



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: Monday, December 21, 2015 – Workshop
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: McCourt Social Hall, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Chairman G. Woodbury, Vice Chair Stevens, Clerk C. Woodbury, Member Pepe and Administrator Gaudette. Member Fritze was absent

At 6:06 p.m. Chairman Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Representative Berthiaume informed the Board that he recently met with the MassDOT liaison to tour Route 31 South. He noted the Town work that has been done and is currently in progress will place the Town in an excellent position to receive funding for the paving portion of the project.

Action Item: Tree Removal – Route 31 (234-236 Charlton Rd)

Administrator Gaudette noted that a Public Shade Tree Hearing was held previously in accordance with MGL Chapter 87 and tonight the Board will have the opportunity to hear concerns and make a decision. U & F Superintendent Steve Tyler, Tree Warden Ray Holmes, and Highway Foreman Eben Butler were present.

Mr. Tyler reported that an objection to the removal of trees in front of 234 and 236 Charlton Rd. was made by property owners Roger and Debra Barnes.

Mr. Barnes questioned the necessity of removing these healthy hickory trees, which are between 8-10 feet off the road. He noted that with 25 trees being taken down, the road will resemble a super highway and expressed concern over potential issues with speeding.

Mr. Tyler understands the concerns and agreed they are beautiful, healthy trees, however with the resurfacing of Rout 31, it is important to remove these trees for safety reasons. He provided a Public Tree Hearing presentation and noted that a Road Safety Audit was conducted where all comments relative to the tree removal are related to safety; the only reason for removing these trees is to prevent injuries and save lives. The State is limited to the removal of four trees for any project, otherwise an ENF is required, which is an involved process, therefore it's important for the Town to remove them and prevent jeopardizing or delaying approval of the project.

Mr. G. Woodbury noted his concerns over safety and speeding but agreed the tree removal is necessary to help obtain funding and meet safety guidelines. Mr. Pepe pointed out that speed limit enforcement should be part of the plan.

Debra Barnes asked about the removal of telephone poles. Mr. Tyler said requests to National Grid to have poles moved back from the road are made whenever possible. Any newly installed poles will be pushed back from the road.

Judy Cobill, 232 Charlton Road said she is happy with the road work being done but is concerned with speeding on the road, especially when children are at the bus stop and when she crosses the road to get her mail.

Mr. Gaudette said public safety is the top priority and is being done to benefit overall public safety.

Mr. Stevens said he is sympathetic to concerns; however public safety and the need to have Route 31 fixed are important factors in the decision.

Mr. Tyler said he is in agreement with Mr. Barnes and tree removal is a last resort. It's about the safety of the roadway.

Mr. C. Woodbury asked if it made sense to install guardrails; Mr. Tyler said no since there is not an excessive slope. Mr. Butler said the slope is minimal and can be filled in.

A motion to proceed with the removal of the trees that were the subject of this meeting (Stevens/Pepe) passed 5/0.

Discussion: Building Permit Fees

Mr. Gaudette reviewed a chart on Building Permit Fees that showed fees from Spencer's Comparison Communities, of which the majority were much higher. He advised the Board to increase the residential and commercial inspection fees, even a modest increase of \$1 will help fund additional hours for the Building Inspector who is currently working 19.5 hours and may increase to 24 hours per week. He pointed out that fees have not been increased since 2006.

ODIS Director Lee Jarvis and Building Inspector Bill Klansek were present.

Mr. Klansek mentioned that the Building Department collected a record amount of revenue in permit fees last year and additional hours will help to improve customer service.

Mr. Pepe is in favor of gradual fee increases. The Board agreed that fees should be reviewed annually for each department.

A motion to increase the FY16 Building Permit Fees from \$4.50/\$1,000 to \$6.00/\$1,000 for residential and from \$5.50/\$1,000 to \$7.50/\$1,000 for commercial, and to review all permit fees annually (Pepe/C. Woodbury) passed 5/0.

The fee changes will take place on January 1, 2016.

Discussion: Lake Street School

Mr. Gaudette reported that the lease agreement with the District needs to be revised to eliminate Lake Street and Maple Street buildings. He will work with the Superintendent and Business Manager to develop an updated lease agreement and asked them to properly maintain Lake Street School until it is officially turned over to the Town.

Mr. C. Woodbury would like to do a building walk-through prior to final acceptance. The Board agreed.

Mr. Tyler mentioned his concern over the condition of the building and any assets that are part of the building that may belong to Town. He questioned whether laws were broken or if ethics violations occurred with removal items from the building. Mr. Gaudette said they are working to determine if items were given inadvertently, and if so will need to be returned and procurement laws followed.

Mr. Gaudette will revise the lease and schedule a walkthrough prior to the final turnover of the building.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials

Public Tree Hearing Presentation
Building Permit Fee Memo/Chart