

# Greensboro Selectboard

May 10, 2023 – Minutes

[Meeting was held via video conference]

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ellen Celnik, Gary Circosta, David Kelley, Peter Romans, Eric Hanson

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Brett Stanciu, Josh Karp, Tom Camarra, Christopher Roy, Jane Johns, Laura Hill, Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, Stew Arnold, Kent Hansen, Liz Steel, Isa Oehry, Abraham Ames, Ila Hunt

**CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM**

## ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None this evening.

## MINUTES

Minutes from April 12 meeting unanimously approved as amended.

## PUBLIC CONCERNS

A petition with 31 signatures was received by the town, stating:

*Shall the registered voters of Greensboro approve the lowering of the speed limit to 25 mph on Main St. in Greensboro Bend.*

Jane Johns said almost all residents of Main St. signed the petition, and asked the Board what happens next.

Eric asked for some background on the petition. Jane said there's been an ongoing issue of speeding on Main St., adding that even 35 mph is too fast with so many kids and other pedestrians around. The problem could be compounded with the anticipated increase in traffic from rail trail users. Dave made the following motion:

*The Board will do everything it can to set a 25 mph speed limit on Main St. in Greensboro Bend, and will consult with the Orleans County Sheriff about legal and procedural issues.*

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Peter said he'd contact the OCSD.

## GREENSBORO FIRE DEPT. – Chief Dave Brochu, Jr.

No reports were available this evening.

## ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.

Some Board members have had trouble logging in to the OCSD database and weren't able to access the monthly reports. Josh will make sure the reports are included in the monthly meeting packet.

## ROADS

- 1. Road Foreman's report – Tom Camarra.** Tom said the road crew has been grading and is already applying chloride as needed.
- 2. Driveway plowing - damage to Compton's driveway.** Compton's driveway on Cook Hill had extreme damage done to their driveway during the last, or second to last, plow of the season. Yards of gravel were

scraped off down to the filter fabric; repairs required 40 yds. of gravel and cost about \$2k. The driveway was plowed not with a pickup, but with a front-end loader equipped with a large plow.

Peter discussed the damage with Jeff Perry, but he took no responsibility for the incident.

While the driveway plowing contract states the contractor is not responsible for damage, David said he'd check the language closely. While the contract's intent is to account for fair and reasonable damage, such extreme damage may possibly be considered negligence.

Dave will draft a letter to Perry's regarding the incident, to be reviewed by the Board prior to sending.

3. **Winter whips.** Peter Gebbie expressed frustration that some whips adjacent to his fields weren't picked up while most others around town were. Tom said those particular whips were still frozen into the ground, leading to a delay in collecting them.
4. **New Trailer quote.** Tom said the town's existing trailer, used primarily to move the excavator, is in poor condition and should be replaced. The Board reviewed a quote for a new trailer, which Tom noted is large enough to handle the front-end loader. Peter asked whether this quote reflects the unit the town actually needs, or is there a cheaper option? Tom said this was the cheapest quote of the bids he received. Discussion of how to pay for a new trailer, given that no HERF funds are earmarked for it. Eric made the following motion:

*The town will look into purchasing a new trailer, ideally with a trade-in on the old trailer.*

David seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

5. **FY23 new truck – update.** No purchase offers have been received yet. Peter was unsuccessful in negotiating a higher trade-in value from the dealer, but was able to buy the town three weeks until the trade-in decision must be made. In the meantime, perhaps an offer on the old truck comes in.
6. **Green-Up Day tires.** The tire roll-off was overflowing after Green-Up weekend, and All Metals had to leave a pile of tires behind in order to safely move the box. Discussion of what to do with the remaining tires. Brett will make some calls, but it appears that having the road crew haul them down to All Metals will be the simplest solution.
7. **Gravel reclaimer.** The town did not receive a grant for a gravel reclaimer this time around but will apply again next grant cycle. In the meantime, the town of Barton has agreed to rent their unit to Greensboro. The Board reviewed the rental contract.
8. **Traffic ordinance.** At the 2022 town meeting voters approved Article 5, which set the speed limit of 'all gravel roads' at 35 mph. Gary wondered about places in town where the speed limit has historically been lower than that, such as Country Club Rd. and up by the school. Given the way the article was written, can these areas legally have a speed limit less than 35 mph? Discussion. Peter said that since those areas have historically had those lower speed limits, they can likely remain that way.

## **ORLEANS COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT – Abraham Ames**

Abraham gave a presentation about possible water quality projects at the public beach, and a stormwater project on Lauredon Ave. There is very likely funding for these projects if the town chooses to move forward with them.

1. **Public beach projects.** After a Lake Wise assessment was done at the public beach, four restoration projects were designed. If the Board approves these projects, Abraham said he'd pursue approval from the DRB.

Discussion about the fact that project approval may be up to the town of Hardwick, which owns the beach. Abraham said he is seeking buy-in from all appropriate entities, and that he'd speak with the Hardwick Electric Dept. as well as the Beach Committee. Dave made the following motion:

*The Selectboard endorses the projects at the public beach.*

Peter seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 2. Lauredon Ave. Project.** A study identified Lauredon Ave. as being the highest priority for stormwater improvements in Greensboro. Peter said stormwater runoff in this area has been a problem for years and it would be fantastic if the state could improve the situation. A few years ago he inquired about installing berms in the wet area across from the Village Green, to slow down stormwater flows, but this was rejected by the state due to the field's wetland status. Abraham said that since the project would be considered 'watershed restoration', and since the study was commissioned by the VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation, berms would likely be approved this time around.

In addition to the berms, Abraham mentioned the installation of a detention pond on the Village Green. Liz had concerns about a pond's impact on the community garden, and Stew said the Village Green is used by the town for various activities and should be considered off limits. Abraham said the project can likely be successful with just the swales. He added that the project has not been fully designed and the town will have the final say on which approach is taken. Peter made the following motion:

*The Board supports the concept of stormwater improvements on Lauredon Ave, and requests that Abraham move ahead with the next steps.*

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

### **TOWN CLERK – Kim Greaves**

Kim was not present this evening.

- 1. Liquor licenses.** Gary made the following motion:

*The Board approves First Class and Third Class liquor licenses and an outside consumption permit for The Highland Lodge. The Board approves a Second Class liquor license and a tobacco license for Smith's Store.*

Eric seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 2. Snow Farm Winery – special events permit.** Gary made the following motion:

*The Board approves a special events permit for Snow Farm Winery, for an event at the Highland Center on August 13.*

Eric seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 3. Town Gardens bid.** One bid was received, from Laura Hill. Eric made the following motion:

*The Board accepts Laura Hill's bid for town gardens maintenance.*

Peter seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

### **TREASURER – Brett Stanciu**

1. The Board reviewed the treasurer's monthly report, the FY23 budget report, and the April check warrant reports.

- 2. Cemetery Fund CD.** The Cemetery Fund's five-year CD will be maturing soon. Discussion about moving the funds to an account with a higher interest rate. Eric made the following motion:

*The Cemetery Fund's CD will be moved to Infinex.*

Peter seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 3. Town employee pay rate increases.** Brett told the Board that the pay rate increases for FY24 need to be approved by the Board.

**4. Non-arbitrage account.** Gary asked whether this account is part of the town's general fund balance or is separate from it. He also asked whether Board can allocate this money as it sees fit, or if the funds need to be returned to the taxpayers in some way.

Brett asked the town attorney for an opinion about possible restrictions on the use of this money, and heard back that there isn't enough information about the account for an opinion to be drafted.

### **HOUSING AT TOWN HALL – RuralEdge Option Agreement**

Dave met with Patrick Shattuck of RuralEdge and reported that all of the concerns raised at last month's Selectboard meeting were easily addressed, including that there would be no assignment of the deed without the town's consent, and due diligence will be done to study moving the town offices to the Grange. Kent Hansen said if that project is included in the overall feasibility study, it could increase the availability of grants.

Josh asked, after RuralEdge completes the feasibility study – at substantial cost to them – and if they feel the project is feasible and want to move forward, can the town choose to reject their proposal? Eric replied that yes, the town can elect to not proceed.

Discussion about holding a public meeting to solicit feedback from residents. Gary felt there should be public feedback on the front end of the process, not after the study is completed. Eric said Patrick presented the idea of converting the Town Hall to housing at the 2023 town meeting, and there were few or no questions. Naomi expressed concern that many residents were not at town meeting and thus may not be aware of this potential project. She added that a lack of questions at town meeting shouldn't imply full support by residents, since this was the first time most folks had heard of this and likely wouldn't have had time to formulate questions. Peter made the following motion:

*The Board will start the process with RuralEdge and sign the option agreement.*

David seconded the motion. Further discussion.

Liz met with Patrick to discuss energy efficiency aspects of the project, and they had a good, transparent discussion and he was receptive to her concerns. Patrick's biggest concern is wastewater, which could make the project untenable if serious issues arise.

Peter said the feasibility study will take at least a year, so there's lots of time to discuss these issues and any others that come up.

Naomi said that since the feasibility study will be a huge, expensive process for RuralEdge, why not start with some town input to help guide their process? And what about starting with an assessment of the wastewater issue, since it's of fundamental importance?

Ellen said RuralEdge won't have much information for residents without first doing the study.

Gary said that he was not comfortable signing the option agreement at this time.

The vote was held and the motion carried (P.R., E.C., E.H., D.K. in favor; G.C. against).

### **ONGOING BUSINESS**

- 1. LVRT Trailhead project.** Peter anticipated that the lease with VTrans should be approved shortly.
- 2. Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard.** Eric suggested that before hiring an administrative assistant to write grants and support the town office staff and Selectboard, it would make sense to first determine what current staff do day to day, and clarify what additional help is actually needed.  
The Board agreed that Eric could begin work on the staff assessment with assistance from Ellen as needed.
- 3. Trapping on town properties.** No date has been set for a public hearing. David said he hopes a hearing can be held this summer.
- 4. New town garage.** Peter recently met with architect James Coe and members of the road crew. It appears that the best place for a new town garage, if located on the current lot, is where the sand pile is. In addition

to that complication, there's the challenge of a huge, disruptive building process on a site that has to be functional day to day for the road crew. For these reasons, building on the current lot could end up being the most expensive and least desirable option.

Faced with this, the group looked at the fire station lot as a site for the new town garage (the building only). The sand pile, salt shed, and outside storage of equipment and supplies would remain at the current location. There could be substantial savings by not tearing down as many buildings and from possibly sharing fire station infrastructure.

Gary suggested the Board ask residents what they think about this idea.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1. Caspian Critters 4H gazebo project – Laura Hill.** While \$7k in ARPA funds have already been approved by the Selectboard to install a gazebo at the town park, Laura requested Board approval to move forward with the project. Gary asked whether permanent seating and solid walls will be part of the project, features the Craftsbury Common gazebo has. Laura said she believed seating would be part of the project. Eric made the following motion:

*The Board approves installing a gazebo at the town park, and an application may be submitted to the Zoning Administrator.*

Gary seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 2. Selectboard rules of procedure.** Peter asked Board members to review the Selectboard rules of procedure. He'd like to see the Board 'improve its game' and has some changes to the document in mind. He said others may also have changes to propose, and a discussion will be held next month. After discussion, Gary made the following motion:

*All town policies and ordinances will be put on the town website, where both the Selectboard and public can be made aware of and have easy access to them. Town policies and ordinances include the Selectboard Rules of Procedure, ATV Ordinance, Personnel Policy, Drug & Alcohol Policy for Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators, Purchasing Policy, Investment Policy, and the Conflict of Interest Policy.*

Peter seconded the motion, which did not carry (G.C., D.K. in favor; E.C., P.R., E.H. abstained).

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Peter made the following motion:

*The Board will enter executive session at 8:50 PM to discuss a contract.*

Eric seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The Board left executive session at 9:03 PM. Peter made the following motion:

*The Board appoints Gary to be a driveway plowing liaison.*

Dave seconded the motion which carried (P.R., D.K., E.H., E.C. in favor, G.C. opposed). Gary declined the appointment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:05 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted: Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk*

*AMENDED 6/15/23 J.K.*