

Town of Princeton, Mass. – June 26, 2017 – 7:30 PM

Board of Selectmen – Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairman Jon Fudeman, Edith Morgan, and Richard Bisk, plus TA Nina Nazarian.

7:32 PM The chairman opened BOS meeting in Town Hall Annex. Attending were Tom Sullivan for the Princeton Land Trust, Deb Cary for MassAudubon and Sue Mitchell for the Conservation Commission. The board considered signing a deed to accept a 10- acre, L-shaped parcel of conservation land (backland) which is part of the Fieldstone Farm project. The deed included signature lines for Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40, §8C. Also attached was the survey plan, showing lot A5-2. If approved, this land would be in the care, custody and control of the Conservation Commission.

This parcel (as part of 20-acre Parcel D) had originally been considered for cluster housing but failed to attract a developer. It had then been considered as a purchase by the town for municipal use but failed passage at ATM. It was then split in half and the road-accessible 10-acre portion is being sold as a single house lot, now surrounded on two sides by lot A5-2.

Edith questioned the transaction and insisted it was being “rushed” and should be presented to voters. She pointed out that the project had originally proposed more development that would increase the tax base, and there were only five or six house lots in this final stage of the project. Tom S. and Deb C. noted that the evolution of Parcel D had been clearly outlined in the proposal all along, through the past year or two of public meetings. Selectmen and the attendees all agreed there was no other option for the 10 acres in front of them. The pros and cons of holding off signing the deed immediately were considered by all present.

8 PM Board ultimately voted all in favor to accept Parcel A5-2 as a gift of land, shown on a plan entitled “Plan of Land in Princeton, MA” recorded in the Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 922, Plan 87, and signed the deed.

The recent FY16 Management Letter from the town’s auditor recommended instituting more efficient write-off and abatement procedures in regards to the Fire Department ambulance outstanding invoices. F.D. staff agrees that annual write off procedure would be most appropriate. A recent change in billing vendors will provide for a positive change in collections. Dep. Fire Chief Tim Kelly was in to explain how insurance pays a certain amount which doesn’t necessarily cover actual costs. Selectmen reviewed a list of proposed abatements from 2014-15 that totaled \$18,329.49.

8:10 PM The board voted to abate the list of recommended Ambulance Abatements, as presented. Kelly also noted that public safety calls, mostly medical, have increased and there have been 206 to date this year—compared to just over 300 in all of last year. He also explained the ongoing maintenance of fire holes (dry hydrants in ponds) and offered an inventory map that was available.

8:20 PM Selectmen considered a proposed Fraud Policy which they had reviewed that was also suggested in the auditor’s management report. They voted all in favor to accept the Fraud Policy as written.

The group discussed a BOS Goal-Setting Session and considered scheduling it for Sept. 11 or 12. A location needs to be chosen and it will be finalized at the next BOS meeting on July 10.

8:35 PM The board focused on the Charter Cable Franchise, Nina noted options of moving forward with a provisional license or a final license. The issue depends on status of the Pole Attachment Agreement (6 out of 13 pole attachment licenses complete, other 7 pending) and dealing with Verizon which owns half of each pole. For the next meeting, Nina anticipated being prepared with a recommendation on how to move forward with licensing. Princeton is in a

unique situation as it done its own make-ready work. The PBMLP currently holds the completed licenses and must transfer them to Charter. Paul Caneen who is on the Cable Advisory Committee was in to discuss progress and how the up to 4.5 % reimbursement from the cable company to the town for PEG (public/educational/government) is not viable to use for other costs such as make-ready work.

Jon F. had suggested that a BOS liaison be created to be included in cable negotiations, and he offered to do it. The scope of work is to be involved in the high level details of the negotiations and report back progress to the Board. Paul C. pointed out that negotiations per se are over, since the bid which charter provided that was accepted by the town could not change; it was now a matter of solidifying requests within the contract—the town cannot amend the “amended contract.” This contract does not include rates/fees to customers. There was much discussion about the complexity of so many players, with Nina describing it as “layers.” The group focused on a plan to have all selectmen being involved and communicating individually through the T.A. The Board voted all in favor to appoint Jon as the Board of Selectmen liaison to the cable franchise negotiations.

9:15 PM Selectmen had reviewed the charge for the Advisory Committee Review Committee and they voted all in favor to approve it.

They considered continuance of the local email service under the “Princeton-ma.us” address and agreed that the town should wean off of it. Currently Phil Mighdoll volunteers as webmaster while the town covers the cost of the web host. He is proposing adding some fees to cover rising costs, and a fee-schedule letter to subscribers was presented to selectmen. Nina suggests that the town collect a service charge (for password reset) and then pay it to Mighdoll. Selectmen voted all in favor to approve the fee schedule and address the issue in one year.

Edith had expressed interest in the Facilities Steering Committee to facilitate setting up the first meeting, attend meetings and report back progress to the Board. Selectmen voted all in favor to appoint Edith as BOS liaison on the Facilities Steering Committee.

9:30 PM The board voted all in favor to approve minutes with minor changes for June 12, June 12 executive session not to be released, and June 15. They then discussed asking John Kowaleski to attend cable TV discussions/conference calls as he is most knowledgeable about technical and other related issues. Edith agreed to contact him.

9:40 PM The board voted all in favor to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted, Marie Auger, admin. assist.

BOS Referenced Documents: Survey plan and deed to accept a 10- acre parcel of conservation land. Auditor’s FY16 Management Letter; Fraud Policy; charge for the Advisory Committee Review Committee; Email fee schedule; in correspondence: letter from the ABCC regarding the Kwik Stop, a notice from the Friends of Mechanics Hall, and a letter from the Cable Advisory Committee.

Marie Auger
Administrative Assistant
Planning Department
978-464-2100