

Minutes of the Waterbury Select Board
Monday August 7, 2023
Steele Community Room, 28 North Main Street and via Zoom

Attendees: Roger Clapp, Alyssa Johnson, Kane Sweeney, Mike Bard, Tom Leitz, Lisa Scagliotti, Bill Shepeluk, Mal Culbertson, Steve Lotspeich, Tami Bass, Patrick Olstad, David Frothingham

Via Zoom: Myra Perry, MK Monley, Elizabeth, Jake Ferreroa, Belle McDougall, Duncan McDougall, Alexandra Thompson, Mike Rossi, Life LeGross

The meeting was called to order 7:03 pm.

Approve Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by M. Bard. The motion was seconded by K. Sweeney and passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda Items

- a.) Minutes of July 31, 2023
- b.) 1st, 3rd & Outside Consumption Permit for Michael's on the Hill (Outside deck with railings and a door to the inside. Deck size is approximately 30' x 30')
- c.) Authorization to change the date for Waterbury Arts Fest to August 25 & 26th (previously approved)
- d.) Authorizing the Waterbury Area Anti-Racism Coalition to display a plaque or sign on bridge

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by K. Sweeney. The motion was seconded by A. Johnson and passed unanimously.

Public

R. Clapp provided an update regarding the evolution of the situation regarding a Sweet Road resident. He expressed thanks to the Vermont State Police for their efforts in this instance, and expressed thanks generally to the VSP and the public safety officials.

M. Bard thanked L. Scagliotti of the Waterbury Roundabout for ongoing news coverage of this and other important community issues.

Flood Response

T. Leitz provided an update on Flood Recovery Coordinator update from Tom Drake. There are approximately five jobs active on the sign up list at this point. They have ordered a pod for equipment storage. Two of the rented dehumidifiers outstanding. There may be a need to order concrobium is mold but supplies fine otherwise. Overall, there are adequate supplies and volunteers at this point.

Natural Disaster Response Committee

K. Sweeney provided an overview of the proposal to develop and train a disaster volunteer corps to support during future disaster response. The goal would be to have a more well trained training for volunteers – leadership. Several states regarding a volunteer response corps.

It was noted that the format of the existing emergency management plan is based on state requirements, and that there could be utility in having a separate town working plan, with local resources such as a lead person – ready to go with an employment agreement from day one.

M. Bard made a motion to approve the creation of a Natural Disaster Response committee pending approval of a motion and group. The motion was seconded by A. Johnson and passed unanimously.

Mitigation

T. Leitz provided background information on the Milone and MacBroom hydrological study completed after Tropical Storm Irene. The study presented a set of recommendations, including doing mitigation at the state office complex, which was completed. Other recommendations were not implemented. It was noted that the cost for the projects is significant; the process at the state complex cost over \$130 million. A choke point has been identified at the Harvey Farm, where mitigation could reduce the flood levels by a foot in Waterbury, which is significant. There are other options at the cornfield behind the state office complex. It was noted that R. Clapp and T. Leitz were meeting with a representative from Senator Sanders' office to see what additional support could be provided for this type of state and local projects.

M. Bard noted Ducks Unlimited was a potential as an alternative for floodplain restoration projects. There were questions regarding if the study looked downstream impacts from Waterbury. It was noted that it was not included in the study, but that this was a preliminary report, and additional work would be conducted if a project were to advance.

By consensus, the Board expressed support for continuing to take a look at what options there are for flood mitigation, how to take advantage of existing studies, and to keep these projects it on the radar. It was noted that for multiyear projects, a longer term flood response group with leaders in certain areas may be a useful tool to continue to advance and advocate for such projects.

SE Group Presentation

P. Oldstad provided an overview of the overall process that led to the development of the Waterbury Hope Davey and Ice Center Area Parks Master Plan document, including the community engagement processes throughout the study.

The presentation began with review of the Ice Center Area, and existing constraints such as the river corridor, floodplain and prime agricultural soils. The goal for the area was to accommodate additional needs and desires, such as the skatepark committee looking for a site, while meeting regulatory requirements.

SE Group considered adjacencies between different uses and different location layouts within the site. There were conversations with regional floodplain managers, which ultimately informed the proposal for siting proposed new infrastructure downstream of existing elements. P. Olstad talked through several examples of potential historical resources and improvements to the site.

S. Lotspeich elaborated on the coordination with Ned Swanberg, who is the state floodplain manager, regarding the guidance provided. The State has been more dedicated to allowing rivers to wander, but when there is existing infrastructure, the state will accept defending those structures. This guidance impacted the lack of a proposal to move the road on the site, as if the town was to move the existing road, then it would lose the infrastructure it was trying to, and the state will not support adding new facilities that will need defending.

P. Olstad continued with a discussion of the Hope Davey park. Key consideration included working to update amenities, and achieve a balance between access to natural areas and disc golf. Tees and baskets for disc golf and concerns with neighbors were addressed with expanded setback from property lines and a riparian buffer area away from the brook. The plan would maintain the current 18 hole course, and is thoughtful about how the trail related to the current conditions and wetlands. It was noted that disc golf precedes the state's wetland rules and there is a certain amount of grandfathering, so modifications will require wetlands permitting. The plan includes a proposal for best management practices for trails over wetlands to bring the park up to more current standards, as well as restoration of the nature path and improved wayfinding to improve user experience, and keeps folks on a more designated path.

It was noted that there is a recommendation to adopt this study to the Select Board from the Parks Planning steering committee. It was recognized that it is a work in progress in terms of implementation and will take further work with disc golf group and other to implement changes. The arts group is very interested incorporating public art into both parks. The goal of the process was engaging the public and get a lot of input to then serves as a conceptual guide for moving forward.

There was additional discussion of minor elements including Hole realignment, management proposals, and potential liability for the skate park. It was noted that the skate park coalition was meeting at Hope Davey for a site visit at 6:30 pm the next day. T. Letiz noted he could be meeting with Capital Soccer, who has a long term lease on the soccer field at the Ice Center, to see about if the town can provide support to help restore the fields. The Selectboard previously approved applying for a grant for funding for Hope Davey.

M. Bard made a move to approve the Hope Davey and Ice Center Area Parks Master Plan document. The motion was seconded by K. Sweeney and passed unanimously.

Tax Abatements

T. Leitz noted that the town has received one formal request for tax abatement, as well as phone calls about abatements and buy outs. Dan Sweet, the lister, has the ability to apply depreciation to properties, which was done in a substantial way after Irene, and then gradually removed over time. The process is challenging for many reasons, including that there are over a hundred

impacted properties. Additionally, the grand list is lodged April 1, so impacts would be the 2024 grand list. Hard to figure out the right numbers, and will be revisited moving forward.

W. Shepeluk provided a table and additional background regarding how the process for abatements was done following Tropical Storm Irene, including a table for number of days out, which was used in the calculations. In total, after Irene, the Town abated approximately \$93,000 in taxes based on a calculation involving the number of days people couldn't occupy their property. As of the present, very few people have lost their ability to use their properties. For the requested hearing, there is a prescribed timeline for response. By consensus, the Board supported scheduling a BCA meeting to take up the issue as soon as practicable.

Recognition of Municipal staff for flood recovery efforts

T. Leitz noted that he would be having a similar meeting with EFUD later in the week regarding providing additional remuneration for extra time and effort for municipal staff during the flood. Per his request, the municipal manger would be exempted from this remuneration. T. Leitz emphasized that this feels highly important for salaried folks, such as the public works director.

K. Sweeney made a motion to authorize the municipal manger to adjustment to municipal salaries and compensation at his discretion. The motion was seconded by A. Johnson and passed unanimously.

Next Meeting Agenda

Topics raised to be added to an agenda at the next meeting included:

Flood recovery updates, Katarina intro, presentation of the charter to the public, Presentation of the audit; Flood after action review; Update on the bylaw rewrite and proposed timing.

Adjourn

K. Sweeney made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by M. Bard and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm

Next Meeting of the Select Board: Monday August 21, 2023