

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Monday, January 31, 2011
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM

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Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons, Mark Fairbrother, Chris Boutwell, Patricia Allen, Town Administrator, Frank Abbondanzio ; Administrative Secretary, Wendy Bogusz; Arn Albertini, Greenfield Recorder, Jeff Tirrell, WHAI (absent), Janel Nockleby, Montague Reporter

Allen announces meeting is being taped

Approve Minutes of January 10, 2011 and January 24, 2011

Fairbrother makes the motion to approve the minutes of January 10 and January 24, 2011. Seconded by Boutwell, approved unanimously. Fairbrother – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Allen - Aye

Jon Dobosz, Parks & Recreation Director

Parks & Recreation Commission vote to ban smoking in all playground areas

Dobosz: At the November 2010 meeting the Park and Rec Commission voted unanimously to ban (for a lack of a better term) smoking in all playground areas. This was on our radar for a few months and the process was expedited by a resident Leslie Cogswell, who called and sent us a letter and talked about the issue. This is being done relatively consistently throughout the country. How we looked at it was, it is obviously a health concern for the children but when it comes to enforcement have it be self directed. We'll have signs up, communication staff is pretty much the way we are looking at it. Not necessarily an ordinance where your on the phone with the police. Most successful policies are those that have signs and a less confrontational way of enforcing it. It is not the whole park, just where the playground equipment is, not looking to do it park wide at the moment. Broomball is scheduled for this Saturday at the Montague Center Pond, snow sculpture contest coming up as well as cardboard box derby.

Allen thinks Peskeompskut Park should also be included and should be looked into at the next meeting.

Other

- Snow Emergency: There is No on street parking from 1:00 AM Wednesday, February 2nd until Noon on Thursday, February 3rd and this is for everywhere.
- Allen reads letter to the Selectboard from Gary Earls commending the DPW on the outstanding job they have been doing and thanks for keeping sand and salt pile open to the public.

Big Box Issue

Allen: I'm not sure where this Board stands, I know Planning Board did take a stand and sent a letter to the Greenfield Planning Board about issues they had.

Ramsey: The letter was sent in October when they were discussing what the use might be and we had concern if there was going to be a grocery store as part of that use. We do not have any legal stance but it was just suggested that it not include grocery in the box store because of its potential impact on businesses in Turners Falls and the residents that need those businesses.

Allen: That is what I've been hearing from people, what happens to stores like Food City and Aubuchon's. I wasn't sure if this was something the Selectboard wanted to take an official stand on, or you'd rather not?

Fairbrother asks what the Montague Business Association feels about this? If someone was going to write a letter of concern or support, I suspect we would want to hear from them, because it is their business necks on the line.

Boutwell: The other one I was going to suggest was the EDIC too, how they felt about this.

Allen: I'm going to the meeting on Thursday that is the last chance anyone has a chance to say something and I'm happy to go just as myself but I'm also happy to represent the Board if you wanted to do that. I will talk to the Montague Business Association and the EDIC to see.

Ramsey has only heard from individual businesses and the Planning Board. Another concern was traffic over Turners Falls Road and over 5th St. Bridge. Right now we do not know what impact the new development is going to have or the amount of traffic that is going to be coming into Turners Falls. The traffic study did not look at that area. The Greenfield Planning Board is not required by the regulations to consider impacts on Montague, including traffic impacts, but arguably there is

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going to be one. We can't require that they look at impacts on Montague, but we can ask that they consider the impact as a friendly neighbor.

Allen: Will contact people but will attend meeting as herself.

Town Administrators Report
Conservation Commission Appointment

Fairbrother makes the motion to appoint Justin T. Fermann to the Montague Conservation Commission for a term extending through June 30, 2012. Seconded by Boutwell, approved unanimously. Fairbrother – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Allen – Aye. There is still an opening on the Conservation Commission.

Montague Agricultural Commission is looking for members.

Status of Erving Sewer Agreement

Abbondanzio: I finally connected today with the Erving Administrator and he provided me with some information which is still only in draft form. The Erving Finance Committee and Selectmen are going to talk about this again on Thursday night. At this point, we are looking at a total cost including what we would normally pay for our assessment which is \$159,635 an additional \$75,157; it would be \$234,792, which is in the ball park of what was discussed at the meeting back in December. I told Tom the Board was interested in looking at negotiating the contract wording and conditions, and he agreed that was necessary on their end as well to make it clearer than it is. The way we left it is, we are waiting to hear back from the Erving Board to see whether these are numbers everyone is in agreement they are offering, then I think at that point plan on sitting down and working out the actual agreement if we want to go that route or figure out what we want to do.

Allen: I would have thought the annual operating costs or the amount we are paying for Art Pace would be included since that is annual operating costs that would be part of what we have been paying over the years.

Discussion about handout from Erving

Industrial Park Status

Abbondanzio: I was here working on Friday and I received a call from Doug Clark, WMECO saying they wanted to come in and deliver a letter to us on Monday morning. This morning Walter and I met with Doug Clark and unfortunately after serious consideration of whether they wanted to proceed forward with this project that has been in the works for 10 years, they made a business decision that it is not really in the company's best interest, they have other possible uses of the property, including solar and it is not to preclude the fact that we could potentially benefit from that down the road; but right now they have 6 megawatts permitted and that is used up through 2012. Assuming they would get additional allocation from the state, it is possible we could be included in the second round. I also mentioned if they were going to consider solar, they might want to look at our landfill expansion area, not the landfill per se because we do have some serious site constraints for the capped landfill for solar because of the materials, the Erving sludge, that was used on the cover and the grades are pretty steep, there is not a whole lot of flat area on the top. We were rated by the Solid Waste Management District as a Tier 2 site, meaning it wouldn't be real attractive as a solar site. I mentioned they might want to consider the adjacent site which we are looking for other uses including an industrial park. This may be something we want to follow through on.

Allen: At least we finally have a definitive answer on this even though it is not the answer we wanted.

Abbondanzio: NU has really worked hard to try and make this work going back 10 years, they have done a number of studies, feasibility studies, conceptual plans for an industrial park, they kept on running against the wall in dealing with priority habitat issues with Natural Heritage. I think it is worthy to point out that the Montague Plains site is probably one of the few if not the only site with industrial development potential in the region. It is an important site, it is unfortunate that when we had our discussions with Natural Heritage and tried to point out that 60% of the Town is in some form of either permanent protection or limited protection and we also had 1,600 acres taken off the tax rolls 10 years ago when the property was sold to the State Fish and Game Wildlife area. When I tried to bring that point up, they were totally insensitive and basically what they were looking for, was if you want to develop 100 acre Industrial Park then you have to give 200 acres of dedicated land as a way of allowing you to go that route. NU was only going to give us 100 acres we would have had to give up 2/3 of that acreage to develop 1/3. Unfortunately the economics just don't work for 30 acre

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Industrial Parks, particularly in this area. It is unfortunate that the long term economical development needs of the region were secondary in this case. We will now look at other potential sites.

Ramsey: This is a cross roads for economic development because the Plains Industrial Park was a major part of our Economic Development Strategy in 2004. With that closed we need to look at our new options and I think Turnpike road is a large chunk of Industrial land about 120 acres, half of it is developable. I think it is worth looking at in more detail at this point now that we have a definitive answer from the Utility Company; we should turn our attention towards that site area. A feasibility study would be a next step for the Town since we have done conceptual designs through the Conway School in 2000.

Strathmore Pedestrian Bridge

Abbondanzio: Walter is working partially with the funding that was freed up from 43D to look at the issues of keeping the pedestrian bridge open. A meeting has been set up with First Light at Northfield Mountain on February 15 to deal with that issue. We are facing a deadline on April 1 to enter into a 99 year lease. Legal assistance is being provided with some of that 43D money.

Greenfield Road Status

Abbondanzio: We had a meeting a few weeks back with GPI, our engineering consultant for the Greenfield Road project; that project has gone through so many different transformations. Currently we are at a point now where the 75% drawings were submitted to the Mass. Dept. of Transportation 4 years ago and there hasn't been a whole lot of movement on the part of the State; we need to apply pressure to state. The engineers have reached the point where to complete the project to 100% we are looking at approximately an additional \$100,000 more in engineering fees. We are talking about the two miles on the side going towards Montague City Road. GPI is the engineer of choice, they are doing the Hatchery Road part and the pedestrian bridge; I'm not sure if they are doing the southern side of Greenfield Road. We asked Mass. Highway if they would fund the completion of the design and I think we need to continue to press for that, otherwise we will end up using Chapter 90 money to do it. I think it is important that we get the design done as soon as possible because there is a window of opportunity. We have had discussion with FRCOG and as of a few months back they were prepared (once we had 100% design) to fund the project with 2 years worth of the counties total allocation under the Transportation Improvement Program. At this point there are not a lot of projects competing with it at this point, there could be later on down the road. Also, I think it is important to get our legislatures to turn up the heat otherwise we are going to lose out on potential funding.

Greenfield/Montague Transit Authority (GMTA) Developments

Abbondanzio: We have a couple meetings scheduled for this week, but I don't think they are going to happen (due to the weather). GMTA is all but defunct, we have an organization, the only thing we basically own right now is the garage. The lease on the garage to FRTA is up in August, so we are going to be negotiating a lease for continued use of that probably. The way it is looking now is that FRTA doesn't have an alternative at this point, so they will need it at least another couple of years. We will probably be looking at tripling that lease and significant changes to the lease. We also have new members on the GMTA board from the Town of Greenfield including someone who is either a current or former banker. We have issues with the appraisal of the value of the garage, and we are going to get it updated, and FRTA is going to get an appraisal. I Don't know if that will go anywhere in terms of a sale, but we need to go through with that. Jim Hayne who is serving an unpaid position assisting the GMTA submitted his resignation to the GMTA earlier this month so we will probably have to hire someone else to do the work he was doing. I think he was doing roughly 5 hours a month. When that facility is actually sole, the town will be entitled to 1/3 of the value, but we are also responsible for 1/3 of the current deficit which is running about \$375,000, it might end up being a wash depending on the appraisal. Whatever we get from the sale, will be applied towards the debt.

MMA Legislative Breakfast

This is scheduled for February 25, 2011 from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM in South Hadley if anyone is interested.

Commonwealth Award Ceremony

Pat Allen and I will be going to Boston with Lisa Davol on February 9th for the Commonwealth Award Ceremony for the RiverCulture Program.

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We just received notice that the RiverCulture Program was funded at the full 100% request, \$36,000 which is an exceptional thing because we're now going into the sixth year. The program has an excellent track record in the state as evident by the Commonwealth Award. .

Fairbrother makes the motion to authorize the Chair to sign the contract for \$36,000 from the Mass. Cultural Council, Adams Arts Program pursuant to FY11-IMP-CE-0620 for the RiverCulture program. - Seconded by Boutwell, approved unanimously. Fairbrother – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Allen – Aye

Regional EPA Wastewater Treatment Plant Excellence Award

Frank and I were in Boston last week in when the Waste Water Treatment Plant received its award from the New England office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and they seemed very pleased to have the administration of the Town supporting the WWTP and being there. It was very nice 1) for CDM to really make sure we knew how important the award was and 2) make sure we got there. Bob and his Family was there which was very nice.

Other

Abbondanzio: I was talking to Tom today about budgets and snow budgets and because we haven't had a lot of small ice related incidents that require constant sanding and salting like last year, we're actually not doing too badly; we are at only about 60%. It costs a lot less to do snow than ice, but then after tomorrow, who knows.

Fairbrother makes the motion to go into executive session at 7:41 pm for litigation and only coming out to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Boutwell, approved unanimously. Fairbrother – Aye, Boutwell – Aye, Allen - Aye

Boutwell makes the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Allen - Aye