

MINUTES OF FRANKLIN LAND STUDY & SELECT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, October 24, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

FELCO Room-Franklin Homestead

Attendees: Polly Gadbois, Peter Kittell, Gerald Gates, Nat Worman, Sara Rainville, Kim Gates-Maynard, Kyle Lothian, Andy Godin, Eric Beauregard, Fran Hopkins, Peter Magnant, Hugh Gates, Susan Clark, Doug Clark and Bob Irish.

Polly called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and passed the sign in sheet around.

The minutes from May 13, 2009, June 29, 2009, July 27, 2009 and September 27, 2012 were passed out to all in attendance along with map of the Village of Franklin. Polly asked everyone to review them and be ready to have discussion at the next meeting as well as approve them.

Discussion/Suggestions:

Doug would like to see something involving alternative energy put on the Town's land; it would generate income and could reduce people's property taxes in the long run; he is thinking photo electric-solar panels. He has seen that there are grants available now, the longer we wait the less grant funding may be available and the less chances we have of receiving that funding. Polly stated that Northwest Regional Planning could assist us with locating the grants currently available. Sue questioned if NRP is still willing to conduct a study that was discussed at the 2009 land study meetings. Polly will talk to Katherine at NRP next week about attending the November land study meeting.

Sue noted that the Tri-Town Recreation Committee's work will ultimately affect her decision for what she supports here in the Town for land usage and financial too.

Polly questioned Peter & Kim about what phase the Tri-Town Recreation Committee is currently in. Peter M stated that the Franklin, Highgate and Swanton Select boards have been meeting and also with the Tri-Town Recreation committee. There are two options that are currently being reviewed:

Option 1: would be \$4.1 million; there would be an addition to the north side creating more locker rooms, a community space room and a weight room.

Option 2: would be \$5.1 million; there would be an addition to the north side creating more locker rooms, a community space room and a weight room; there would also be an addition to the west allowing the ice to be made regulation size.

Peter M stated that the goal is to have two articles go to the Town's at Town Meeting in March. One article would request approval for a contractual agreement for the three Town's to own and run the rink; the second article would be a bond vote for a dollar figure for renovations and additions. If a Town's voters do not approve the articles then it would be up to the remaining two Town's to decide how and if they want to proceed with the project.

Hugh spoke about the need to employ a professional landscaper or architect on this type of project; he mentioned TJ Boyle in Burlington. If we continue to move forward with this project we need professional guidance, we can't just do it alone with the people on this committee. We should be requesting that bids be submitted for a certain amount of work that includes the ideas that this committee has received to date; they would then come up with a proposal for the lands use. He put out the idea of a daycare facility and would like a survey put out for people at Town meeting to get their feedback as well. He stated that the professional landscaper or architect would be knowledgeable on financial resources and have a conceptual plan and that it would range in price from \$4-5k. Polly questioned whether or not the board should be in touch with Katherine at NRP before we make any costly decisions.

Polly would like to have a meeting in November then skip December due to the holidays and meet in January 2013.

Sue questioned the Select board about the Village Septic Study results and what they showed in regards to the Town land that is being discussed. Peter mentioned that it was not really part of the study to create new, was mostly about existing village septic systems.

Kyle stated that the ROW issues still need to be resolved as well before any money is spent on architects, study's, etc.

Polly stated that it does not cost anything for Katherine from NRP to come and talk to everyone.

Doug reiterated that he really feels that alternative energy is the way to go, there would be no need for anything septic related and would have a long term payback. Kyle likes the idea of a renewable energy project, he had never considered that.

Gerald reminded everyone that there is an underground telephone cable buried across the Town lots and that has to be taken into consideration with anything that is done on that land. Kim gave the whereabouts of that line to the committee.

Andy feels that whatever is done should not cost the Town or taxpayers any money; time should be donated.

Polly stated that there is already a walking path at the school. Sara suggested a community garden; flowers and vegetables.

Hugh questioned Andy's earlier comments; Andy stated that they are his own personal thoughts, not of the Select board. Hugh stated that the Town's voters should also have the choice as well.

Sue would like to see a certain percentage back required on any survey that is done before the boards proceed with any projects as many times people just don't respond to them; should be a ballot or something mailed. People are already very upset around Town with the recent tax bill increases; she doesn't feel people would support something that costs anything. Sue questioned what the response rate was on the Tri-Town Recreation Committee's survey; Kim could not remember the number. Peter M stated that the Tri-Town Committee has done a lot of work with their project; initially the Town of Swanton did not want to be part of the Tri-Town's study but the Town's people petitioned the board and had the study approved by their voters. It was noted that with an Australian ballot more people have the opportunity to vote; the board wants everyone's support on whatever they decide to do with the land.

Bob stated that his concerns are the ROW issues. He also feels that the State of Vermont would not encourage or support a bridge over or in a wetlands area. He also feels that this entire committee will be forgotten about within the next six months just like in 2009. He mentioned having volunteers hand out surveys at the November 6, 2012 General Elections.

Polly stated that it is not this committee's task to resolve the ROW issue, the goal is to find ideas for the Town land use. Eric further questioned the scope of this committee; is it just to come up with ideas for the voters as well as the cost/feasibility of those ideas? Polly stated yes. Peter M stated that the Select board requested that this committee get back together and the ROW issue will be discussed when its appropriate. The sand pile and potential sand shed is the issue that needs to be currently addressed as it is a safety issue for the Highway works and the public.

Fran stated that it's pointless to come up with ideas if the ROW issues have not been resolved, they need to be addressed.

Doug noted that the Town made a bad investment by purchasing the land that is being discussed.

Polly will invite Katherine from NRP to the November meeting. She is very knowledgeable as well as resourceful and the committee can hear what she has to say then go from there.

The next meeting is November 28, 2012.

Hugh questioned what the Town is currently getting for the haying of this land. Peter advised this year's awarded bid was \$2000. Hugh suggested taking that money for the next few years and putting it towards a land study; also adding a line item to the budget for Recreational Planning.

Nat questioned Polly about what the public can expect to have any decisions from this committee on land uses. Polly stated that the committee is still in the beginning phase and it will be quite some time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Rainville
October 24, 2012