

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting
Minutes of Sept. 6, 2022
Unapproved

Board members present: Koran Cousino, Eric Cota, Nancy Boss, John Painter, Carin McCarthy
Others present: Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Josh Martell, Susan Klaiber, Star Porter, Will Bissonnette, Ellen Bissonnette, Steve Cooper, Stephen Ahern, Abby Ahern, Nick Bissonnette, Alan Quitner

The meeting was called to order by Chair Koran Cousino at 6:01 p.m. at the town clerk's office and via Zoom.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Koran Cousino stated she spoke with legal counsel regarding a topic on the agenda tonight and the addition of an executive session at the start of the meeting is recommended.

Motion: Nancy Boss moved to find that premature general public knowledge regarding a zoning bylaw complaint and confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body would clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage, because the selectboard risks disclosing its legal strategy if it discusses the legal guidance in public. Eric Cota second. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: Eric Cota moved to enter into executive session to discuss the town's legal guidance under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(A) of the Vermont Statutes. John Painter second.
Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: John Painter made a motion to exit executive session at 6:08 p.m. Carin McCarthy second.
Vote: Motion approved unanimously.
No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

Road Foreman Report

Josh Martell discussed further details about the grader lease vs. purchase. The interest rate will be higher for leasing/renting without the intent to purchase.

FEMA extension date: Rebecca noted that the town needs to apply for an extension for the remaining project. Josh to tell Rebecca the date to propose for completion to FEMA. Rebecca to submit formal request on behalf of Selectboard.

Starksboro Cooperative Pre-School

Star Porter attended on behalf of the preschool to request some safety signage for the parking area. Requests are:

1. Speed limit sign – 5 MPH
2. No smoking sign – smoking in commuter hut and cigarette butts. Requests signage to deter smoking at the bus stop and near the preschool outdoor area.
3. No parking sign for area by fence – parents and others have been dropping off there which leads to congestion if parked cars are there.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the requested signage by the preschool parking area as described. Carin McCarthy second. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Warrants

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the warrants for bills, orders, and payroll as presented. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Temporary Driveway access request from Dale Norton

Motion: John Painter made a motion to approve the temporary driveway access permit for Dale Norton at 590 Conway Road. Eric Cota second. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Renumbering Town Parcels

Town staff has been working with Chris Chamberlain who is updating the town wide parcel maps for zoning and lister work. Staff suggests renumbering the parcels in town to simply the numbering and establish a more user-friendly system for parcel IDs. The board supports this work.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the renumbering of town parcels and the proposal from C. Chamberlain for \$1400. Carin McCarthy second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Zoning Bylaw complaint – Steve Cooper

Steve Cooper, resident of 1113 Jerusalem Road, South Starksboro, attended to discuss an ongoing complaint from he and his wife, Jane, regarding the Bissonnette firewood processing operation that sits on an adjacent property on Jerusalem Road owned by Len Denice.

The Coopers have concerns about smoke and noise, activities on the land, and storage and removal of materials. They have had repeated interactions with the zoning administrators over the past 3 years. They are looking for relief and felt they were “ghosted” by the ZA in recent months. S. Cooper stated they did not think the DRB did its due diligence at the conditional use review in 2019 and asked if site visits had occurred. The Coopers did not appeal the DRB decision when it was issued and had assumed the application would be denied. Ellen Bissonnette said there should be a way to figure out a solution amicably. She also said asked that there be measurable tests done before any changes to the allowed business operations were to be issued.

K. Cousino stated that town has a specific process to follow for this complaint to be addressed and it does not involve the Selectboard. The Selectboard has no authority in this matter.

1. Submit a formal complaint to the Zoning Administrator
2. ZA will issue a formal response
3. Coopers may appeal the ZA's decision and be referred to the DRB
4. DRB will consider appeal and issue written decision
5. DRB decision can be appealed to the VT State Environmental Court

Jerusalem Schoolhouse and Fire Station

Susan Klaiber attended to discuss the research and new information on a proposal for the Fire Station #2. The committee has a new proposal that will address most of the concerns expressed by the DRB. They are asking for the Selectboard's approval to bring this new proposal to the DRB. Carin asked if the neighbors have been consulted about the new idea. Susan said not yet but it will be done shortly. Discussion continued about the appropriate process for proceeding – new DRB application vs. revised proposal. Rebecca will work with Susan and the DRB to confirm the correct next steps for DRB site plan review.

Selectboard Roundtable

Payroll clarification:

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to increase the Selectboard Assistant pay rate to \$30/hour plus mileage and to retroactively pay Rebecca Elder at this rate from July 12, 2022. Eric Cota second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Community Event – Carin gave updates on the event that is scheduled for 10/16. Peg Casey is coordinating with local groups and businesses. The Selectboard will contribute dessert or other food to support the event. More details to come.

PO sidewalk – Repair work is being scheduled. A new pad for the exterior mailbox will be poured at the same time (2x3 pad)

Pavilion – Concrete to be poured very soon. Contractor changed but price is still competitive and work will be done in next couple of weeks.

Motion to adjourn: Eric Cota moved at 7:43 p.m.; Carin McCarthy second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Selectboard Assistant

Special Meeting: Sept 13, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.
Next regular meeting: Sept. 20, 2022 at 6 p.m.