

TOWN OF HIGHGATE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Thursday, May 4, 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 (arrived @ 7:07pm); Bruce Butler; Steve LaFar; *absent – Randy Connelly*

Highgate Office Staff – Wendi Dusablon, Town Clerk; Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator; Shelley Laroche, Town Treasurer (arrived @ 7:22pm);

Public / Other – Richard Wilkens; Greta Brunswick – NRPC; Christopher Yates; Michael Casella – Casella Waste Mgmt.; Alice S. Cota (arrived @ 7:26pm)

B. Public Comment(s)

Chris Yates is looking for support from the board with regard to one of the ball fields, known as the Beyor field. This field has a high clay content and does not drain, making it unplayable and unsafe. A permanent fix would be to dig out the clay and bring in new soil and conditioner on top. Chris is working on some donations, but wants this on the radar of the board prior to any repair arrangements being made. A temporary fix could get the teams through this season, with a permanent fix afterwards. The area is 8,350 square feet, 103 cubic yards total. The goal is to make the field higher than the grass so the water will shed. The sand could be donated, but we would have to purchase the conditioner. The conditioner would make all the fields playable, not just the Beyor field. Chris will forward numbers as he has them.

C. Brownsfield Development Fund – Greta Brunswick, NRPC

Greta is here to discuss the property located at 14 St. Armand Road as well as the old town garage property. Phase I at 14 St. Armand Road has been completed, then Greta and the town committee have provided edits. This has been sent to the State and EPA. The EPA had no comments. Once finalized, the go ahead will be given for a work plan for sampling of soil and possibly groundwater. Chris Yates feels that Phase I went better than expected, based on rumors he had heard beforehand. Nothing is drawing any red flags. There will be investigation into any possible underground tanks as well as the floor drains, all the other points were considered de minimis. It was noted that the buildings likely contain asbestos and lead materials. The program can assess where the materials are located and help with abatement plans with contractors. The report also noted that the home at 14 St. Armand Road is the oldest building in our village. This structure is not listed on any state historical registry. Any sampling that is done is non-invasive with regard to asbestos and lead. If federal funds are used to demolish the structure this will come up then as well. Greta also wants to confirm that there are no archeological concerns prior to soil samples. Heidi added that a study was recently completed as part of the Lamkin Street sidewalk project and nothing was found. As soon as Greta hears back from DEC she will move forward with a work plan. There was some discussion on where the town stands with the purchase of the properties (14 St. Armand Road and 3119 VT Route 78). We are currently in a contract extension already with the current owners and the closing has been pushed out to May 12th (tentative date). The date may be bumped again due to health issues within the family. Greta will be meeting with her team on Tuesday to see if she is authorized to move ahead with Phase I for the old town garage property. It would be cost effective to work on them both at the same time, but there are no time constraints on the part of NRPC. Chris reiterated that the town has a good relationship with Keith Machia, the executor of the Ephriam Machia Estate, and the town needs to be compassionate about the health issues the current occupant is experiencing. Rich Wilkens asked to summarize what was found during Phase I and also summarize what the voters approved at town meeting. Steve LaFar

believes the bigger concern is the town shed property, not the Machia property. Greta stressed that funding is available for clean-up and because it is prior to the purchase of the property there is protection available under Brownsfield law. There is a comfort level associated with this. If we decide to purchase the Machia property prior to Phase II, there is still funding available. Greta discussed the Brownsfield Reuse and Environmental Liability Limitation Program and how it makes sense for us to get into the program. This will allow us, after addressing any Phase II issues, to be issued a certificate of completion and we will not be responsible for any issues at the property if anything should arise. If we do not join this program, we would receive different closure documents with less liability coverage. There is an application process and a legal notice that needs to be published once in the newspaper. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to sign the program application. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Motion by Steve LaFar to move forward with the purchase of the Machia property. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Motion by Josh LaRocque for Sharon Bousquet to represent the town at the closing, along with our legal counsel. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**. Chris will communicate with the board if the date of May 12th changes. With regard to the old town garage property (still owned by the town), Greta has the nomination form ready to put before the Brownsfield committee on Tuesday. We are not doing any inquiries, which changes the eligibility for funding. It is more complicated if there are issues there which require cleanup. Depending on what is found, if all or most of the issues are related to before we purchased it in 1951, there is a process we can go through to gain access to funds. There will likely be no issues related to the town garage use, as vehicles were not serviced there. There was a fire at that site back when it was a foundry. Back in 1951 a Phase I assessment was not common practice. There is potential for clean-up funding if any issues were not caused by the town. Sharon added that we have an agreement here that basically says we have more liability on this property vs. the Machia property but gives the ok to proceed with Phase I. Motion by Bruce Butler to sign this agreement. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Bruce Butler to also sign the site access form. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

D. Town Treasurer Updates – Shelley Laroche

1. Check warrants

Motion by Josh LaRocque to accept the check warrants. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

2. Misc.

The Finance Committee meets on May 8th @ 3pm. We received the audit report, each Selectboard member has a copy. Just a few dings regarding journal entries, cash balances and fixed assets is the biggest one. They recommend we have an accounting procedures manual. Highgate has never had one and we need one in place. Shelley asked the board if they would like the auditors to come in for an exit interview, per say, they are willing to come in if the board is interested. We will continue to tighten up and put policies in place. Things will continue to get better and better. The workers comp audit, done yearly, is happening tomorrow, May 5th. Shelley put budget info for April in the drop box for review.

E. Town Clerk Updates – Wendi Dusablon

1. Minutes

Motion by Sharon Bousquet to approve the minutes from April 20, 2017, as amended. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

2. Request for Municipal Park use – June 10th

Chris Uzell could not be here tonight, so this will be deferred until the next meeting.

3. Dog registration update

As of today, we have licensed 778 dogs in the Town of Highgate for 2017. Wendi mailed final notices on May 1st to 83 dog owners. The final date to license dogs has been set for May 12th. Any unlicensed dogs as of that date will incur a fine, per dog, in addition to licensing fees. Vonnie and Ben will be out knocking on doors as necessary.

4. This weekend in Highgate

There is a lot going on in town this weekend, see list below:

- May 6th GREEN UP DAY
- May 6th 8am-2pm Household Hazardous Waste Day
- May 5th, 6th, 7th Historical Society Lawn Sale
- May 6th 10am-2pm 6th gr. car wash/bake sale/bottle drive
- May 6th 9:30am Zumba @ MVU – football fundraiser

F. Casella Update – Michael Casella

Things are going well at the Highgate Transfer Station with some changes put into place. The board discussed with Michael the possibility of adding a gate, where the town and Casella would have keys. Michael would like to discuss with the board some wiggle room with hours during the week. They are currently open 8am – 4pm Monday through Friday and 8am – 11:45am on Saturdays. Saturdays are a very busy time, so those hours will remain the same. During the week, closing earlier would allow them more time to clean the yard. ACT148 law has changed some. There is a one year delay for haulers to offer compost services. Sharon asked what this will mean to Casella once organics are taken out. Michael addressed how new technology is also changing things, and noted that the bigger concern is sludge. You can only take in 20% sludge, as a goal, when mixed with solid waste. It needs to be mixed so it does not create landslides. Landfills are closing, which will be a big problem for some states and will drive costs up. Heidi asked about state recertification. This is every ten years, he believes, and the last time was in 2012, but Michael will double check that. Heidi also pointed out that when the property was walked most recently with Shawn Coleman and Lauren Oates, there is one divot at the southern end by the fence that has changed dramatically. The southern slope is showing a lot of activity. Hopefully someone will be sent in there soon to finalize details for the Phase I assessments for repair of that property. The fix we did in 2013 looks great and is holding very well. Sharon added that the board is interested in talking with Casella about the contract and how it can be edited and still remain mutually beneficial to both parties. There was also some discussion on feral cats and that issue at the site. The town will be in touch with Michael about coming back to discuss the contract and they thanked him for coming and for the updates.

G. Town Administrator Updates – Heidi Britch-Valenta

1. Roof repair update

We have seen more leaks, this time on the fire department side in the office. We have permission from Rural Development to push this ahead. We have received two bids previously and put this through the CIP for approval from the voters in March. Heidi is also talking to Laz Scangas about this. Steve LaFar asked about what kind of protection the town will have with these repairs. The previous contractor that put the roof in is no longer in business. Josh added that it is all about the company you choose. We have hired Laz Scangas to oversee the projects at the municipal office (with the exception of the floor, being overseen by Tim Hardy), so it is their responsibility to make sure things are done and done properly.

2. Fire department floor update

This RFP was issued and there is a mandatory site visit on Tuesday, May 9th with bids due back by May 19th.

3. Smoking policy amendment for signature

This amendment was discussed at the last meeting and a motion was made. Motion by Sharon Bousquet to accept the smoking policy for the Town of Highgate. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Heidi will get a new copy for the board for signature.

4. TA grant extension

The term was until June of this year, and AOT has created an extension for us. The terms are the same, \$250,000.00 with the town on the hook for the 20% match. Steve still has concerns with maintenance of the sidewalk once it is installed. The Planning Commission has invited the public works director in for a discussion on the issue. It may not be a bad idea to sub it out or rent something until we get a feel for what is involved. This sidewalk will run from the municipal complex to the Catholic Church on Lamkin Street. It will also include a crosswalk across Route 78 with a flashing beacon. Steve would like to see one of the Mill Hill roads closed. Heidi noted that the section of Mill Hill in front of the library will change to a one way going south. Plans are in the drop box for review. Motion by Sharon to

have the town administrator sign the time extension for the State of Vermont Standard Grant Agreement for the Lamkin Street sidewalk project. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. We are obligated to hire an inspection consultant to oversee the project, because it is federal funds. This is part of the grant and is calculated in already. They will take us through the process and be a consultant during the construction. This is in addition to our design consultant, RSG. Motion by Josh LaRocque to put out an RFP for Highgate Lamkin Street Sidewalk Project Construction Inspection Service. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**. Sharon pointed out that on her copy it says "Town of Alburgh" in a few spots, but otherwise she is fine with it. The copy in drop box appears to be correct.

5. Misc.

- Patrick Loyer is meeting with Bob from Pike Industries tomorrow about the paving contract. There are a few discrepancies to be addressed before it is signed. The pricing is fine, we just need to make sure that everything is included that we had agreed on. Pat will call Josh tomorrow to confirm everything, and Pike wants to start on Monday, weather permitting. Motion by Bruce Butler to authorize Patrick Loyer to move forward with Josh's approval. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.
- St. Albans dispatch will be here at a future meeting.
- Franklin-5 State Representatives Steve Beyor and Chuck Pearce will be here on June 1st.
- Josh would like to plan some time in executive session with Franklin County Sheriff's Office to discuss the directed investigations that the voters approved \$10,000.00 in funding towards.

H. Selectboard Items

1. iPad policy

There is a draft policy in the drop box. The Selectboard, DRB and Planning Commission all have town issued iPads. Larry Simmons, former member of the PC, drafted this policy based on a model they use at his employer. We discussed insurance, but it is not practical for us. They are in cases which has been effective. Motion by Josh LaRocque to approve the iPad policy. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**.

2. Selectboard policies and procedures

Bruce has brought this back up because it was never approved. There were issues with the public comment section and times associated with it. Sharon would like to strike the portion about limiting public comment and instead putting it at the board's discretion. Shelley feels if it is a passionate topic and needs more than 15 minutes it should be an agenda item, not under public comment. Public comment is not the place for an hour long conversation on a hot topic. If the agenda is already full, those items don't get the time they need or deserve if public comment goes on for too long. There was some discussion on adopting Roberts Rules vs. adopting policies and procedures. It was decided to adopt the Selectboard Policies and Procedures and to modify any sections involving time constraints. The board, at their discretion and with a majority vote, can limit or extend the timeframe involved for public comment or discussion at any time. Motion by Sharon to accept the Selectboard Policies and Procedures with the above mentioned amendments. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**.

3. Interstate 35 (Canada) letter of support

Motion by Josh LaRocque to sign the Interstate 35 letter of support. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**.

4. Land donation agreement – Frontage Rd.

Motion by Josh LaRocque to move forward with the land donation agreement with amendments from previous versions as recommended. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

5. Ray's Salvage – Certificate of Approved Location (COAL)

Ray's needs to submit this to the State in June. A lot of effort has been put in and the property looks much better. A fence has been put up to separate their property from the Townline Auto property. It was noted that the property was clean when the COAL was issued last year and then got very cluttered again. It needs to remain clean. The offices are being moved into the house, it will no longer be rented, which should help with the clutter. This is a long standing business in town. Motion by Josh LaRocque to

approve the COAL for Ray's Auto and Salvage. The motion was seconded by Steve LaFar – **APPROVED**.

6. Misc.

- We have not heard anything new from Geo Design. They do not have enough information and want to talk with Lauren Oats for more details.

I. Upcoming Events

May 6		Green Up Day
May 6	8-2	Household Hazardous Waste Day
May 5-7		Historical Society Lawn Sale
May 8	3pm	Finance Comm. Mtg.
May 11	6pm	DRB Mtg.
May 16	6pm	Planning Comm. Mtg.
May 18	7pm	Selectboard Mtg.
May 29		Memorial Day in Highgate HVFD Chicken BBQ @ 11am Parade @ 1pm Ceremony in the park & HVFD auction to follow for more info on Memorial Day, visit the town's website or FaceBook page !!!

Brush Depot at Highgate Transfer Station is open April – November on **SATURDAYS** from 8am – 11:45am for **HIGHGATE RESIDENTS ONLY**. Arrangements during the week must be made **AHEAD OF TIME** through the town clerk's office. Thank you.

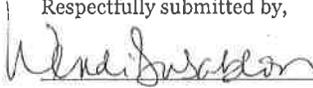
J. Executive Session

Motion by Sharon Bousquet for the Selectboard and Town Administrator to enter into executive session @ 8:39pm to discuss a lease and a personnel issue, where premature public knowledge would place the town and the individuals involved at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Josh LaRocque – **APPROVED**. Motion by Josh to exit executive session @ 9:35pm. The motion was seconded by Bruce Butler – **APPROVED**.

K. Adjournment

Motion by Josh LaRocque to adjourn the meeting @ 9:37pm. The motion was seconded by Sharon Bousquet – **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted by,



Wendi Dusablon, Highgate Town Clerk

Minutes approved by,



Sharon Bousquet - Chair, Highgate Selectboard