

# Greensboro Selectboard

July 10, 2024 – Minutes

[This was a hybrid meeting held at the Greensboro Free Library, with some participants joining remotely]

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ellen Celnik, MacNeil, David Kelley, Eric Hanson

**SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT in person:** Chris Steel, Liz Steel, Chris Roy, Meaghan Meachem, Beth Meachem, Erika Karp, Brett Stanciu, Kim Greaves, Josh Karp, Tom Camarra, Dede Stabler, Vangie Kelly, Ellen Gray, Nancy Keyes, Bobbie Nisbet, Jan Terweisch, Bonnie Cleveland, Randel Cleveland

**OTHERS PRESENT remote:** Bill Hardy, Christine Armstrong, Anne Altman, Dan Predpall, Davis Barnett, Hugh Knox, Janet Long, John Lukens, Joseph Gresser, June Bascom, Lise Armstrong, Melissa Moffatt, Peter Romans, Liz Baum, Mary Parker, Elissa Mackin, Aileen Gebbie, Neal Burnham, Jerilyn Virden, Jess Nichols, Amy Nichols, Janet Hill, Sandra Gebbie, Michael Porrazzo, Liz Gebbie, Kent Hansen, Gail Sieg, Elsa Shultz, Chad Sims, Eleanor Guare, Lisa Sartorius, Jennifer Lucas, Nancy Riege, Ila Hunt, Janet Patterson

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

## ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Curb cut – Jan Terweisch.

Eric congratulated everyone for a great Funky Fourth celebration, 450+ people were fed and \$3k was raised for the food pantry. He specifically thanked John Schweizer for his work organizing the event.

## MINUTES

Minutes from June 26, 2024 regular meeting approved as written.

## NEW SELECTBOARD MEMBER

Bobbie Nisbet volunteered to fill the open selectboard seat. David made the following motion:

*The Board appoints Bobbie Nisbet to fill the open selectboard seat.*

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

## PUBLIC CONCERNS

None this evening.

## ROADS & DRIVEWAYS

**1. Road Foreman's report.** Tom reported that the road crew is finishing up FEMA work on Bayley-Hazen Road. Edsall Hill was repaired after washing out during a recent downpour. Road crew members took vacation time in June, slowing down progress on road projects since there was only a two-person crew for much of the month.

## 2. Road concerns from public.

- Erika noted that some rough areas on Circus Rd. would ideally be fixed before the August Smirkus shows.
- Beth said there are some large holes on the hill above the Gebbie farm that need fixing.
- Bonnie said a town culvert above their house empties debris onto their lawn and asked if there might be a solution. MacNeil said he'd investigate.

3. **FEMA update.** Josh said the plugged culvert on Gebbie Rd. on John Downing's property is a FEMA project leftover from last year; this needs to be communicated to John so he doesn't hire a contractor to complete the job. The Board directed the road crew to replace this culvert.

4. **Curb cut.** The Board unanimously approved a curb cut request from Jan Terweisch.

## **COMMUNICATIONS GROUP – Revised communications plan with civil discourse policy**

The communications group (CG) submitted a revised communication plan to the board, which includes a civil discourse policy. Ellen and David said it appears they didn't receive the document prior to the meeting.

Meaghan asked the board to think about the 'new world' of remote meeting attendees and how a civil discourse policy would apply to them. She asked the board to consider enabling Zoom's chat function, as this could be considered an equity issue since some folks have trouble with public speaking.

Beth said the CG is aware that some of their proposals could take a while to implement due in part to budgetary considerations, but that the group hopes small steps can be taken to build better communications between the town and community. The board reviewed the CG's six recommendations.

1. **Civil discourse policy.** Eric said the existing selectboard 'Rules of Procedure' may address some of the civil discourse recommendations and asked board members review the 2018 document. Revisions will be considered at the next board meeting.
2. **Quarterly update from selectboard chair on board/town committee projects.** Eric agreed to do this, and will ask selectboard members and town staff for input on these quarterly updates. Ellen suggested that town committee chairs could rotate in and be present at the quarterly updates.
3. **Restructuring selectboard agendas.** If there continues to be two meetings per month, the recommendation is that the first monthly meeting be focused on town 'admin' matters, with the second meeting mostly dedicated to public comment and discussion of specific projects going on in the community. David suggested the Board adopt this recommendation.  
MacNeil suggested that the board chair send out draft agendas to all board members prior to posting, in case they have anything to add. He said he's not in favor of holding two meetings a month indefinitely.
4. **Improvements to town website.** Liz said a website upgrade proposal was presented in 2021. Some improvements have been made, but other recommendations have not been followed and there is still a need for more transparency. The CG knows that getting the town website up to a level that serves the community more efficiently will take time and financial support; the group is aware that we're a small town with a small staff. Brett suggested this be put on the budget committee's agenda this fall, and she'll invite folks to budget meetings to continue the discussion.
5. **Review job descriptions of town employees.** Kim said as town clerk, she is responsible for hiring an assistant, taking into consideration the complexity of the town office. While she'd take suggestions about the job description of an assistant town clerk, she felt that publishing the entire job description isn't necessary. Liz asked Kim to consider adding website skills to the job description if they're not there yet. MacNeil said the board needs to understand the budgetary impacts of staffing changes in the town office.
6. **Community conversations.** The CG recommends that the town hold a discussion forum twice a year as a way to make connections with each other and discuss issues. Many residents can't attend Selectboard

meetings so more opportunities may increase community engagement. Liz said the VT Council on Rural Development (VCRD) is willing to facilitate the first of these community conversations.

She said while the VCRD Community Visit was back in 2019, the community hasn't been formally updated on some of the initiatives that came out of that process, nor have members of the community been invited to 'plug into' these initiatives. Liz said VCRD is very supportive of doing a review of task force developments since 2019, as well as looking at other things that have come up in the meantime.

The Planning Commission (PC) is about to start the lengthy process of updating the town plan. Beth said that chair Kent Hansen agreed that the PC will host the first community conversation, with a pot luck supper and round table discussions. The visit will be preceded by a PC community survey on August 3.

Ellen said it would be 'extraordinarily helpful' if people volunteered to serve on the PC, as that's where a lot of visioning and prioritizing happens.

Bobbie thanked the CG for their efforts. She added a lot has been put on the table and there is a lot of thinking to do.

Eric asked what is needed from the selectboard for the community visit. Liz replied that the board's support and attendance is what's needed. The Board agreed to support and attend the community visit.

### **ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.**

1. The Board reviewed the June OCSD report.
2. **Speed study – Main St.** Tabled.

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

No report was available and no representative from the GFD was present.

### **TOWN CLERK – Kim Greaves**

No items this evening.

### **TREASURER – Brett Stanciu**

1. The Board reviewed the treasurer's monthly report, the FY24 budget report, and the June check warrant reports.
2. **Line of credit for 2023 flood repairs.** The town is waiting on approx. \$700k of FEMA reimbursement and needs to renew the LOC, which comes due July 31. Eric recently renegotiated the LOC with a 5.25% interest rate.
3. **Town hall – new generator.** Brett noted this is an unbudgeted expense. There is a 2-3 month wait for installation once the deposit is received by the contractor.
4. **Tax rate.** Brett said the board needs to set the tax rate at its next meeting. She added that the letter sent out with the tax bills is a great opportunity to communicate with landowners about important topics.

### **TOWN HALL HOUSING PROPOSAL – RuralEdge update**

Ellen said she and MacNeil had their first meeting with RuralEdge (RE) a few weeks ago. RE recently sent the town 25 pages of legal documents which Ellen and MacNeil are reviewing, and they hope to continue discussions with RE in the upcoming weeks.

Ellen said they are working to make sure all of the town's concerns are being discussed, including the fact that the Village Green must continue to be available for public uses even if a large wastewater system is sited there. MacNeil said they're going to press RE to provide a timeline for completing tasks such as the test pits for the wastewater system.

Core samples have been completed and no underground tank leaks were found.

Bobbie asked whether the RE documents include details for parking, lighting, septic, and water. MacNeil said town approval of parking and lighting designs must be granted as part of the overall process. Septic and water are not regulated by the town: septic systems require a state permit, while hooking up to water would need to be negotiated with the Fire District #1.

Ellen reminded folks this is not ‘subsidized’ housing, but ‘moderate income’ housing.

Meaghan said a recent article mentioned that three units may be set aside for families coming out of homelessness, and wondered if RE has ever mentioned this. Ellen said three units is a low percentage of the total units, adding that there have been cases locally of folks who lost their homes to fire and had a very hard time finding housing.

Eric said that moving forward, the board has informally agreed to discuss RE issues in open session, and to only enter executive session to discuss RE if there’s a specific legal reason to do so.

Liz requested that the public’s RE questions, and any known answers, are placed on the town website. It was agreed to put questions from the April 24 meeting held at Lakeview School, and the June 4 meeting held at Fellowship Hall, on the website. Brett offered to do this task.

Regarding the town vote on the project, David said the vote will happen once the Purchase and Sales Agreement (P&S) is complete, but prior to signing. He said the board needs to check but that the vote would be warned at least 30 days out.

Ellen said if the Village Green is found to be suitable for a wastewater system, ‘Phase 2’ studies will continue throughout 2025. All studies must be complete in order to finalize the P&S agreement and hold the town vote.

## **ONGOING BUSINESS**

**1. Glover land – encroachment.** Eric said Peter Romans is handing this project off to the Selectboard. Peter suggested that the town first figure out what land the folks may be interested in purchasing, then a price can be negotiated, followed by a survey. David said he would meet with the landowners to keep things moving forward.

**2. Zoning bylaw – public hearing on ‘Misc. Changes’.** The state has released new language that is required to be included in municipal bylaws. Discussion on how best to incorporate this language, as the bylaw hearing has already been warned for July 25. After discussion, David made the following motion:

*On July 11, Janet Patterson will send an addendum with the new state language to Brett who will post these changes.*

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**3. New town garage.** This project has stalled after some serious challenges appeared. MacNeil asked if selectboard members still feel a new town garage is a critical need. He wondered if pursuing a state wetland waiver to build a new town garage on the fire house lot could be a path forward.

Discussion about the connections between building a new town garage and relocating the recycling center.

It was agreed that Josh, MacNeil, and Brett will discuss the new town garage project.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**1. Greensboro Bend block party.** Erika announced there will be a block party in Greensboro Bend on Saturday August 3. Discussion of why this event isn’t listed yet on the town website.

Jane Johns, one of the organizers, reportedly has concerns that the event could get too big if widely advertised. Chris Steel said the Greensboro Association wants to support the event, and suggested that more resources be requested/allocated next year so this event can be larger in scope. Dan suggested there

shouldn't be a problem if the event is advertised in Greensboro only. Kim said she'd discuss timing of the website announcement with Jane.

- 2. Federal funds for local renewable energy projects.** David said he's heard that a large amount of federal funding earmarked for renewable energy projects will soon be available to towns. Liz said she's aware of these funds, which can be used for projects such as community solar arrays.

She added that the town Energy Committee has been renamed the *Energy and Climate Action Committee*.

- 3. Village Trust Initiative (VTI) application – Methodist Church.** Dan Predpall said the Bend Revitalization Initiative (BRI) submitted a pre-application to the Village Trust Initiative to convert the Methodist church in Greensboro Bend, currently for sale, into a community center. Dan said the proposal made the VTI's short list and a detailed application is due on August 2, followed by an interview. He said the application is a bit of a long shot, with one challenge being that site control must be established ASAP. Dan has been talking to the property's realtor about getting a six-month option agreement to establish site control so the VTI project can potentially move ahead.

Dan said a project working group of approx. 12 people needs to be established, and the BRI needs a resolution stating that the selectboard supports the project and VTI application. David made the following motion:

*The board supports the Village Trust Initiative application for the Methodist church project as presented by Dan Predpall.*

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted, Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk*