

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes  
September 10, 2018

At the Selectmen's Meeting held on Monday, September 10, 2018, at 6:30 p.m. the following people were in attendance: John Tholl, Stanley Holz, and Peter Corey.

Ivy Pearson who lives at 46 Union Street wanted to bring to the attention of the Town of Whitefield that whoever maintains the railroad tracks is using herbicides on the railroad tracks, the herbicides being used are pretty strong and cancer-causing. She reached out to the EPA, as it is right by the river. She wanted to bring it to the town's attention. Peter suggested they contact the Bureau of Rails. She said that they did have a permit to do it. She said it does not mean it was a smart decision. It was Roundup that was used. She said they told her they were permitted. Her concern is a safety concern for the abutters like herself and the waterway. Stanley was wondering if we could ask the State about notifying the abutters when this is going to occur. Ivy said it should be something the Town should be looking into further from a safety point of view. The Board said that they will speak with the state and see what they can find out. (Judy spoke with Lou Barker on September 11, 2018 at the Bureau of Rails and he explained that the State owns the rail property and they get a permit from the NH Department of Environmental Services to use the herbicides. He said they used a licensed company to use the herbicides on all the rail properties in the State of N.H. He said they are spraying within 15 feet of the center line around the track structure. There are very strict conditions, and they are very careful and do not spray around any water, even standing water – so there are some areas near water that don't get sprayed. He said they need to keep the brush and weed down so the rail cars don't get damaged. He said they also research any wells in the areas and do not spray near them.)

Pursuant to NH RSA 41:9-a, the Whitefield Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, September 10, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at the Whitefield Town Offices located at 56 Littleton Road in Whitefield to discuss the adoption of the following three proposed additional charges for the Town of Whitefield Development Application fees for all residential and commercial applications:

Septic Permit (Initial Application) - \$50.00

Demolition Permit - \$25.00

Driveway Permit - \$25.00

There were nine members of the public in attendance. Peter explained that these fees would be in addition to the fees that are currently in effect that were adopted in July 10, 2017.

Peter said the reason this was proposed to the Selectboard by the Planning Board is because in the planning board fee schedule there were some omissions so they felt it was appropriate and prudent to add them to the fee schedule to cover the administrative costs associated with giving the permits, checking the properties before and after the permit to be sure the work has been completed, changing the tax cards, etc. For the Driveway Permit, the Public Works Director, actually goes out and meets with the landowner.

Mr. Jones asked why there is a fee when the state regulates it. Peter said that there is administrative costs associated with these activities. The administrative costs are borne by all the taxpayers as part of the general taxation. Adding these fees, gets it into the direction where people who are generating the activity will pay for that. We pay the tax assessor a certain amount of money each year and most of the fees he charges are from people who are changing their properties. This is a way that the people who

are actually creating the costs are carrying the costs. Mr. Jones asked if the planning board budget would be cut by the revenue that is collected. Peter said that it would not be. Peter says the money goes into the general fund and offsets the tax rate. John said the money is not going to the planning board. This is a way of recouping the expenses. The planning board has a very small budget. It covers the administrative costs for the planning board. This is a small way to recoup some of those expenses for administrative duties.

Tom Ladd said that the permits are not what the landowners want. It shouldn't be structured so that we are penalizing people who want to improve their property. Tom said he feels it is inappropriate to add the fees to someone who wants to improve their property. It should be paid by the taxpayers.

Barbara Jones said if we are not paying the assessor more to do this, why are we imposing these fees? How much more can the senior citizens afford in this town? John Tholl said he is not that familiar with the requirements for the septic permits. Many towns require that the Town approve the septic permits before it goes to the state. It takes the time of the town to research this and look into the septic permits. There is a cost to the town whenever these actions are done.

Stanley Holz said that the majority of these fees applies to new construction. It is basically for new construction. The planning board doesn't get the money or pay the expenses, it comes out of the town budget.

Gerry said that he sees this as a reimbursement for services provided. People who are paying it are reimbursing the town for their expenses.

Peter said taxes continue to rise, with increase in energy costs, insurance, salaries, and if we don't start looking at the revenue side of things then our taxes will continue to rise. Most towns in N.H. have permitting fees. These are minimal compared to our neighboring towns. It is a way to recapture some of the costs the town is paying for development without putting the burden on all of the taxpayers.

Rick Wright asked if the fees pay for the entire cost of the administrative costs? Peter said that analysis was not done. John said when you talk about demolition, depending on how long it takes him and what is going in its place there is a loss of taxes to the Town on that property. It has to be inspected and to make sure that it is safe for the public.

Rick Wright asked if we go out and verify whatever was asked for on a permit is actually accomplished? Peter said that is the job of the tax assessor. The permit is the signal to him to go be sure the work that was permitted was actually done.

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to approve the proposed additional charges for the Town of Whitefield Development Application Fees for all residential and commercial applications: Septic Permit (Initial Application): \$50.00; Demolition Permit: \$25.00; Driveway Permit: \$25.00. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed.

A motion was made by John Tholl to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2018 Selectmen's Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Stanley Holz. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passed.

#### John Tholl – Airport Committee

John said there hasn't been a meeting since his last update. John said the Commission continues to work with the engineering firm dealing with the approach clearing. The Commission has gone to one meeting a month instead of two meetings a month. The hanger inspections have been completed.

#### Peter Corey – Planning Board

A lot of development permits have come through. The vast majority of requests are for second homes, building of second homes, addition to second homes, as well as a large number of septic permits. We did have a demolition permit for the property that Steve Cox recently purchased from Margaret Ribb on Kimball Hill Road, which has been vacant for many years. We have a meeting of the Master Plan next week. Hopefully we will put the finishing touches to that and the capital improvement committee will be formed and starting up again soon.

#### Stanley Holz – EDC

Stanley said he met with Gerry Pons, Mike Scala and Robert DeAngelis of CEDC for discussion on what is happening with the plans for renovating the downtown. CEDC was approved for \$270,000 for feasibility studies – optimistic that things are going to go forward. Dan Hebert and Horizons and Warren Street were in to look at the Fiske Barn. It was their opinion it was not really worth renovating. There is not much there to do anything with. It was basically built for a barn.

Valerie asked about the downtown buildings. She was concerned about the buildings used for transient workers. Stanley said that is not what they are considering. It is to supply housing that is inadequate for people looking for jobs. People were coming up getting job offers and looking for places to live, but couldn't find anything. Valerie was concerned that it was housing for transient workers. CEDC is working on the downtown development project.

Tom Ladd was asking what the parking restrictions are in the areas around King Square. Peter suggested he speak with Chief Samson. Stanley said back when he owned the store there was two-hour parking for the area around the common. After discussion on the downtown parking, Peter said we will reach out to North Country Council to see if they have a planner who could do a comprehensive assessment and come up with some solutions and go from there. Let someone who is paid to do that kind of work do it.

A motion was made by Stanley Holz to enter into non-public session at 7:10 p.m. pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(I) consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present. The motion was seconded by John Tholl. Roll call to enter non-public session: Corey-Yes; Tholl-Yes; Holz-Yes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.