

- Draft only, not yet approved by the Selectboard -

Greensboro Selectboard

September 18, 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: Bobbie Nisbet

OTHERS PRESENT in person: Erika Karp, Meaghan Meachem, Beth Meachem, JoAnn Hanowski, Davis Barnett, Naomi Ranz Schleifer, Sandra MacLeod, Kent Hansen, Dede Stabler, Gary Circosta, Renee Circosta, Tom Camarra, Dan Predpall, Mary Parker, Jan Terwiesch, Brett Stanciu, Josh Karp

OTHERS PRESENT remote: Hugh Knox, Janet Long, Michael Porrazzo, Judy Carpenter, John Burchenal, Elisabeth Sartorius, Elissa Mackin, Aileen Gebbie, Janet Patterson, Betsy Hunt, Lise Armstrong, Chad Sims, Paul Brierre, Karl Stein, Kristen Leahy, Courtney Labson, Ila Hunt, Melissa Moffatt, Vince Cabbage, Jess Nichols, Andy Nichols, Jennifer Bayles, Nancy Riege

CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Bend Revitalization / Village Trust Initiative – Dan Predpall

Sign policy – Gary Circosta

MINUTES

- July 25, 2024 zoning bylaw hearing: unanimously approved as written
- August 28, 2024 special meeting: unanimously approved as written
- September 9, 2024 emergency meeting: unanimously approved as written

PUBLIC CONCERNS

Gary asked why there wasn't a warning for the Selectboard's September 9 emergency meeting. David said the board had to engage a contractor to deal with the mold emergency at the town offices and the meeting was scheduled quickly.

Gary asked what the topic of discussion was for the 'legal issue' during the second executive session at the May 8 selectboard meeting. Eric said this was a confidential discussion.

Gary expressed concern that the newly re-formed housing committee doesn't plan to follow the open meeting law, resulting in a lack of transparency. Gary didn't explain why he believes the housing committee will be operating in this manner.

Gary asked why the selectboard's sign policy was not on the meeting agenda for this evening. Eric said Bobbie had been working on this issue and since she's been out of town, discussion was tabled. Gary said the direction the town is heading in may not be legal and suggested the board do further research. He read a statement describing a US Supreme Court opinion: if signs are regulated, it must be on a 'content-neutral' basis or could be considered unconstitutional.

Renee asked if the board could explain the Rocco Real Estate settlement. David said the lawsuit resulted from a technical issue having to do with a tax sale. The town had a good lawyer and Rocco eventually withdrew their suit, choosing to settle with the town. David said most of the town's legal costs were paid for by VLCT.

ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.

No report was available.

GREENSBORO FIRE DEPT.

No report was available.

ROADS & DRIVEWAYS

- 1. Road Foreman's report – Tom Camarra.** Tom said with the good weather and additional trucks the road crew has made good progress resurfacing roads around town. Erika asked about the process for alerting residents when a road is temporarily closed, such as for a culvert replacement. Tom said whenever possible he notifies Kim and she posts a notice on the website and notifies emergency services.
- 2. Stewards of the Greensboro Watershed – Adopt-a-Culvert – JoAnn Hanowski.** JoAnn proposed a citizen led adopt-a-culvert program to help prevent future road damage and reduce phosphorus loading in the lakes. Ideally all 700+ culverts in town would be adopted, with a core group getting started this fall and a big push for volunteers at the March 2025 town meeting. Tom suggested that at the least, people keep an eye on their own driveway culverts. The board was in support of the adopt-a-culvert program, MacNeil will assist as roads liaison.
- 3. Driveway plowing bid.** The town received one bid, from BP & Sons Inc. for \$450k plus \$12.6k additional for Overlook Rd. The bid covers plowing services for three winters, and would be in effect 11/1/25 to 5/1/28.

Discussion about the requirement that driveways must be well maintained in order to be plowed.

Gary noted extreme damage to a driveway after a spring snowstorm a few years ago and asked whether the board discussed changes to the contract based on this occurrence. Brett noted that all residents must sign a damage waiver in order to have their driveway plowed. David made the following motion:

The board accepts the driveway plowing bid from BP & Sons as presented.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 4. Road reclassification for TH 34 (Barton Rd.) and TH 28 (White Rd.).** As required by statute, public notice was given and a site visit was held at each road in April 2024. Gary noted the board was supposed to make a decision in writing within 60 days of the hearing. David made the following motion:

The board will downgrade TH 34 and TH 28 from Class 3 to Class 4.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Discussion of downgrading other town roads that currently serve only as driveways. These roads used to lead to working farms and were maintained by the town so milk could be reliably picked up. MacNeil and Tom will work on compiling a list of these roads.

- 5. Engine Brakes - Sandra MacLeod.** Sandra expressed concern about the use of engine brakes as trucks pass by her house on East St. Tom said these brakes are an important part of the trucks' braking system, are factory installed, and are required to be used for safety reasons. Sandra countered that not all trucks seem to use engine brakes. Nancy said trucks are also speeding on East St., and Elissa added that trucks are often speeding on Cemetery Ridge Rd. Chad said contracted trucks, not town trucks, are speeding on Craftsbury Rd. Tom said due to the large size of these trucks, it can appear they are moving faster than they actually are.

Eric asked Brett to price *Please No Engine Brakes* signs.

6. **FEMA update.** Brett said the town has spent \$400k to date on the July 2024 flood repairs. In terms of the 2023 flood recovery costs, Josh said he's delayed signing off on \$1.2 million in FEMA reimbursements because he's trying to get an additional \$4-500k for road improvements approved first.
JoAnne asked when the town will be able to update the Municipal Roads General Permit and culvert inventory to reflect all the work done on the roads over the past year. Having these databases updated will help the town prioritize future road work. Josh said he'll begin working on this later in the fall once all the FEMA projects are submitted.
Tom said while stone lined ditches will help reduce erosion they will eventually need maintenance which will require purchasing specialized equipment that needs to be budgeted for.
7. **Salt brine.** Ellen suggested the town continue to research this option for winter road maintenance. Tom noted that this approach doesn't work well during extreme cold.

TOWN CLERK – Kim Greaves

Town clerk Kim Greaves was not present this evening.

TREASURER – Brett Stanciu

1. The Board reviewed the treasurer's monthly report, the FY25 budget report, and the August check warrant reports.
2. **FY 2026 budgeting.** Brett proposed budget committee meetings be held on Wednesdays at 1 PM. Jennifer Lucas will be helping out again, and Brett thanked her for her help last year. Brett said the budgeting process will ideally be wrapped up by Thanksgiving, followed by a public meeting about the proposed budget in December.
3. **Town offices – mold update.** Mold has been found in the town offices and the area is no longer open to staff or public, with the exception of the town records in the vault. The town offices have moved to the town hall's middle level, and mold remediation work is scheduled to begin Oct. 17. Brett noted the vault will be closed during the remediation process.
Brett said the selectboard and town staff need to have a conversation about the long-term location of the town offices.
Ellen said whatever the basement is used for in the future, the causes of the problem need to be determined and the issues fixed. MacNeil said the concrete foundation is likely not waterproofed, leading to moisture continually wicking into the interior spaces.
Brett said materials in the vault are vulnerable to moisture and should all be digitized, a very expensive process. She noted that all records after approx. 2018 have been digitized. Gary reminded the board that there is a records preservation fund that could be used for this project. Renee asked whether these funds could be used to make the website more accessible. Brett said perhaps, if part of the process would be making the records available on the town website.
Beth said the library dealt with a mold issue and offered to answer any questions about their remediation process.
4. Gary asked how much NEMRC will charge for assisting Brett with organizing the general ledger. Brett said she is still working out the details of the contract but estimated the cost to be \$120/hr.
5. Gary asked about ARPA funds earmarked for a gazebo at the town park. Brett said the Caspian Critters 4H club is still planning to pursue this project.
6. Gary asked about mace as an expense line item on one of Brett's financial reports. Brett said this was purchased after instances of very aggressive behavior from members of the public caused considerable concern among town office staff.

TOWN HALL / RURALEDGE UPDATE

- 1. Wastewater assessments.** MacNeil said RuralEdge (RE) was reluctant to spend money on a site assessment for wastewater due to the amount of funds already expended on town hall investigations, along with doubts of future town support. Hoyle Tanner (H/T) agreed to do the wastewater testing on the Village Green as part of its investigations of sites for a town wastewater system, using existing funds earmarked for such investigations. H/T did a walk through with hand augers and will submit a written report by Sept. 30. Dan said H/T is also investigating an alternate site. A few members of the public asked about this alternative site. MacNeil said this is confidential information; Gary asked why this is the case and if there may be a conflict of interest. Ellen said this is a confidential matter due to being a real estate issue and is a legitimate topic for an executive session.
Gary said the H/T staff who were doing the site investigations said they had been asked not to discuss their work with members of the public. Gary said he heard the alternate site is a piece of land on the Perron farm, and said he would like to register his concerns around a potential conflict of interest. Ellen said if it turns out there is a conflict of interest, this will be dealt with appropriately.
- 2. Purchase and Sales agreement.** Ellen said the town attorney is looking over a draft of the P&S agreement.
- 3. Town hall appraisal.** Ellen said a commercial appraisal of the town hall building should be completed by September 23.

GREENSBORO PLANNING COMMISSION

- 1. Zoning bylaw updates - Miscellaneous Changes.** Planning Commission (PC) chair Kent Hansen explained that at the selectboard's public hearing on the misc. changes, MacNeil expressed concern about language allowing the PC to provide advice to the zoning administrator or DRB if interpretation of the bylaw is needed. Kent said while this has never happened, the PC did review this language and sent proposed changes to the board. Kent said changing this language would be considered a major change and would require the selectboard to hold an additional public hearing.
Discussion on how to move forward, either by 1) the selectboard making the change and holding another public hearing, or 2) by the selectboard approving the misc. changes as written with a clause stating that this new language will be added at the board's next public hearing on the bylaw. The board agreed on the second option.
- 2. Zoning bylaw updates - Shoreland Protection District.** The board submitted a number of questions about proposed changes to the SPD, and Kent said the PC spent over 20 hours reviewing these. The PC will submit their responses by the end of this week and hopes to continue discussing the SPD with the board at its next meeting.
Ellen thanked the PC for their considerable work on these bylaw proposals.
- 3. Planning Commission survey.** Kent said while 100 responses have been received to date, they'd like many more folks to fill out the survey. He'll send out a reminder on Front Porch Forum.

ONGOING BUSINESS

- 1. Nursing Home Utility Contract.** Tabled, as no representative from the GNH was present.
- 2. Selectboard meetings.** The board agreed to go back to one regular meeting per month, on the second Wednesday.
- 3. Methodist Church and Parsonage – Village Trust Initiative – *Dan Predpall*.** Dan said these buildings were for sale and NVDA recommended that the town apply for a VTI grant to repurpose these buildings for community use. NVDA assisted Dan with the grant application and the project was accepted.

The grant project is to turn these buildings into useful community facilities. The VTI program will now help with outreach to determine what the community wants to do with the buildings. Dan noted that the parsonage could be a housing unit, possibly a duplex.

4. **Wilson St. drainage project.** Dan reported that CAS Engineers are still collecting data. The next phase is project design.
5. **Land encroachment on the town's Glover property.** David said the property owner agrees they have encroached on Greensboro's property, and is willing to purchase approx. two acres of land from the town. It was unclear whether a formal appraisal should be done, or if getting a figure from area real estate brokers would be adequate. David said he'd try to get a valuation of the property by the next selectboard meeting. It was also unclear who would pay for a survey. David said he'd discuss this issue with the property owner.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Glover gravel pit.** A formal request has been received from the town of Glover to buy approx. 8 acres of Greensboro's gravel pit land for \$150k. Ellen said this was discussed a few years ago but didn't go anywhere. Gary said this acreage may be much more valuable than the board realizes.

Board members agreed to not pursue this land sale.

2. **Grants committee.** David said there are many needs in town that could be paid for by grants, but that the town staff doesn't have the capacity for grant writing at this time. He proposed forming a grant committee where members of the community could assist the town by applying for grants. He asked for volunteers to write grants for projects such as a grange renovation and water quality issues.

Regarding a grange renovation, Naomi said if the town is considering spending \$2 million on the grange, why not spend this sum on the town hall building? She added that as a town volunteer who applied for the VTrans Bike/Ped Scoping Study grant, she heard recently that the town received the grant, yet no one from the town notified her which she found frustrating.

Eric thanked Naomi for her work applying for this grant.

Ellen said the town needs to budget for assistance with grants administration.

3. **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant application.** Beth said while the state Dept. of Public Service has selected the town's application for approval, the grant agreement remains conditional upon approval by federal agencies. If approved, the selectboard will need to decide whether to accept the grant.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

David made the following motion:

The board will enter executive session at 9:10 PM to discuss contracts.

MacNeil seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The board left executive session at 9:27 PM and took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 PM by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted, Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk