

# TOWN OF HIGHGATE Selectboard Meeting

Thursday, January 17, 2019 @ 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; Joshua LaRocque, Vice-Chair (arrived @ 7:22pm); Bruce Butler; Steve LaFar *absent* – *Randy Connelly*

**Highgate Office Staff** – Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator; Shelley Laroche – Town Treasurer

**Public / Other** – Henry Rainville; Tom Conley; Alice (Sue) Cota; Woody Rouse; Clarence Miller; Michael Kravetz; Andrew Maxfield; Michael Frett – St. Albans Messenger; Chris Shepard; Richard Trombley; Daniel J. Spear; Dawna Duprey; Raymond Laroche; Georgette Roddy; David Roddy; Sarah Chevalier; Eric Chevalier; Elizabeth Tinella; Peter Tinella; Autumn Barnett – BUILD; Paul Simon – HI, LLC; Kevin Racek – Centerline Architects; Nathan Suter – BUILD; Greta Brunswick – NRPC; Amber Machia; Ron Nye; Evangeline LaRocque; Virginia Holiman; Kellie Uzell; Rebecca Howrigan; David Desorcie; Michelle Beaulieu; Ryan Maskell; Steve Scott; Philip (Butch) & Donna Brosseau

### **B. Village Core Master Plan (VCMP) Concept Design Presentation**

#### **BUILD Presentation of MPG Study of former Machia Property**

#### **Brownfield Hearing for Steinhour Remediation**

#### **Brownfield Agreement**

The following were present for this presentation and discussion: Nathan Suter – BUILD; Autumn Barnett – BUILD; Paul Simon – HI, LLC; Kevin Racek – Centerline Architects; Greta Brunswick – NRPC. BUILD became involved in this project in 2018 when the town hired them as consultants. From here, the steering committee (Clarence Miller, David Roddy, Woody Rouse, Steve LaFar and Richard Noel) and the Selectboard will be making recommendations. BUILD was hired to work with the public and architects to come up with concepts that encompass the values in our community. Three concepts have been developed. Nathan thanked Heidi and the VCMP steering committee as well as the public that engaged in the various pieces leading to this presentation. Autumn Barnett from BUILD explained the steps involved and how the data was gathered that lead to the three concepts. 1) Back in June local business owners were invited to a public discussion. 2) A survey was put out for residents and 57 responses were received. From those surveys it was shown that people want to see a place to gather and a place to eat. Also from the survey there were other questions, such as how to pay to develop the property. 74% of those who responded said some town funding should be used. 3) In September two charrettes were held, one during the week and one on a Saturday. A total of 22 people attended those sessions. Kevin Racek from Centerline Architects then spoke about the three schemes that were derived and also shared some 3-D modeling sketches as well. During the charrettes it was clear that residents wanted to see any

commercial / retail along the Route 78 side of the property. All or most of the participants envisioned a new library towards the back of the property, more towards the school. Kevin pointed out differences in the schemes. For Example: Scheme A shows the library closest to the school with parking between the buildings and the commercial lot up tight to Route 78. Scheme B shows the retail space more towards the middle of the site with roadways and parking all around. Scheme C shifts the library down and everything is closer together. All schemes have 70-75 parking spaces. A garden and gazebo were popular in all schemes. Most agreed that existing buildings on the site need to be removed. Different ideas were also proposed by residents, such as a hockey rink, banquet hall, senior housing or multi-family housing. Costs at this point are very difficult to pin down because there are many unknowns. Approximate building costs are \$250.00 per square foot for the proposed library space and \$225.00 per square foot for the proposed commercial space. Many other variables were discussed, such as: utilities, parking, remediation of existing buildings, hazardous material to be removed, lighting, landscaping, asphalt, pavers, septic systems, water systems, gas, electricity and more. Total building costs are just estimates and were presented as follows: Scheme A - \$6 million for two buildings; Scheme B - \$6.8 million for buildings; Scheme C - \$6.5 million for two buildings. These are building costs and not total project costs. Total project costs are also just estimates and were presented as follows: Scheme A - \$6,904,756.00; Scheme B - \$7,926,641.00; Scheme C - \$7,612,551.00. Hand-outs were provided with regard to projected costs, which generated many more questions from those present. It was noted that the town may choose to take on the library portion and the rest be the job of a commercial developer. There are many ways the town could go about this project, and that is now the task of the steering committee and Selectboard to decide how this moves forward. Paul Simon from The Housing Initiative / Park Architecture walked us through some of the next steps that will need to happen. The first step will be to analyze the existing conditions further. A survey will also be one of the next steps. An attorney will do a full title review for the town parcel as well as the school parcel to include any easements and recorded information. Work will also need to continue (that is currently ongoing) with regard to finalizing the environmental site assessment. Funds will need to be obtained for engineering costs. It does help us greatly that we are already a designated village center. This puts us at an advantage for funding some of these next steps, one of which is obtaining an municipal planning grant (MPG) for the engineering work. Once an engineer is hired, feasibility studies will be completed and other alternatives evaluated. A report will be provided to the town with the full scope of what is needed to develop the proposed commercial lot as well as the proposed library building. Concepts will be revised accordingly afterwards. Kevin pointed out these are only concepts, nothing is final here. There will be a pre-permitting review process to be sure everything meets state and local codes. A final planning and feasibility review will take place prior to moving forward towards real design and construction drawings. The town could choose to focus just on the library site and prepare an RFP to go out for the commercial lot. Nathan added that a complete report is available and will also be available by pdf through the town. It does outline a great deal of everything covered tonight. There was discussion on how an RFP (request for proposals) can give us some say in what happens by adding criteria of what the town wants to see. We can stipulate things and still have some control. There were multiple questions from those present. Peter Tinella asked how the town will go about getting that small piece of land, currently owned by the school, that is shown as part of all the schemes. Chris Shepard answered that there will be a warned article for March 5<sup>th</sup> asking if the voters will authorize the school selling that piece (Nadeau property) to the town for \$1.00 and the transaction has to happen by June 30<sup>th</sup>. This transaction needs

to happen before we are forced to merge as a unified district. Andrew Maxfield asked about the commercial property and what is envisioned for that proposed space. We have public input on this from the surveys and more will be needed. Finding people interested in that commercial space will be key. Sue Cota expressed concern with all three of the schemes and the curb cuts onto Route 78 which is already very busy and often congested in our village certain times of the day. A traffic analysis will be part of this process. Michael Kravetz had questions about the contamination at the site currently and how that is being dealt with. Greta from NRPC will be speaking to that topic shortly. Greta confirmed there is no groundwater contamination at the site and spoke about soil remediation. Peter Tinella asked what this was going to cost the taxpayers. He added that a very small percentage replied to the survey (57 people). He has sat through lengthy conversations at town meeting about purchasing a dump truck, he can't imagine the conversation involved with a project cost of \$6 million! The conversation turned to funding options, which include grants and the possible sale of our current library building. Dan Spears had comments about the total building costs presented and had questions about the potential of obtaining grant funding. Michael Kravetz also asked about the timeline for this project. Sharon Bousquet, Selectboard Chair, replied that nothing here is concrete, these are ideas and figures that represent if we did it all and all at once with no assistance. This does not mean there will be a new library or new commercial space. We have to start somewhere and these concepts give a place to start and a place to go. This project could never happen. Right now the steering committee is concerned and committed to cleaning up the property and knocking down the Steinhour Café, which will be happening in the near future. Sharon further explained the phase one testing that has taken place. Greta elaborated some on how the town acquired the property and is now working with the Brownfield program and NRPC with the cleanup process. Clarence Miller spoke to how the project could be done in phases, and how he sees it taking a long time. Eric Chevalier asked how much longer the town has to pay on the arena bond. We are in year #4 of a 15 year bond. We do not know yet about the Machia Road slide situation and what that will ultimately cost the town either. Henry Rainville stated that he voted yes to purchase the property at town meeting a few years ago, but he looks at this as more of a "flip" situation. He believes we need much more input on this project and he attended the workshops. He would like to see the town find a buyer and let them develop it, rather than build something that is not the buyers dream. Henry was more impressed with the business workshop than the charrettes. Greta commented that we will be looking at wastewater alternatives as part of this process and that ANR has funding options available. Cleanup and remediation are the next steps, regardless. Autumn finished by saying that this concludes their work with the town on this project. Going forward the steering committee and the Selectboard will take the ball and run with it. Those present thanked the consultants and architects for their work and for being here this evening. David Roddy noted that the steering committee members are all volunteers and residents can join the effort. Greta Brunswick from NRPC is an excellent resource for the town and has worked with us on a number of projects. Greta spoke to the Brownfield process and what will happen next. This meeting is also a required public hearing on a cleanup plan, specifically at the café building. Greta will be talking with the board about the grant agreement and it will be executed very shortly to advertise a bid for the contractor to do the abatement work. She will work with the town to make sure everything is compliant. One purpose of tonight is to make the community aware that federal funds have been acquired to abate the café building. The next steps of the environmental cleanup will be a small soil issue at the former Machia property. Taking down the former hotel / home is another project and we will have to mitigate the historical impact. Greta touched on

the archeological impact as well. The second phase of the Brownfield process is abating the material at the former Machia home (former hotel) estate. A major hurdle will be section 106 – historic preservation compliance. She closed by saying this is all very manageable and that we have done everything right to get where we are now. The state is a partner with us and want to see the site redeveloped. The issues are quite small in the grand scheme of things and the environmental piece will not hold us back. An agreement is in the Selectboard packet. The town's cost share is 20% on top of our grant and our total contribution will be \$2,673.00. We still have funds for this project in our last CIP. Bruce had some questions about the town's match, which is shown on page 12 of the document. Greta noted a 10% contingency has been built in. Motion by Steve LaFar to sign the Brownfields Clean-Up Revolving Loan Fund Grant Agreement. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

**C. Public Comment(s)**

Chris Shepard let everyone know that the organizational meeting for the Franklin NorthWest Unified Union School District is now **FEBRUARY 20 @ 7PM @ MVU**. The original meeting on Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> was cancelled. It is very important to attend. It will be decided, among other things, how we vote on school budgets going forward – from the floor or on a ballot. It would be great to see a lot of Highgate people there. The organizational meeting has to be a floor vote. Please attend this very important meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> in the MVU theater @ 7pm!

**D. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche**

**1. Check Warrants**

There were no questions on the check warrants.

**2. Misc.**

- Butch is here to discuss our salt supply. Our salt budget has been spent already. Shelley estimates the PWD budget will be overspent this year by \$8,000.00. She feels comfortable that purchasing more salt is necessary and there are funds to use in the fund balance. Butch is requesting to purchase 100 ton, which will cost roughly \$8,000.00. We will need sand also, but he will try to get that from the pit on Frontage Road. A grizzly bar has been borrowed from the Town of Franklin. Josh would like to budget for a set of our own. Most of them are made and George Britch can probably do it for us. One load of salt is 33 ton, so it will take three loads and we can't get it all at one time. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve \$8,000.00 from the fund balance to be used for the purchase of 100 ton of salt. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- We have been working hard on the 2018 Town Report. It will be going to the printers tomorrow. Our draft will be available soon afterwards, with the reports being available for pick up in early February.

**E. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon**

**1. Minutes**

Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from January 3, 2019, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Bruce Butler to approve the minutes from January 10, 2019, as written. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

**2. Town Meeting Updates & Deadlines**

Today at 5pm was the deadline for signed petitions for warned articles. 110 minimum registered voter signatures were required. One petition exceeded the number of signatures, while the other fell far short of the requirement. The next deadline is

January 28<sup>th</sup> by 5pm for consent forms and petitions for elected offices to be voted on by Australian ballot on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Minimum requirement is 22 registered voter signatures and the list of offices can be seen below. Absentee ballots should be available starting the second week of February and the information will be posted as soon as they are available.

## Highgate VT Town Meeting 2019

Petitions & consent of candidate forms are available for the following positions to be voted on by Australian Ballot on March 5, 2019

Petitions and consent of candidate forms are due to Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk, no later than Monday, January 28, 2019 @ 5pm in order for your name to appear on the ballot

*Petitions must be signed by 1% of Highgate registered voters (a minimum of 22 registered voter signatures)*

MODERATOR	for the ensuing year
SELECTBOARD MEMBER	3 year term
SELECTBOARD MEMBER	2 year term
LISTER	3 year term
LISTER	2 years remaining on a 3 year term
LISTER	1 year remaining on a 3 year term
CEMETERY COMMISSIONER	5 year term
TRUSTEE OF TRUST FUNDS	3 year term
LIBRARY TRUSTEE	5 year term
TOWN CLERK	3 year term
TOWN TREASURER	3 year term

Stop by the Town Clerk's Office to pick up your paperwork, or contact Wendi by phone or email @ 868-5002 [wdusablon@highgatevt.org](mailto:wdusablon@highgatevt.org)

**3. Approve and Sign 2019 Town Meeting Warning**

Motion by Bruce Butler to approve and sign the 2019 Town Meeting Warning. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

**4. Applications for Parks & Rec. Director and Zoning Administrator**

- Application packets for the **full time Parks & Recreation Director** are due to Heidi by January 28<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30pm. More information is available on the town's website [www.highgatevt.org](http://www.highgatevt.org) under "announcements".
- Applications for the **part time Zoning Administrator** are due to Heidi by January 31<sup>st</sup> @ 4:30pm. More information is also available on the town's website [www.highgatevt.org](http://www.highgatevt.org) under "announcements".

**5. Misc.**

Anna Roberts, Zoning Administrator, asked Wendi to present the Certificate of Approved Location (COAL) to the Selectboard this evening for M5 Property Group, LLC located on Cook Road. They were at the last DRB meeting and all conditions have been agreed upon and met with regard to the town finally issuing them their COAL. This COAL is needed for them to apply for permitting from the State of Vermont. Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the COAL for M5. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

**F. Administrator Items**

**1. Grant / Project Updates**

An update is in the Selectboard packets. Heidi noted that Butch and the PWD team have done a great job with all the changes to be made to get the road map to agree with our current conditions for the annual AOT reports. Some improvements were made and some roads changed from gravel to paving, etc. Heidi wants to have all the proper details before having the board sign off at the next meeting.

**2. Misc.**

This Saturday at the Enosburg Falls Methodist Church @ 10:30am our very own Sharon Bousquet will be on the panel at this presentation “LEARN WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A MEMBER OF A TOWN OR SCHOOL BOARD”. A pot luck lunch will also be served for those that would like to attend.

**G. Selectboard Items**

**1. Field Days Annual Letter**

Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the annual letter in support of events held at Franklin County Field Days. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.** Motion by Josh LaRocque for Butch Brosseau to use the town’s grader at these Franklin County Field Days events. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED.**

**2. AOT Annual Reports**

Was discussed above under F #1.

**3. Video Surveillance and Physical Access Control Policy**

This is a draft policy that we can adopt at a future meeting. It is in the drop box for the board to review.

**4. Misc.**

- Henry Rainville had questions about paving. He also asked if taking down the house on the former Machia property will be a town vote or will that just happen? Sharon would like to see that be a topic of discussion at town meeting so the committee has a direction to go in.
- Dan Spear thanked the town for posting the Methodist Church dinners on the digital board. It helps them to make ends meet and they appreciate it! Members of the audience commented that they are very good meals! Their dinners are the second Friday of each month and take out is also available.
- Town Offices are closed Monday, Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> – MLK Jr. Day.
- Sharon expressed our sympathy to the family of Real Laroche, who passed away this week. Real and his wife, Marie Claire (Mary), were honored in our town report last year. They have been instrumental in making a difference in our town and to their family, we are very sorry for their loss. Josh LaRocque is their nephew and noted that Real’s service will be Monday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at St. Louis Catholic Church on Lamkin Street @ 11am.

**H. Upcoming Events**

Jan. 21		Offices are CLOSED – MLK Jr. Day
Jan 23	5:30pm	Regional Rec Mtg – Franklin School
Jan 23	CANCELLED	SPECIAL SCHOOL MTG - CANCELLED
Jan. 28	5:30pm	Recreation Commission Mtg. @ arena
Jan. 28	by 5pm	Petitions to run for elected offices due with min. 1% (22) reg. voter signatures
Feb. 7	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
Feb. 14	6pm	Development Review Board
Feb. 19	6pm	Planning Commission Mtg.
Feb. 20	7pm	Franklin NorthWest Unified Union School District – SPECIAL MTG @ MVU
Feb 21	7:00pm	SB MTG - Town Mtg PUBLIC INFO PRESENTATION
Mar. 5	10am	Town Meeting Day @ Highgate Elem.– polls open 7am – 7pm

Motion by Steve LaFar to exit the regular meeting @ 9:06pm. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**

**I. Executive Session**

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to enter into executive session with Heidi Britch-Valenta for personnel, contracts and legal @ 9:07pm, where premature general public knowledge would place the town and / or the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to exit executive session @ 9:35pm. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

**J. Adjournment**

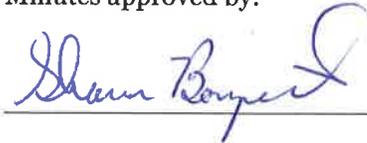
Motion by Sharon Bousquet to adjourn the meeting @ 9:36pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:



Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk

Minutes approved by:



Sharon Bousquet – Chair, Highgate Selectboard

