

TOWN OF HIGHGATE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Thursday, August 17, 2017 @ 7pm

Approved Minutes

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.

A. Call To Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Sharon Bousquet, Chair @ 7:02pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Highgate Selectboard Members –Sharon Bousquet, Chair; Josh LaRocque, Vice-Chair; Randy Connelly; Steve LaFar; Bruce Butler (arrived @ 7:05pm)

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk/Public Meetings Clerk; Shelley Laroche, Town Treasurer/Delinquent Tax Collector; Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator

Public / Other – Alice S. Cota; Woody Rouse; Duane Tremblay; Richard Wilkens; Taylor Newton – NRPC; Ty Choiniere; Brian Spears

B. Public Comment(s)

- Sue Cota would like to have the intersection of Monument Road and Tanglewood Drive looked at to increase street lighting in that area. She is concerned with how dark that area is, and referred to a recent structure fire in the development. Josh will take a look at it and then get together with Pat Loyer, Public Works Director.

C. NRPC Taylor Newton – Draft Energy Chapter for Town Plan

Taylor was present and has also been working closely with the Planning Commission on this. The timeline for adopting this into our town plan was discussed. There will be one public hearing with the Planning Commission and two public hearings with the Selectboard prior to adoption. We are also looking into modifications in our town plan with regard to village designations, so that can all be done at the same time. There is no rush from the town's perspective. A motion was already made by the Selectboard a few meetings ago. Taylor will plan on attending the PC hearing and the first Selectboard hearing once they are scheduled.

D. Parks & Recreation Committee – Ty Choiniere / Brian Spears

- **Arena parking lot update & other misc. updates**
Ty and Brian are here with three bids for sealing the arena parking lot. We budgeted \$7,000.00 for this project. There was some discussion about narrowing the parking lot section near the road. Pat is against doing this, for plowing purposes. We have received bids from: Black Beauty Driveway Sealing \$7,500.00; Bushey Seal Coating \$6,145.00; Freshcoat Asphalt Services \$6,634.00. Bids cover cleaning up the lot, filling cracks and sealing. We are familiar with Busheys and are comfortable with them. Motion by Steve LaFar to go with Bushey Seal Coating and their bid of \$6,145.00. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. They gave an update on the bleacher project at the arena. They look good, but there are still some issues that need to be worked out. A motion was made a few months ago for Brian and Ty to help with mowing until August. The public works department is still buried with projects for the remainder of the season. We are also in a new budget season, so there are funds available. Ty and Brian are willing to help for the remainder of the mowing season. Motion by Josh LaRocque to have Ty Choiniere and Brian Spears finish the mowing for the remainder of the season. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. Brian reported that the water fountain in the park is now working. It has been shut off for 15+ years. There is a valve that leaks underground when the valve is wide open. Pat can get a new valve, but we will have to dig it up. The board thanked Brian for his time to get it working again. The playground equipment is in for the arena and ballfields location. There will be a community “build it day” on Saturday, September 23rd beginning at 9am. Volunteers are needed and coffee, donuts and lunch will be provided.

E. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

1. Check warrants

There were questions on the invoices for HVFD from Boat Headquarters.

2. Misc.

Tax bills will be printed and mailed on Sept. 15th. This year, instead of seeing “local agreements” as a line item on the tax bills, it will say “veterans exemptions”, which is what it really is. This has raised questions in the past, so hopefully this will make it clear to the taxpayers. The auditors will be here starting August 30th. The Finance Committee met on August 14th. Shelley and Heidi were the only members in attendance. The RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for fixed asset inventory services was issued and has been posted with a due date of September 8th by 4pm. The FC still needs to deal with the banking and investment policy when they meet again on September 11th.

F. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes from Aug. 3rd

Motion by Randy Connelly to accept the minutes from August 3, 2017, as written. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

2. MAHA fundraiser update – Sept. 16th

Wendi had some updates for the board with regard to this fundraiser. The catering permit with 802 Cocktails has been approved by DLC. Also, Ben Lowell (Constable) has offered to be on site for security at the event.

3. Bids on items at Machia property

Bids were due today, Aug. 17th, for anyone interested in items left behind at the property. We received seven bids from the following: Lisa Wilda \$60.00 for 6 windows and 10 shutters; Julie Rice \$5.00 per shutter (4 or 5) / 2 or more of the 6 pane windows for \$5.00 / and one big long window for \$10.00; Justine McNeice \$10.00 for 2 of the 6 pane windows; Art Bousquet \$20.00 for all shutters; Jim Laden \$50.00 for the water pump, tank, old mailbox and tire; Patty Rainville \$10.00 for 9 shutters or \$20.00 for all the rest; Dean Fackler \$10.00 for a metal register grate. Woody Rouse was present but did not put in a written bid. He made a verbal bid at the meeting of \$10.00 for all the hubcaps and \$5.00 for the t-tops. Motion by Josh LaRocque to accept the above bids with the funds going towards the needed repairs for the water fountain in the park. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED**. There are still items available at the property. Sharon will be at the property located at 14 St. Armand Road on Wednesday, Aug. 23rd and Thursday, Aug. 24th from 5:15-6:15pm for those who placed bids to pick up their items. Anyone else who shows up during these time frames and wants any of the remaining items is free to show up and take them away. Donations will gladly be accepted and also put towards the fountain in the park. Contact Sharon to set up any separate arrangements, but there will be no separate arrangements for free items. Wendi will contact bidders about pick up dates and times.

4. Misc.

~ Sharon attended an Open Meeting Law training in Swanton on August 9th.
~ The final summer concert is this Sunday, Aug. 20th @ 7pm.
~ An employee of the Highgate Jolley has contacted the town about having a bake sale on town property located between the vet’s office and the gun shop. There are some benches and shade there. This will be to benefit Mr. Roy Bockus, who is a Highgate resident and recently underwent a liver transplant. His wife is an employee of the store. The board approved this request and only asked that they be mindful of parking in that area and that the area is left clean when they are done. The bake sale will be in the next few weeks, no date has been chosen yet.

G. Administrator Items

1. Dispatching tower contract update

This has been delayed some due to vacation schedules but is still in the works. We may be able to wrap this up by the next meeting. Bruce asked about Mrs. Chevalier’s email some time ago referring to other dispatching services in Vermont. There was some discussion on Middlebury dispatch services and Shelburne dispatch services. Bruce is curious how they compare to St. Albans. Having St. Albans dispatch on our tower would be a service to the entire community, not just Highgate, and is not necessarily

contingent on contracting with them. We are, however, in a contract with St. Albans dispatch from July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 and the amount is \$32,592.70.

2. Summer Sounds request – shrubs at Veterans Memorial

We have had a request to trim or remove the shrubs at the front of the memorial because it is difficult to see the performers during the concerts in the park. There was some discussion on this, with varying opinions. Some would like to see the opening in the front larger, some want it left as is. This is a respectful space for people to come and reflect on those who sacrificed so much. There was also discussion on moving the concerts to the Highgate Falls park and the potential for a bandstand structure in the future. For now the shrubs have been trimmed but will be left as is. This Sunday is the last concert for the 2017 series.

3. Hungerford Construction contract – park & ride grant

This is for the work at the front of the park and ride to provide curbing and a green space. A site visit has been performed with AOT and Mr. Hungerford is ready to move forward. The amount is \$22,800.00 and is covered through the park and ride grant. Motion by Josh LaRocque to give Heidi permission to sign this contract and get this project moving. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**

4. ADA Modifications – grant resolution signatures

We do not yet have bid documents or an environmental review started on this. There is a resolution in the Selectboard packet for us to apply for construction funds and a hearing will need to be held at the next Selectboard meeting. Rich Wilkens asked if any ADA work can be completed prior to applying for this grant. Heidi doesn't believe we can do that. Rich is concerned about liability issues with people not having access to our building. We have funds in the CIP that were approved at town meeting. Rich would like to see some work be done, like the bathrooms. Bruce would like us to prioritize things and doesn't understand why these projects are taking so much time to get started. Shelley pointed out that although the voters approved the funding, we have not yet collected any taxes. That will be happening this fall, with a Nov. 1st due date. Sharon added that there are some projects that are happening this year – such as the HVFD floor, the municipal roof, the sidewalk project and the park and ride green space and bus shelter. All of these things take time, and can be frustrating. The ADA construction grant funding will be awarded in February. Bruce also pointed out that Mrs. Chevalier had accused the board of being “delinquent” in taking care of this building. The floor and roof projects are not contingent on this ADA grant. Sharon cautioned everyone that just because funding was set aside in the CIP does not mean we are obligated to spend it. We need to be prudent and look out for our taxpayers. Heidi will put together a timeline for this ADA project. If the board signs the resolution tonight, they can always change their minds right up until the time she submits the grant application to them for signature. Motion by Randy Connelly to go forward with this ADA grant application. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED.** Sharon signed the resolution.

5. Highway and storm water grant application submitted

Heidi submitted this on Tuesday for the Machia Road slide issue. The amount is \$900,000.00 and the town would be on the hook for \$183,000.00. We will not hear back on this for a while.

6. Village designation application update

We touched on this issue earlier. Heidi will be renewing our application for Highgate Center and putting together new proposals for Highgate Falls and Highgate Springs.

7. Sidewalk project update

The sidewalk committee will meet on August 22nd @ 6pm to review the applications for construction inspection services. The construction bids for the sidewalk are due August 22nd by 3pm and will be opened at that time. **This project is happening this fall, to be completed by November. Any work on signage can be done after November.**

8. Municipal planning grant

This grant would help facilitate the steering committee for the Machia property and help them to manage public hearings. Anything over \$8,000.00 has a 50% match. Bruce would like the committee to pursue public input and all ideas while we wait to hear about this grant opportunity. There was discussion on the committee and nominating a Chair to lead the

committee and plan meetings. We have had some community members express interest in being involved, as well as the original committee of Steve LaFar, Randy Connelly and Chris Yates. Rich Wilkens would like a member of the Planning Commission to also be on the committee. This committee will ultimately report to the PC. Steve LaFar has volunteered to step up as the Chair of the Machia Property Committee and Woody Rouse will be the Co-Chair. They will get information to Wendi on when they will hold meetings so they will be properly warned and open to the public in compliance with Open Meeting Law. The maximum for this MPG is \$20,000.00. Motion by Randy Connelly to apply for the maximum amount of \$20,000.00, with anything over \$8,000.00 requiring a 50% match, meaning that the town will have to budget for \$6,000.00 in next year's budget. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. There is a lot happening on the Machia property right now with the Brownsfield program and the Phase II assessment. Ty agrees that it is ok to go slow on this issue and with any decisions regarding this property.

H. Selectboard Items

1. Duane Tremblay – Thak Blvd.

Duane would like the town to take over Thak Blvd. as a town road. The second coat of black top has been finished. He has been before the Selectboard previously regarding this issue. There is a public hearing process involved. Sharon wants to be more informed on the process before going forward to understand what the town's obligations are. Pat Loyer has been on vacation, so he has not reviewed the documents yet either. Duane stated that the road was built to A76 standards. Mr. Tremblay will receive a letter from the board when they are ready to move forward with this process. An engineer would have to certify that the road is adequate. There is also a storm water permit on the property which would have conditions. The prior board said they would not take over the storm water permit. There is a homeowners association within the development now and there are bylaws listed within each deed for each parcel that is conveyed. There are two more lots left to sell. Duane has total control of the association until the final lot is sold. Motion by Randy Connelly to consider Mr. Tremblay's request and to contact him by letter when the board is ready to proceed. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

2. Pines Plains Road – culvert issue

The hole is filled with stone and the culvert has failed and needs to be replaced. The option on the table is to reduce the road down to a trail. Steve spoke with the landowner on Pines Plains Road and he is willing to take it over and take it off the town's hands and maintain it. There are some state statutes surrounding this issue and some reading for the board to do. The culvert will be very expensive to replace and not doing anything will mean continued issues for the town. North West Solid Waste District owns property on the far end of that road, which is accessed through Sheldon. If we keep it as a trail, the town will still have rights to it. In order to give it up, we would have to contact Sheldon and they would have to be agreeable to it as well. This will be discussed more at the next meeting.

I. Upcoming Events

Aug. 22	6pm	Sidewalk Comm. Mtg.
Sept. 7	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Sept. 11	3pm	Finance Comm. Mtg.
Sept. 13	7pm	Republican Party Caucus
Sept. 14	6pm	DRB Mtg. with site visit at 5pm
Sept. 15		OFFICES ARE CLOSED – TAX BILLS MAILED OUT
Sept. 19	6pm	Planning Comm. Mtg.

J. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet for the Selectboard and Town Administrator to enter into executive session @ 8:53pm to discuss legal, personnel and contracts where premature general public knowledge would place the town or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Heidi Britch-Valenta exited the executive session @ 10:05pm. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 11:29pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

K. Adjournment

Motion by Josh LaRocque to adjourn the meeting @ 11:30pm. The motion was seconded by Randy Connelly – **APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted by,



Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk
& Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by



Sharon Bousquet - Chair, Highgate Selectboard