, he has got electricity with a lot of wood rot and nobody is going to buy the building for \$80,000. Bob offered to pay him \$30,000. Stanley said it wouldn't be worth more than assessed value. The assessed value is approximately \$41,500. Stanley has an EDC report in a few minutes. EDC elected Bob to be their representative to speak with Mr. Gozzo. Bob said personally if the money was available we could have some food sales to raise the money. Bob would like a place for the kids to go when they get out of school, the historical society, and the seniors. There is a lot of square footage. Peter said there is a lot of opportunity. It would be a wonderful piece of history to preserve—how might that happen? Peter said that it is a responsibility of the EDC to seek out opportunities to acquire some funds. The Historical Society would be interested in donating as well. The idea that is going to put forth a real visitor center with the historical society and then the other floors can be used for alternative uses. The building has a lot of missing pieces, walls and some rot in spots. The main structure is concrete main support beams, a fairly new tin roof. There is a lot of repair work to be done, but it is solid building. They have talked about paving the municipal lot and adding in the Fiske house as one project. We would get a paved lot with lights and an entrance to the visitor center. The building can accommodate several uses. Community Development Finance Authority does projects. They sell credits to investors to invest in your project. Donna Lane said that our project is a suitable use of those tax credits. Stanley said they met with Brian Bresnahan, Annie Kuster's guy, this a project USDA would be interested in doing as well. Donna Lane who is handling tax credits has money available for architectural studies. The building is something the town should have. The Fiske house is an important historical structure of the town. The exterior is very much what it was. We would like to own it. If we buy it, we can use that as a good faith

effort we want to proceed with the project. Bob Stiles said he purchased the tax credits to help the Mountain View when they got started.

Bob Stiles said he would like to see the Board get the Brown Street Furniture building into the EDC committee because it sits now nothing has happened for two years. If we could get someone on their toes, it is going to belong to the town of Whitefield. If you have it, you have to make something of it. If you take it for taxes, are you going to let it rot down or make it happen? Bob has brainstormed nobody else has. We have to make something happen. Bob thinks there are some members of the EDC to push to make some jobs available.

Peter said the EPA has no obligation to the Town of Whitefield to notify us of what is happening in that building. Whatever happens between the EPA and the owner is privileged communication. The Board was notified on June 26<sup>th</sup> that the removal action was completed to EPA's standards, thus EPA's environmental objectives have been met and it is no longer an active removal site. Peter said we could take it for taxes. We would own with all of its liabilities and we don't know what they are. The issue EPA was involved in was that they had some leftover chemicals in barrels in the buildings. Valerie Yelton said she would help with that, as that is her background. Peter said we can take the building for taxes and we own the building, the good and the bad. Right now there are a lot of unknowns. If we own it, we are responsible for securing the building, and paying to tear it down, etc. There are a lot of liabilities. Peter said there is another avenue we could take and it is under RSA:155. We would notify the owner of the property that it is a public safety hazard and the owner has to raze the building or repair the building and if they don't we can have the building razed or repaired and put a lien on any properties owned by the individuals in the State of N.H. If the Town does take the property, the owner has up to three years to buy it back. That is the situation with Brown Street. Peter said if the Business Finance Authority had some businesses who wanted to locate there, then that is a different story. If someone came with something certain, we could act, and with the absence of having something certain just acquiring the property brings in a lot of liabilities. Bob thinks we should do something with it. Stanley said there are a lot of unknowns. Bob said that the Town is not getting any tax money for that property, and it puts a burden on the taxpayers. We still don't know what is in there. We have not made a survey of the building. There has been vandalism to the building. We don't have the money to renovate the building so the only out we would have is to sell the building to someone who would want to develop it. There is a lot more information we have to have. It might be an EDC project to do a study of the building. Tom Ladd asked about the contamination of the land, and there is no contamination on the land. They have said there is no further removal action required. We would like to see the property redeveloped, but at this point with an absence of a definitive path forward taking it for taxes is just going to create a liability. We would need approval to spend money on the building at town meeting. Rick Wright asked about making a decision and the key factor is for someone to find a potential buyer and come back and see if the town would take it for taxes.

Zach Pierce of 20 Anna Drive attended the meeting to discuss an easement or variance to construct an accessory building and the property owners he needs permission from is the Town. He is in the process of getting his falconry license and he would like to put up a home for the falcon and he would like to place it under a tree branch so the falcon has some shade. It is 15 to 17 feet closer to the town shed. Peter said if someone is looking to construct a building inside the 25 foot setback they are required to get a letter of approval from the abutter that it is o.k. with them. His property is down by the town garage. The Board does not have a problem with it.

A motion was made by Stanley Holz that the Stanley made a motion that the Board approves the request by Mr. Pierce to build a structure for his falcon within 25 feet of the town owned lot. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed. Stanley noted that he does need to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the final approval.

The Board discussed the issue of the contractor for the water project using Mr. Harris's property on Hall Road for staging and storage of materials in connection with the water project. There will also be two other properties in town that will be used as well. Peter said we are not going to solve this tonight, and he wants to review the contract and attorney opinion further. We just want to be sure everything is within the guidelines.

A motion was made by John Tholl to approve the June 25, 2018 Selectmen's meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed.

Stanley Holz – EDC Committee Report:

Stanley said in addition to what they discussed earlier in the meeting, the EDC at their last meeting said they have been discussing the by-laws, and there is a board of directors with no membership. Should it have a membership or a board of directors? The parking lot that was originally a separate issue, but it makes more sense to get a grant to do the Fiske house and the parking lot as one project. Brian Bresnahan thought it would qualify for some grant funding. They had a walk-thru today, and they toured all three levels. It is a sad building and it is a very impressive building. It is something we would like to see developed. Edie asked if it would support itself when it was all said and done. It depends on the use of the building. It is possible to have rental space for retail businesses. A lot will depend on an architectural study or engineering report. Ideally the building would pay for itself. Right now it is too early to tell if that will happen. The taxes are paid on that building. There is no limit on the grants you receive. The only way this project would work is if we get grant funding.

John Tholl – Airport Commission:

Airport Commission is meeting with Gale Associates to do hazard mitigation and removal for the airport. There are certain things that have a height limitation so there are some trees that have to be removed. We are working on what has to be done and removed and how it will be done. North Country Ford is willing to provide rental cars with 24 hours advance notice. They are still looking into the possibility of a courtesy car. We are working out the terms of someone who is willing to provide a car for this purpose. The fly-in went well, not sure how much money was made. The biggest complaint was there was no coffee out there. Everything went well. They sold 162 lobster/steak dinners.

Bob Stiles asked about how the cemetery association could acquire some loam from the airport. John said he could address it at the commission meeting on Wednesday night. Progress on new fuel system? The grant has been applied for and waiting to hear on it. How about the Army Corp project? The biggest delay is going to be approval of funds from Washington. Peter asked about the cutting at the Industrial Park? Rick said Gerry said it has started.

Peter Corey – Planning Board:

As far as the planning board goes, nothing worth mentioning, working through the issue with the water system contractor using private properties across town for the processing of materials. They pull

materials out of the ground, screen it and some goes back in the ground and some may get sold. They did have some resident complaints in one part of town. We just need to be sure we are doing it legally and the residents are comfortable understanding that.

The Board reviewed the proposal from Wright-Pierce for updating the Sewer Use Ordinance for the Town of Whitefield. The estimated fee for this work is \$7,500, with the tasks being completed within 10 weeks of receiving the signed contract. A motion was made by Stanley Holz to accept this proposal from Wright-Pierce. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed.

The Conservation Commission terms were discussed. The terms will be as follows:

One-Year Terms: Marsha Lombardi and Edith Worcester

Two-Year Terms: Frank Lombardi and Kenneth Jordan, Jr.

Three-Year Terms: Valerie Yelton and Donald Laplante

They plan to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the Month at 6:00 p.m. at the town offices.

The letters re: RSA 155 were just reviewed and o.k.'d by the town attorney and will be going out soon.

The Board will be meeting on Friday, July 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. to approve the purchase of the land for the Dodge well improvements.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.