

Greensboro Selectboard

February 23, 2021

Meeting Minutes

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Romans, Andy Kehler, Gary Circosta, Tracy Collier

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Matt McAllister

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Greaves, Josh Karp, Tim Nisbet, Eli Wells, Jennifer Ranz, Betsy Hunt, Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, Heidi Lauren Duke, Elissa Mackin, Jess Nichols, Michael Porrazzo, Nisbet's cat

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

TOWN MEETING/AUSTRALIAN BALLOT INFORMATIONAL HEARING

Town moderator Tim Nisbet attended a VLCT webinar about running an online informational hearing. He shared what he learned, and those present discussed how Greensboro's upcoming meeting might be run. It was agreed that speakers must state their name and town of residence, and while anyone will be allowed to speak, registered Greensboro voters will be given priority. Non-residents may speak if there are no objections.

A number of issues regarding the video conference interface were discussed, including use of the 'waiting room' vs. participants just showing up on the screen, and use of the 'chat' feature. While enabling chat allows participants to talk with each other privately, and also allows the host to communicate with participants in writing, the chat can easily be co-opted by someone intent on making mischief (as happened at a prior Selectboard meeting).

Procedures for running the meeting will be finalized soon, with the goal of keeping the meeting open while minimizing the risk of disruption.

The Board agreed to upgrade its video conference account from a 100 person limit to a 300 person limit.

PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT

Planning Commission (PC) members unanimously approved MacNeil to fill a vacancy, and asked the Selectboard to appoint MacNeil to the PC. Andy made the following motion:

The Board appoints MacNeil to the Planning Commission.

Tracy seconded the motion. Discussion. In a letter to the Board, Jennifer Ranz-Schleifer said she was against this appointment, due to what she sees as a conflict of interest with MacNeil currently serving on the Development Review Board. She felt a different candidate might offer expanded perspectives and opinions.

Gary asked what process the PC goes through when seeking new members. While there is no formal process, Josh said that historically, the Selectboard has preferred that openings on town committees and boards be widely advertised in an attempt to broaden the pool of interested citizens.

It appears such advertising may not have been done for this PC vacancy, with Heidi saying she hadn't heard about the opening. She added that if you don't advertise, you won't know who might be interested in serving.

Peter said that in his experience, the Selectboard has never denied an appointment request from the PC. Andy agreed that the PC went through a process and selected its preferred candidate, adding that it's hard to find volunteers and that the Board should respect the PC's recommendation.

Gary noted that the term of the open position ends in 2021, so the Board would have to re-appoint MacNeil in a few weeks anyway. So, why not ask the PC to advertise the opening, with the Selectboard making the appointment at its March meeting?

VOTE: all opposed; the motion failed.

The PC will be asked to advertise the opening; Kim will assist as necessary.

SIDEWALK GRANT

Gary said that the town applied for a sidewalk grant, and thanked Naomi for doing much of the work.

The scope of work is to install 800' of raised concrete sidewalk with a granite curb down East St. and extending down Cemetery Ridge a short distance.

It's a 50/50 matching grant; the project budget of \$128k includes a 20% contingency. It's believed that the town's match will be mostly in-kind, with contributions including gravel and trucking.

Last year, BP & Son was awarded the bid for the initial 300 feet; they may need to bid on the additional 500'. Different, specialized contractors will bid on the granite curb installation.

Elissa said that there's a lot of foot traffic on that stretch, and that the new sidewalk will be much safer and a huge improvement.

Naomi said another grant round is scheduled for late spring/early summer, and could be an opportunity to replace another stretch of sidewalk. She also mentioned that VCRD (VT Council on Rural Development) is making a grant writer available to the town in the near future, paid for with a USDA grant.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Police Contract Negotiations

Andy made the following motion:

The Board will enter executive session at 7:50 PM for police contract negotiations.

Peter seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The Board left executive session at 9:03 PM and took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk

AMENDED 3/10/21 J.K.