Town of Huntington — Selectboard Meeting

Monday, November 18, 2013—6:30 pm RECEIVED:

Town Office Building - downstairs DATE 12.13.13

APPROVED MINUTES

Agenda	• Fire Department – Budget Review • Planning Commission – Number of Commission Members; Proposal to move to a Development Review Board (DRB) model • Public Hearing – Proposed Zoning Regulation Change • Public Comment • Building and Grounds Committee • Minutes and Warrants • Administration, Planning & Highway: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program; Employee Health Insurance; Departments & Committees; Correspondence & communication (VTel / HCC Letter); General updates & new business • 2014-2015 Budget Working Session
Selectboard members present: **Selectboard members absent:**	Jim Christiansen (Chair), Dori Barton (Vice-Chair), Doug Graver, Roman Livak Everett Lewis, Jr.
Staff/Officials present	Barbara Elliott (Town Administrator)
Others present	Julia Austin, David Brautigam, Knox Cummin, Dana Cummings, Everett Marshall, Gordon Miller, Mark Smith, Dan Stoddard, Nancy Stoddard
Call to order	Christiansen called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
Fire Department – Chief Tate Jeffrey *Follow-up: Selectboard to consider forming an Ad Hoc Public Safety Committee*	**Department Staffing** • Chief Jeffrey indicated that the Department's intent in submitting the 2014-2015 budget request for a paid EMT/Firefighter was to initiate the conversation regarding the need for daytime coverage/staffing. The Department responds to about 70-100 EMS calls per year. A single individual can take a fire truck out to a site and perform an initial 'blitz attack' prior to the arrival of mutual aid. Jeffrey noted that Road Crew can also be utilized for response – especially when they are trained members of the Fire Department / EMS team. He noted as an example that the Starksboro Fire Chief is Starksboro's Road Foreman. Jeffrey noted that he would like to have input from Town voters on their vision for the department. • Livak noted that his understanding is that after Richmond Rescue initially hired staff, their volunteerism dropped dramatically – so that the impact of hiring paid staff can have a negative effect on overall staffing. • Graver noted that hiring staff opens up issues related to scheduling, personnel management, benefits management (including time off) – which can be difficult when the oversight responsibility for a paid staff person resides with volunteers. • Christiansen recommended Jeffrey include information on staffing in his department's Annual Town Meeting report. He further recommended the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of the Chief or other Fire Department liaison, Selectboard and general public. This could be expanded to look at other public safety issues including police coverage. • The budget request also included stipend amounts for the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief. Selectboard members expressed support for this request.

Huntington Planning Commission (HPC) *Follow Up: Elliott to research process for changing the number of HPC members.* *Follow Up: Elliott to research process for changing from PC/ZBA to PC/DRB.*	**Town Plan** • HPC Chair Knox Cummins reported that the Town Plan draft has been completed and the Public Hearing is scheduled for 7pm on Thursday, December 5th. **Number of Commission Members** • HPC member Everett Marshall reported that HPC has had difficulty finding a full complement of members. Currently there are 7 seats, with 2 vacancies. The HPC has had difficulty meeting quorum requirements, leading to delay problems for residents/applicants and difficulty in meeting work plan goals. The HPC recommended the Selectboard vote to drop the number of Planning Commission members from 7 down to 5. The request is to do this as soon as feasible – especially since the two HPC members with terms expiring this year are not planning to run for re-election. • Selectboard requested Elliott research the process required for changing the number of members. **<u>Development Review Board (DRB)</u>** • Cummings stated that the HPC recommends the Town move from a Planning Commission (PC) / Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) model to a PC / DRB model. Initially, the same members could serve on each board while migrating to separate membership with at least one cross-over member after the transition of work is complete. Currently 2 members of the ZBA have expressed interest in serving on the HPC (one of whom is already doing so). • Marshall indicated that Fayston and Westford both utilize the PC / DRB model and could be valuable resources as we transition to this new model. • Barton noted that Bolton also has a DRB and could be a valuable resource. Barton indicated that this transition could lead to a more level workload between the two boards than exists today. • Mark Smith indicated that he thought conceptually it was a positive recommendation. He stated that Huntington could benefit from having more focus on long-term strategic thinking. He also noted that we have an exceptional ZBA which has benefited greatly from the leadership provided by Joe Perella. • HPC member Julia Austin indicated that the way the HPC is currently functioning is not sustainable. • Livak noted that members for the 5 member PC would be designated by Town Australian ballot vote, and that members for the 5 member DRB would be appointed by the Selectboard. • Gordon Miller noted that it would be essential to build in a mechanism for ensuring the boards are working well together. Cross-over membership is one way to facilitate this. • Selectboard requested Elliott research the process required for changing from the PC / ZBA model to the PC / DRB model.
Public Hearing – Proposed Zoning Regulation Change	Christiansen called the Public Hearing to order at 7:23 pm for the purpose of receiving public comment on a proposed amendment to the current Huntington Zoning Regulations (Adopted July 9, 2012) • Existing wording: 5.7.1(3) At least two (2) off-street parking spaces shall be provided for each dwelling unit and no additional access drives are to be created. • Proposed wording: 5.7.1(3) At least two (2) off-street parking spaces shall be provided for each dwelling unit.

	Comments included: • Dana Cummings – stated that he is not in favor of the proposed amendment. • Julia Austin – stated that she is not in favor of the proposed amendment. • Gordon Miller – stated he is in favor of the proposed amendment. He asserted that driveway cuts are part of the Road Foreman's job and believes this is sufficient for managing and approving driveway requests. Eliminating limitations on the number of cuts for accessory dwellings would be consistent with the Town's regulations for access cuts other types of development. He further posed that the recent ruling by the ZBA set a precedent favoring this amendment. • Livak – stated the importance of controlling the number of access points on parcels as well as the need for ensuring ongoing maintenance so that our roads are not degraded. • Barton – stated that eliminating the restriction is a way to circumvent zoning regulations for housing densities. • Mark Smith – indicated that the process used by the ZBA for granting the recent variance was a good and effective process, and one that is better to use for considering requests than arbitrarily changing the zoning regulations. • Barbara Mayo – Elliott read a written statement submitted by Town resident Barbara Mayo, who does not support the proposed amendment. Comments will be accepted by the Selectboard through November 25th. A final decision will be made by the Selectboard at the first meeting in December.
Public Comment	**CHNSA Proposed Town Forest Ski Trail** • David Brautigam requested status regarding the Selectboard's decision on the proposed Town Forest ski trail. Elliott read the motion approved by the Selectboard on 10/21/2013 which granted construction approval, with provisions that restrict the width to 5', exclude motorized vehicle use during or after construction, and that require no trail grooming. Brautgam indicated that CHSNA would need to revisit their proposal in light of the restrictions – especially since the connecting trails are wider than 5'. • Barton encouraged Brautigam work directly with the HCC, which has a vision for the Town Forest.
Building & Grounds Committee	**Buildings and Grounds Committee Report** • Christiansen thanked Chair Nancy Stoddard and the Committee (Don Dresser, Barbara Elliott, Ryan Elliott, Dan Stoddard, Nancy Stoddard) for their work in pulling together the extensive report prepared for the Selectboard. • N. Stoddard presented an overview of the Committee's report, including the process used, data collected, building overviews, capital plan and prioritization, and recommendations for next steps and ongoing plan maintenance. The full report is available on the Town website. • Specific recommendations include establishing an ongoing committee and process to ensure the Capital Plan remains an up-to-date, useful document. • Selectboard members congratulated the Committee for providing such detailed information, with special thanks to Nancy Stoddard for her leadership.
Minutes (10/21, 11/04)	Graver moved and Barton seconded to approve the draft minutes of 10/21/2013 as edited. Passed with 3 members approving and one abstention (Livak). Barton moved and Graver seconded to approve the minutes of 11/04/2013 as written. Passed with 4 members approving.
Warrants	3 warrants were signed as presented.

Administration & Planning *Follow-up: Elliott to forward proposal to the ZBA for their follow-up*	**VTel Wireless 45-day notice & request for recommendation for the proposed 2505 Main Road Project** • The Selectboard received a report from VTel Wireless regarding their proposed construction and installation of a wireless telecommunciations facility at 2505 Main Road. • Selectboard requested Elliott forward the proposal to the ZBA, as the responsible board, for their comment. The Selectboard also encourages the ZBA to request that the tower be open to other providers as part of the conditions of approval. **Huntington Conservation Commission request for reconsider of public input** The Selectboard received a letter from the HCC requesting the Selectboard entertain public comment on the Green Mountain Audubon Center's Conservation Fund application. • Barton stated she had been contacted by townspeople who expressed dissatisfaction that the Selectboard did not move the HCC's request forward for public comment in order to help inform the Selectboard's decision making regarding the application. • Graver agreed that the 'right thing to do' would be to allow the process to move to the next step of soliciting public input. He expressed concern that based on Fowle's relationship with the Audubon Center, it may have been appropriate for her to recuse herself from this issue rather than participate in writing the letter to the Selectboard on behalf of the HCC. Graver further stated that perhaps the role of the Selectboard should be to ensure that there is nothing seriously flawed with a proposal supported by the HCC for use of Conservation Funds (more like the Senate confirmation process) rather than the current process which grants the Selectboard a more controlling role. • Christiansen asserted that the process clearly states that the Selectboard is to decide if a proposal forward by the HCC to the Selectboard warrants moving to the next step – and that the Selectboard had concurred that the proposal did not warrant further consideration.
MOTION: Green Mountain Audubon Center's application for Conservation Funds	Graver moved and Barton seconded to advance the Green Mountain Audubon Center's application for Conservation Funds by holding a public meeting for the purpose of soliciting community input on the application at the December 16, 2013 Selectboard meeting. Passed with 3 members in favor (Barton, Graver, Livak) and 1 member opposed (Christiansen).
2014-2015 Budget Working Session	Selectboard continued review of the budget line item requests submitted by each department.
Adjournment	Livak moved and Graver seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:56 pm. Passed unanimously.
	11/18/13 – Meeting date 12/06/13 – Preliminary draft minutes to Selectboard / Clerk, Treasurer & Auditors 12/09/13 – Final minutes approved by Selectboard 12/10/13 – Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk