

Select Board Members

Peter Hood, Chair
 Mary Just
Skinner,
Vice Chair
 William Callnan
 Steve Martin
 Liz Scharf

MINUTES

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD

Tuesday, August 25, 2015

5:00 PM

Middlesex Town Clerk's Office

5 Church Street

Middlesex, Vermont 05602

(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

Present: Chair Peter Hood, Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner, Members Steve Martin, and Liz Scharf, Bill Rossmassler, ANR Lands Administrative and Records Coordinator Brian Horvath, Jenny Montagne, Middlesex Country Store owner David Specht, Surveyor Mike Patterson, Brian Redmond and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and welcomed Bill, Ryan and Jenny. There were no amendments

Update on Cynthia Steed Property

Bill updated the Board about efforts to evict two vagrants who have been living in Cynthia Steed's cabins off Notch Road since March 15th. The Washington County Sheriff served them legal notices of eviction on August 19th, giving them 14 days to vacate the property. After that, no-trespassing notices may be posted.

Bill also said he met with Cynthia today to discuss the terms of a potential sale of her 38.9 acres to the Town to adjoin, and provide access to, the Town Forest. Her asking price is \$40,000 with a life estate (or easement) of perhaps 150 years for her son and grandchildren. In addition, she would like a "buffer area" that would be free of timber harvesting, public trails, etc. that would start where the camp road meets the stream, 150 feet west, south 75 feet, east 150 feet. Peter said he would want to raze Eleanor Ott's cabin so it didn't invite problems.

The question was how to pay for the purchase and whether there should be a special public hearing to spend \$40,000 that hasn't been budgeted. There is already \$20,000 in the Conservation Fund for land acquisition, Bill said, and Mary noted that this is the result of voters approving annual contributions to the fund for just this purpose.

Bill said the Conservation Committee is following protocol by appointing a subcommittee of volunteers to review the proposal and then make a recommendation to the Conservation Committee on September 10th. After that, the CC will make a recommendation to the Select Board at its next meeting on September 22nd.

The Board agreed that abutters should be notified of the potential sale of the property and that legal counsel should be sought on whether the Town may purchase the property even though it was not a line item in this year's budget without a special Town Meeting. In addition, the Board would like a provision to address neglect and/or abandonment of Cynthia's cabin if no one maintains it.

That said, Board members agreed they were supportive of buying the land which would provide so far the only public access to the Town Forest.

Clearing Title of Phelps Hoyt/Town Forest Properties

Ryan explained that in researching the title to 43 land-locked acres Phelps Hoyt purchased from the Town in 1999 after it acquired the parcel at a tax sale, he discovered that a small sliver of Town Forest had been accidentally included in that deed which is recorded in Volume 25, pps 218-221 of the Town land records. Phelps was never taxed on that land. It appears to be a scrivener's error that needs to be corrected before Phelps can donate his 43 acres to the State of Vermont. The Board agreed that a Quit Claim needs to be drawn up to deed that extra portion back to the Town. Bill said Phelps has agreed to cover the cost of that.

Lee Rosberg's Request for Funding to Help Pay for Winooski River Clean-Up

As Lee stated in an August 25, 2015, email that he would request funding for next year, this item was passed over.

Reconciling Property Line between Town Hall/Morse Property

Though he drew the survey of the Town Hall property when it included the "Morse" property behind it, Mike said the deeds are too old and too unclear to determine where, exactly, the line was between the Town property and the Morse property before that latter parcel was acquired and merged into the Town's. He reviewed the current survey map with the Board and potential buyer, David, who agreed that the property line should go behind the old Fire Department, along the top of the bank to a pin at Route 2. David and Mike inspected the proposed line outside and returned to the meeting in agreement.

MOTION: Liz moved and Steve seconded a motion to accept this new line as the definitive property line between the Town and the old "Morse" parcel. The motion passed.

Updated Middlesex Dog Ordinance

The Board reviewed the model ordinance from VLCT and suggested changes. It will be brought up at the next Select Board meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded approval of the 7.28.2015 Select Board minutes. The motion passed. Liz abstained.

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded approval of the 8.11.2015 Special Select Board Meeting minutes. The motion passed. Peter abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Board reviewed an August 25, 2015 email from Angelo Napolitano saying that he and his wife would not pay their property taxes if the Town sold the Morse property to David Specht.

The Board reviewed an email from Traven Leyshon asking if the Progressive Party could use the Bandstand for a caucus on September 10th. The Board agreed.

The Board reviewed an August 17 letter from VLCT noting fire and safety hazards in Town Hall. One issue was trash in the furnace room. Right now the Road Crew gathers Town Hall trash and recyclables. The Board agreed to contract with Casella to put out two containers and pick them up weekly. Also, Weight Watchers, which adds a lot of trash, should be charged more rent to cover this cost.

In addition, the VLCT letter noted that the fire door needed to be closed and a mechanism installed so that heat could be vented to the hallway in the winter. The Board agreed that Bourne's, which services the furnace, could install this on the door.

All Orders were signed.

Peter adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Merriman, Select Board Assistant

DRAFT