

**Town of Starksboro
Selectboard meeting minutes
October 3, 2017
DRAFT**

Present: Koran Cousino, Tony Porter, Peter Marsh, Keegan Tierney, Rebecca Elder (SB assistant)

Visitors: Dennis Casey, Jeff Keeney, Dave Russell, Representative from VAST

The meeting was called to order at 5:30

Agenda was reviewed. A request from Jane and Scott Ploof of Jerusalem Road to be added to the agenda was received. The request is regarding the posting of speed limit and other traffic signs on Jerusalem Road. Issue to be discussed at the next SB meeting on 10/17/17 and referred to the Road Foreman for follow up.

The board briefly discussed some administrative issues including adding a preparatory packet of information with the agenda for each meeting. This consolidated information will help board members prepare efficiently and have adequate time to review materials prior to meetings.

MOTION: Keegan Tierney moved and Koran Cousino seconded a motion to delay approval the September 19 minutes until the next regular meeting.

VOTE: All in favor.

MOTION: Koran Cousino moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion to pay all bills submitted.

VOTE: All in favor

Old Business

- Tony Porter drafted and signed an MOU allowing logging use of Brown Hill section until 12/31/17. The board members present also signed the MOU. After the Audys have signed, the document will be recorded at the Town Office.
- Keegan Tierney distributed a draft RFP for the repair work needed on the town office roof and porch. He will update the RFP based on comments from other board members, finalize, and send out for bids. Four contractors have expressed interest so far.
- Thacher Hurd Easement: S. Jefferies has communicated with GMP and VLT and will provide an update at next meeting.

Road Foreman Report: Tom Estey

- Ploof request – To be discussed at next meeting. (Received after meeting had been warned)
- Ed Hall asked if the Town would put stone in the turn-around on XX Road. Recently there was trash dumping including a freezer with rancid meat. T. Estey said the Town couldn't put stone there due to liability. The area cannot be ditched due to erosion dangers. Delineators with reflectors are needed. D. Casey said another culvert would be installed in the future.
- The Millhouse owners would like to remove the old guard rails so they can put lawn up to road. The guardrail was originally installed due to a steep drop that is no longer there. The owner may wish to put up a split rail fence, which must be 25 feet from center of road. There would be no change of access.
 - Koran Cousino voiced support of guardrail removal. The board has no objections. No approval needed.
- A resident on Big Hollow asked for some trees to be removed. A fence or retaining wall would be needed if the trees were removed.
- XX grant: T. Estey received a proposal from Otter Creek Engineering for an hourly rate for work needed. He will request a different quote structure to include a capital budget and estimate. OCE is doing work for 5-6 towns. The goal is to reduce town road crew labor time in the future.
- New clearing device worked well beneath guardrails.

- Road inventory review

Green Lantern Solar/Sam Carlson and David Russell

Sam Carlson from Green Lantern Solar (GL) returned to discuss leasing the former landfill area for solar array. The revised layout was distributed. P. Marsh asked for description of differences in the new layout:

- Delineated wetland (season now ending)
- Deer wintering area (east side) 100 ft set back (dotted red line)
- On south slope, can put closer rows, on the other slope a bit farther apart
- Confirmed they won't need to do tree clearing to deal with shading issues
- Large cherry tree needs to be removed; tree is right on the line, lower side of road towards the well

Carlson said Green Lantern's policy is to "do no harm" in developing these sites. GL just completed a similar project in Cambridge. It is a nice precedent: DEC and ANR are happy with the process. GL would use low pressure equipment to have less impact on the soil, have racks to go around methane pipes, and would allow no hard pounding on the landfill base.

GL's proposal is to put forward an option to lease with a one-year stipulation that the town would not lease or sell the land to anyone else.

T. Porter asked if there are any concerns about what exists now from GMP? No, this would just be putting up 3 additional poles with the possible need for one more pole close to site (anchor brace placement is tricky on landfill sites).

T. Porter asked Dave Russell is he had any concerns as an abutting landowner.

- Generally, no, the Russells support the project.
- They do have a PRD on seven (7) lots below the site. They are concerned about a vegetative buffer to create a visual screen. D. Russell reported he has tried some seedlings but they are slow growing.
- S. Carlson confirmed that the solar array would have 3 to 8 foot structures and because of the range in height, the land makes it challenging to create a full screen of vegetative cover.
- The Russells understand the growth would take time and some plantings might need height management. They do want a barrier.
- S. Carlson noted that one concern for GL might be that a future owner might plant some fast-growing white pines, and those could shade the array. The land lease with GL would require that the town stipulates unrestricted access to the sunlight.

S. Carlson will talk with their landscape architects. They will visit the site to look at the soil, the slopes, the angles, and what height of tree is needed. D. Russell noted that sunlight access could be included in the easement language. Two lots would be in the area in question. Green Lantern needs copies of the Russell development plan.

The board agreed a site visit would be useful soon to evaluate other possible scenarios given the development plans. The Russells want to make it work. S. Carlson noted that there would likely be added costs with a landfill site. GL will come up with a proposal to see if agreeable, then will re-run the numbers. It might be a lower lease than what they originally hoped to offer. S. Carlson said perhaps some seedling trees could be purchased from the Russells to help offset costs and use resources already there.

K. Tierney noted that the Planning Commission has already signed off on this proposal. Is any other input needed? He is prepared to sign an agreement if all parties are happy with the deal. KC and TP concur. Understand price might change.

K Cousino spoke with the Robinson school board and asked for this to be on an agenda very soon. (The Board is meeting less frequently as they transition to the unified district schedule.)

The Board discussed with S. Carlson whether any other sites would be of interest to Green Lantern. He will follow up with T. Porter/T. Estey for a site visit. He will also look at the ANR site re: delineation as it was updated after the garage was built.

D. Russell also noted that because of the former landfill, permitting requires the future development wells be dug south of the stream. There would be multiple houses on a line. There is additional expense to installing the lines to this location and impacts on his subdivision. At a past meeting with a previous Select Board, D. Russell said he was asked to provide expense estimate for the extra line. **2008-10 - Check minutes for info**

P. Marsh noted the Town will create an MOU so that, in the future, the costs of the piping and extra lines would be considered for reimbursement. There would not be a formal commitment but a recommendation to future Select Boards.

Zoning Administrator position vacancy

PC members Jeff Keeney and Dennis Casey brought a job description for the Selectboard to review. They presented several options for consideration. Short-term coverage is a priority since the position will be vacant as of 10/6/17 and there are a few pending zoning issues that must be addressed. New inquiries and requests are received roughly once a week. The PC expects the hiring process could take a couple of months, depending on if the position were a shared one with another town, such as New Haven if they are interested.

The Zoning Administrator position has incorporated additional responsibilities in recent years, including some grant management and coordination with consultant for the Town Plan. Dave Wetmore to review job responsibilities with Amy McCormick and Tony Porter.

The Board discussed various options for filling the short-term gap.

Consensus decision: Tony Porter to talk with Jeff Keeney and Amy McCormick to discuss details of their availability. Meeting to take place on 10/4/17 and Tony will follow up with the Selectboard about options.

Class 4 road classification

Koran and Susan will attend the October 19 meeting to discuss the Class 4 road classification issues.

P. Marsh asked if the Town Plan will change much in terms of forest fragmentation and conservation of land. J. Keeney indicated the Plan will be very similar and these issues have and will be considered. P. Marsh asked with regard to an example like Mason Hill – would reclassification tie the hands of future Select Boards regarding areas for development? Can a year-round dwelling be built on a class 4 road? D. Casey recalled from town planning meeting years ago that some people placed future development on the Mason Hill connector.

VAST representative re: Brown Hill

_____ attended to receive an update on Class 4 road discussions. T. Porter explained the Selectboard's desire to get input with PC and CC before proceeding with any decisions. After that, there would be another public form. No changes will be happening quickly.

The Selectboard feels there are more questions that need answers. The SB has not received much public feedback. One resident (Farr) spoke with T. Porter about concerns and asked when a decision might be made. P. Marsh asked, if Class 4 road status were changed, is there anything that would negatively affect VAST access? No, as long as VAST can access the road for grooming the trail.

P. Marsh and K. Tierney to attend Conservation Commission meeting to hear their input. K. Cousino expressed interest in what the CC arguments are for and against reclassification. Generally the SB wants to broaden the spectrum of the conversation and hearing more from the planning perspective. It will likely be beneficial to distinguish among the examples – Perry Sweet; Mason Hill, Brown Hill – and that one solution does not fit.

The SB can bring the reclassifications up for a vote at Town Meeting or there can be a petition. For a petition, 5% of the voters must sign the request. The SB does not have an obligation to take any action now. Decisions could be made regarding any of the three current roads or could be left for action at a later date.

Thacher Hurd Easement: S. Jefferies has communicated with GMP and VLT and will provide an update at next meeting.

MOTION: Keegan Tierney made a motion to adjourn at 7:56 p.m. Peter Marsh seconded.
VOTE: All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Selectboard Assistant

Approved X/X/17

DRAFT