

BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN OF CONWAY, MA  
MINUTES - DRAFT  
Sept. 28, 2009

**Meeting Open: 7:00PM**

**Present:** Maureen Chase, Jack Lochhead, Chuck Trombley, Tom Spiro

**Others Present:**

**Appointments**

**7:00 Housing Committee** – Pixie Holbrook, Woody Paparazzo, Ed Lareau, Pat Lynch, Janet Chayes

Ed noted that he was “insulted” at the All Committees meeting as it had turned out to almost be just another Selectboard meeting. He said that people should stay to the end of this meeting to hear all reports. Maureen recommended that the Housing Committee meet with Sue Bridge to coordinate projects regarding home insulation projects. Ed mentioned that he felt that there was some duplication of tasks between the Housing Committee and Conway Conserves.

The group has been working on plans regarding elderly/affordable housing. Pixie said the Committee had decided that a good way to move forward for them would be as a resource for upgrades, affordability and issues of access. Pixie said that she was confused by their relationship with the Selectboard (SB). She felt there was a noted lack of communication. They felt they were being by-passed. Maureen said that she needed more information to make a determination on what direction the Committee should go in. Jack noted that Conway Conserves would probably become a separate energy committee. Chuck said that Sue had worked on coordination with state and federal programs and that their assistance with that would be valuable. Jack thought that their main focus should be on affordable housing, maybe for first-time buyers or the elderly. Ed suggested that their survey form could be used by the Conway Conserves. Pixie noted that they would still try to work with the Housing Authority. They had met with the Housing Committee in the Town of Leveret and found that they had not had much success at moving towards their goals either.

They discussed the idea of an inventory of existing affordable housing. Jack mentioned the mandate stipulated by MGL 40B. Pixie noted that Jack had looked into land behind the French’s property as a potential space for the elderly or infirmed, but found that it was not ideal in terms of accessibility. They were looking for a space to put a housing complex of 6-8 units, which would need to be on Town land, and would cost \$260,000 per unit. The Lathrup land was a possibility but was not viable. Woody said that the Town needed to commit land as a way to get the ball rolling. Pixie asked about the Rose land and it was asked why there was rock left on that land. Maureen and Chuck noted that this would be a good place for elderly housing. Jack explained that the rock would be needed for any project as a base fill. Maureen suggested that housing would still be her recommendation for this land because of its proximity to all the services and daily needs of the elderly.

Janet said she spoke to Diane Poland about buying a small house. This was under consideration by the Committee and was discussed with the Housing Authority as well. There was discussion about future use of the current Highway Garage. There was a suggestion of using the Mallary property if Mr. Mallary was open to selling. Jack noted that the problems with septic could possibly be settled with a central septic system.

Jack said that we could find an elderly couple who might be willing to have their home receive an upgrade loan from the Town, and eventually the Town could own this building after they have no further use for it. This is similar to what had been arranged with the Fournier family. Ed said that they had discussed a reverse tax or subsidy of some sort. Lifetime tenancy would have to be looked into with legal ramifications investigated. For the future, Pixie will send minutes out to the SB to keep them abreast of their issues. Janet noted that there was a need for the committee aside from just their perceived existence by some as sub-committee of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC).

**7:30 Mark and Elisa Tanny – Bardwells Ferry Road slope project**

Introductions were made. Maureen noted that fixing the road had to move forward somehow. Mr. Tanny said that the proposed retaining wall would prevent them from making future plantings or to hide the proposed wall, because they perceived it as an eye-sore. Jack asked if he had an alternative in mind. Mark said he did not know of one, aside from an under road aqueduct or bridge.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN OF CONWAY, MA  
MINUTES - DRAFT  
Sept. 28, 2009

Jack explained that the aqueduct was not the problem and that the bank needed to be repaired and replaced with a more gradual grade to prevent a recurrence of the banking failure. Mark asked about hiring his own engineer to come up with an alternative plan to the retaining wall.

Chuck noted that if the road is closed due to further failure, emergency services would not be able to get through. He noted that the Town had tried to appease all land owners, but costs and time were factors running against us. The Tannys were shown who would be affected and how, in comparison to them. While Mr. Tanny acknowledged the Town's position he still felt that the design was not consistent with his personal needs for his land. Mrs. Tanny said that even if new trees were planted, they would be problematic and expensive to maintain, and would not be aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Tanny wanted to know if the town would provide and maintain the trees. Chuck explained that was not possible and Jack and Maureen concurred with that not being possible.

There was further discussion regarding other alternatives and the process that had taken place up until the present, including the fact that planning and construction funding were extremely limiting for the Town. It was reiterated at several points that the financing for the project was in question and further added, non-construction expenses were not acceptable. Mr. Tanny stated that he still needed to seek other council and was going to lose out financially no matter whether he acquiesces to the Town's plan or the necessary land is taken by eminent domain. He felt that he needed to be compensated for anything that is done. Chuck noted that he agreed that he should be able to do anything he wants with his land. He also noted that alternatives exist but they would be cost prohibitive. He suggested that a compromise could possibly be reached. He also noted that the engineers will be further consulted, and that a meeting should be set up to deliberate further. Jack cautioned that additional engineering costs be kept to a minimum. There were statements made about understanding the positions of both Mr. Tanny and the Board. Mark asked what his rights were with regard to landscaping and other aspects. There was no final agreement made.

**8:40 Town Telephone System** – Lee Whitcomb, Jan Warner, Elizabeth Braccia

Maureen noted that she spoke to Lee about the telephone going dead on many occasions during the last two and a half years. She said that she wanted to fix the problem at any cost because the Town is running business and needs a good working phone system. Liz noted that computers and phones were being fixed during office hours, which was unacceptable to her. Chuck and Tom expressed their experience with services were they ran daily schedules and it was expected they would have to be in the offices doing repairs during work hours. Tom gave details about the problems of the current communications system, which includes the internet, file sharing, backups as well as the telephones. He explained that the current system was not sufficient as it relied on an inconsistent wireless point-to-point connection. He noted that he had asked to redesign the whole system two years back but his request was not acted upon at that time. Tom recommended several alternatives, which included a hardwire connection between the two buildings, and a VPN connection that would utilize a VoIP phone system. Maureen stated that if a hardwire system would correct the problem, which Tom stated it would, then it should be done and get the problem fixed now because so much time had gone by without a permanent solution. She stated she felt it should be done as soon as possible. There were several comments made that hardwire may not be necessary. Tom will do further research and report shortly.

**9:30 EMD Position** – Kate Clayton Jones

Introductions were made. Kate said that she was told that after review of her resume, the Board had decided that she didn't have enough experience to be appointed as EMD. However, the Board said that in fact, they had not wanted to hire her because she had not been available for meetings in other positions and it looked like she had a full schedule at this time. She noted that she was in training now and was taking 200 and 700 level classes. She explained the work she was currently doing for Sunderland and other Towns. She proposed that she be appointed as interim consultant EMD for Conway. Jack asked her for a list of other people that were available to cover the times when Kate would not be available. She made several recommendations. It was noted that Joe is still working in the capacity of EMD until someone else was found to replace him. It was suggested that staffing needs be discussed in a meeting at some point soon. The Board will get back to Kate on how they

BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN OF CONWAY, MA  
MINUTES - DRAFT  
Sept. 28, 2009

would like to proceed. It was also noted that Joe stated he would stay on until a replacement was found and had not submitted a written resignation yet.

**meeting items**

- Meeting minutes for 9/14/09 and 9/21/09 were approved as amended.
- The warrants were signed, but Maureen questioned an invoice from the Fire Department.
- The Board approved Maureen to sign the COA State signature verification form.
- There was further discussion regarding the conversation with the Tannys. Chuck felt that Tanny was mostly concerned with his landscaping requests. He also suggested that Mr. Baranowski was almost at a point where he could agree with plans. The cost of further engineering and construction were weighed against the cost of taking their land through eminent domain.
- Jack reported that Siemens was contacted. He noted that Roland Butzski claimed they would not go forward with any contract work as Siemens was waiting for enough Towns to commit to construction before they would move ahead. However, Jack was told that the Investment Grade Audit (IGA) could go ahead at no cost. The Board approved Maureen to sign the IGA contract.
- There was another test of the dry hydrant on North Poland Road that yielded poor results. The Board decided that the Fire Department should make a proposal on an alternative design and construction to be presented at the next Town Meeting. It was noted that no contract had been made and/or signed with the contractor on this project.
- The advertisement for a new Town Accountant was approved and will be placed in the paper tomorrow.
- Jack's Visitor news article regarding the progress of work on Bardwells Ferry Road was discussed. The initial reason for this piece was to allow the affected land and home owners know that the Board is working to get the required signatures from the abutters. The Board approved the update and it will go into the next edition of the Visitor.
- The Board decided to sign a resolution regarding the expansion of the State Bottle Bill.
- Tom described new legislation regarding a change to requirements mandated by the State Ethics Commission. This issue was tabled until another meeting.
- The Board decided not to join other Towns in their fight with WMECO for reimbursement of overcharges for streetlight service.
- It was stated that the school regionalization is no longer a matter being considered by the region due to the inflated cost of pursuing such actions.

**Mail and Other Items**

- other mail items as per agenda

**10:20 PM**

Motion to adjourn by Maureen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jack, all in favor.