

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
July 16, 2024

In attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert, Ron Madan and Sara Smith (Town Administrator)

John called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Meeting Request from the Rumney Select Board

The Rumney Select Board requested to set up a meeting regarding the upcoming Fire/EMS coverages agreements and related costs. They recently replaced the 1992 Fire Engine and their Select Board would like to discuss our Towns percentage of coverage cost and the depreciation cost of the new engine purchase. They are inviting us to attend their meeting on Monday August 5, 2024 which starts at 6:30pm. Sara asked the Select Board if they would be available to meet this day and time. The Select Board agreed that they can attend. Sara will send Rumney an email letting them know.

Quote for Town House Repair Items

So far only one company has come out to look at the Town House repairs which was Craig Brouillet from Brouillet and Sons.

His quote for the siding, back door and adding the overhang totals \$11,000.00. Sara asked if this included the rotting window sills and he said it does. Of course, this could be more because he won't know exactly how deep the rot is on the siding, back door and windows until he gets in there.

For the roof he provided quotes for different options:

- Asphalt Roof quote: \$29,000.00 which includes labor, material and dumpster
- Standing Seam Roof Quote: \$60,000.00 which includes labor, material and dumpster
- Classic (Rustic or Oxford) Roof Quote: \$65,500.00 which includes labor, material and dumpster
- Classic (Country Manner Shake) Roof Quote: \$67,500.00 which includes labor, material and dumpster
- Vic West Roof Quote: \$62,000.00 which includes labor, material and dumpster

Right now, there is \$32,532.67 in the Town House Capital Reserve Fund. The Select Board agreed that we should at least move forward with the siding, back door, window sills and overhang. They would like the window sills to be added and then they will sign the agreement. They will hold off on the roof for now. **John motioned to come in and sign the agreement for the siding, back door, overhang and window sills once it is ready, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Questions on shared lap top

Virginia sent the following questions regarding the shared lap top for the Conservation Commission, Cemetery and Zoning Board. The questions are:

1. Is the intention to have all members of each board have access to their respective email? How will the login information be shared? Each board/committee has a separate sign on that once signed in will bring them to their respective emails, files, etc. You can then change your password.
2. Does the town have any standards/guidelines for email usage? For example: should all emails be signed on behalf of the person typing or the board as a whole? The Select Board agreed that it should have a signature for the committees/boards but also the person responding should put their name on it.

3. Will the laptop have a separate user profile/login per board? Beyond accessing email, it seems prudent to have separate access to files (minutes, budget reports, etc.). Sara already answered this. Each board/committee has a separate sign on that once signed in will bring them to their respective emails, files, etc.
4. The conservation commission tends to take a summer hiatus. I'd like to add an auto reply with contacts for escalated/urgent requests. Since we shouldn't be using personal email, would the selectboard email be an OK contact to list? The Select Board agreed to use the Select Board email and then Sara can send Virginia an email to let her know. Sara will also ask Dave for the remote sign on information so email can be accessed from home.

Peter Smith sent the following questions:

1. Does this mean ALL email, etc. HAS to be accessed physically from this laptop at the Town House? So, it takes a trip to Town House during business hours to send an email to call a board meeting, etc.? Sara answered that of course, you can still use your personal emails to email each other to set up board meetings and items like that. The committee/board email should be used when responding to inquiries from residents that have either emailed in to that email address or have requested at a meeting that something be emailed to them. That way it stays in that email for tracking purposes and is not in someone's personal email. Also, each board/committee has someone that has a key and a code for the building so this does not have to be done during business hours.
2. Meeting minutes cannot be done in WORD on PC and file sent to email? The minutes should be taken during the meeting on the laptop. If it is public meetings, they can be emailed to your home for tweaks but the final minutes should be stored on the laptop. If it is non-public meetings they should not be sent home.
3. Are we not supposed to have a document copy or email on home PC memory? All documents related to your board or committee should be on this laptop, not on personal computers.

The Select Board agreed that we should type up a policy and include that this laptop should not be taken home. Once this policy is complete, they will sign it and sent it out to everyone. In the meantime, Sara will email the answers and explain the policy will be created. **John motioned to come in and sign the policy once it is created, Tony 2nd so voted.**

Meeting regarding flood plain concerns

Shannon LaFreniere requested a follow up meeting with the Select Board since it has been over 60 days since she last met with them. Sara has done a lot since the last meeting, such as reaching out to DRA, DES, etc. and has been keeping Shannon informed. We really do not have a resolve as of this time but we are getting closer.

As of today, Sara had a call with Sarah and Heather from OPD, Jennifer Gilbert from DES and our attorney. They all went over the concerns regarding the flood plain, excavation, etc. Our town attorney is also involved and bringing herself up to speed on these issues.

After the meeting Sara sent Shannon an email stating that we had our call today and there really was not any new information. The areas we discussed were:

- DES is working with Mr. Ethier to get the berms removed and is waiting on a response to communication sent by the DOJ. Jeffrey Blecharczyk is the point of contact for the DES restoration plan. This will likely be a slow process.
- Gather a list of issues which overlap with the restoration plan and those which don't. Clarify with Jeffrey Blecharczyk what enforcement actions can be taken by the Town on these issues.

- The Town should pursue enforcement on permitting issues separate from the restoration plan and provide deadlines for action to be taken. The most effective path for enforcement will come from the Town, not the State.
- Resolving the FEMA compliance issues will depend on action taken by the Town, not DES. Reach out to FEMA inquiring about the compliance status and need for a follow-up visit.

Our attorney was able to hop on the end of the call and she will be working on a letter to send to Mr. Ethier and his attorney stating the concerns and requesting to set up a visit. We are also trying to get FEMA to come to the visit with us and see what other experts will be able to attend, because as you know the attorney, myself and the Select Board can go to the visit but we are not experts so we may not know all of the violations that are taking place which is important to know in order to enforce them. Once we know who will attend the visit, we will work on a time that works for everyone to schedule a site visit.

Since the meeting this morning, Sara has already reached out to our contact at FEMA, who is also a new contact as the ones we were working with before are no longer there. She is waiting to hear back from him. We will work on the list of all of the issues and see which may overlap. Once this is complete, which will probably not be until next week or the week after since Sara is off the rest of this week, we will attempt to reach out to Jeffrey again. Hopefully we will have more information in the next few weeks.

Shannon stated that all development needs to stop because it is in the floodplain. The regulations state that. She said that here cannot be an excavation permit in the flood plain. Tony said the issue is that he was grandfathered but we need to know where the exact area is that he was grandfathered and what has been done since so we know what area he needs a permit for.

Tony explained the call today we didn't get any new information but new steps to take. We understand that the town is responsible for enforcement but the Town are not experts so we need to know what is in violation and what needs to be enforced. She said the flood plain needs to be enforced and that the Select Board do not need to be experts.

She said that we shouldn't worry too much about the restoration plan. Sara said that in the meeting today there were concerns that some of the other concerns may overlap the area in the restoration plan. Jeff wasn't on the call today and hasn't responded to Saras last email. She will be trying to reach out to him again.

Shannon asked if the Select Board has gone down to the site yet. Tony explained that is what the attorney is working on. Since it is private property so we can go to the road but any further would require the owner to know so the attorney wants to send a letter to get his set up. Since he has his own attorney, we do not want to go to the property without them knowing. Sara said that our attorney is familiar with Mikes attorney and wants to make sure that we are making them aware of the visit and that we are doing everything that we are supposed to do.

Shannon and Michael said there has been more issues with digging and trees this weekend. He is causing a lot of damage to the land and the Aquaphor that needs to be looked into. Tony said that we will look into that and the other concerns and we are trying. Since it is a private road, the Select Board do not have jurisdiction over it. She said we shouldn't consider it a road because it is in the flood plain and he should not have been able to put in the road, but that is an issue with older planning boards. Tony said that is why he was grandfathered on things because it was done in the past and he was either given approval or the Town did not enforce anything.

Michael said that anything outside of the 50,000 sf is out of the area he was grandfathered for so since he is outside of that so he is required to have the permit. The Select Board agree that a permit is needed for the work outside of the permit area but they want to make sure they know exactly what they are talking about.

Tony said we are trying but it is a slow process. We have the attorney involved again and are moving forward. Tony said that we are hoping to have an expert at the site visit, he feels we need an expert so we know what to enforce. John said he feels we should visit the site every year going forward so we can see what has changed. Michael said that under 50,000 sf you didn't need a state permit but over that you need an alteration of terrain. Sara mentioned that we are looking into the alteration of terrain.

Sara explained that the way the Select Board handle the intent to excavate next year will be different. Mike was about 20 years behind on these intents so Mary Pinkham and the Select Board agreed to just have him fill them all out so they are on file since he did do excavation during those years and to do the same moving forward. However, there is a spot on the permit that asks about permitting so next year the Select Board will not approve the permit when it is submitted without this information. We were told that for this year since the Select Board sign the intent to excavate there really is not anything we can do about this year's excavation but moving forward we can.

Tony said that now that the attorney is working on a letter, we can move forward with this and look into enforcement. Sara said the Town will also provide timelines of when we expect him to meet certain requirements. Sara will continue to work on this next week.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:54pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Town Administrator