

BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP
Minutes of 06-07-10
4:15 p.m.

Selectmen:

Charles G. Palm, Chairman
Colette Worsman, Vice Chairman
Peter F. Brothers
Miller C. Lovett
Nathan J. Torr

Town Manager:

Phillip L. Warren

Recording Clerk:

Karin Landry

Call to Order: Chairman Chuck Palm called the meeting to order 4:15 p.m. He introduced the Board, Town Manager, and the Recording Clerk.

W10-26 Spear Parcel Purchase - Conservation Commission

Community Development Director John Edgar explained that in October 2009, the Waukewan Shore Owners Association (WSOA) established a private conservation acquisition fund to purchase an 8 1/2 acre parcel along the Snake River in New Hampton for the primary purpose of protecting the Meredith water supply. The parcel, owned by Jacqueline Spear, includes 2,841 feet along the Snake River, and is assessed for \$76,900. The purchase price is \$30,000. Mr. Edgar used high altitude aerial photographs to orientate the Board.

Pursuant to Articles passed at the 2009 Meredith Town Meeting, the Conservation Commission has the authority to make contributions to qualified organizations for the purchase of property or interests in property; and to expend funds to purchase interests in land outside the boundaries of the municipality, subject to approval by the governing body.

Numerous meetings involving representatives of the New Hampton Conservation Commission, the Meredith Conservation Commission, the Waukewan Watershed Advisory Committee, and the WSOA have resulted in unanimous support of the project. A Purchase and Sales Agreement was executed between Jacqueline Spear and the WSOA. The WSOA made a \$1,000 deposit on the parcel. Pursuant to the Agreement, the Town of New Hampton will be the owner of the property, and the Town of Meredith, through its Conservation Commission, will hold the conservation easement. Attorney Lee Mattson has reviewed and approved the conservation easement and performed a title examination on the Town's behalf. The Seller is working with the abutting owner to secure a Boundary Line Agreement plan that will provide the necessary public road access. That Agreement will be reviewed by legal counsel for the Towns of Meredith and New Hampton prior to closing.

Mr. Edgar reviewed the easement restrictions. There will be no motorized vehicles or boat launch allowed on the property.

The Meredith Conservation Commission has committed \$10,000 of their funds toward the purchase of the property, subject to the Board's concurring approval. No funding will come from the general fund or the conservation expendable trust funds in Meredith. The New Hampton

Conservation Commission committed \$5,000 towards the purchase, and the balance of the funding will come through the private fundraising effort coordinated by the WSOA.

The Town of New Hampton is making arrangements for a Level 1 environmental site assessment. A public hearing must be held prior to the Conservation Commission expending funds for real estate purposes. A 10-day notice of the hearing is required.

Mr. Edgar explained how the parcel drains into the water supply. The overall health of the Snake River and the preservation of wetland functions and upland buffers associated with the wetlands are very important from a water supply point of view. The purchase of the parcel will prevent future development that could affect water quality. He reviewed the process for the transfer of the property.

Selectmen Lovett wonders if there will be any great impact on the environment if no similar measures are taken to protect the water supply. Mr. Edgar explained that although there is a substantial amount of unprotected shoreline, if the Spear property is not protected and ultimately developed, there will be a negative impact on water quality. Meredith Conservation Commission Chair Mark Billings told the Board that the parcel is very significant, and comprises approximately two thirds of the Snake River's bank in New Hampton.

Selectman Brothers noted the collaborative effort to protect the property, and that the purchase of the parcel ties into the ongoing Master Plan and management plan for the watershed. He inquired about fundraising efforts. Bob Wenstrup of the WSOA reported that fundraising is on track. He is confident that all parties who were contingently willing to commit can follow through and that funding won't be an issue. To date, the Meredith Conservation Commission has committed \$10,000, the New Hampton Conservation Commission has provisionally approved \$5,000, and approximately \$14,000 has been raised from private donations. Additional funds in the approximate amount of \$4,400, must be raised to purchase the property, including fees and costs related to closing. Mr. Wenstrup is confident that fundraising efforts will be successful.

Although Selectman Worsman was very hesitant to approve Articles 5 and 6 at the 2009 Town Meeting, she is delighted with the collaborative effort on the project. She thanked the New Hampton Conservation Commission, Meredith Conservation Commission, and WSOA for their efforts. She inquired who will be the ultimate stewards of the easement. Mr. Edgar explained that routine inspections will be performed by the holder of the easement, the Town of Meredith through its Conservation Commission. There will most likely be some collaboration between the New Hampton Conservation Commission and the Meredith Water Department. At the request of Selectman Worsman, Mr. Edgar elaborated on how the transfer of title will take place.

Chair Palm inquired who will enforce restrictions on the use of the property such as illegal camping. New Hampshire Conservation Commission Chair Ralph Kirshner told the Board that violations of the easement should be reported to the New Hampton police department.

Selectman Torr thanked and congratulated all the parties involved in the matter. Protecting the water supply is most important and taking steps to do so at this time will avoid future damage.

There was a consensus among the Board that they support the purchase of the Spear parcel. The matter will come before the Board for action at their regular meeting scheduled for Monday, June 21. The motion to approve the purchase will be subject to a satisfactory public hearing. The required public hearing for the Town of New Hampton is scheduled for Monday, July 14, at 7 p.m., at the New Hampton town office.

Attorney Stan Wallerstein, who is a shore owner on Lake Waukegan and counseled the WSOA, thanked Mr. Edgar for his part in coordinating the project.

W10-27 Watercraft Use Donation - Fire Department

The Town Manager introduced the matter. H&K Powersports has agreed to donate a 3-person watercraft to enhance the water rescue capabilities of the fire department. Fire Chief Ken Jones told the Board that the Town would be required to ensure and license the watercraft. He obtained a quote for insurance in the amount of \$4.95 for the season. The Chief explained that the fire boat kept on the other side of Meredith Neck cannot respond to water emergencies in a time-effective manner, the police boat kept at the Town Docks has had issues with reliability, and there are staffing issues with the 12-14' aluminum boat housed at the Meredith Center station. The watercraft, which will include a trailer, will enhance the capability of the department to respond to emergency situations in a timely manner. The department has the life preservers and personal safety equipment necessary to operate the watercraft. Basic training and a Standard Operating Guide will be put in place. A New Hampshire boating license is required to operate the watercraft. The Chief will verify how many personnel have a boating license. The unit will be housed at the downtown station.

Dialogue ensued regarding the mutual aid system for water rescues.

Resident Jim Hughes asked the Board to consider housing the boat currently at the Meredith Center station at the downtown station.

The Town Manager explained that the loan program is for one year, and can be evaluated after that time. At the conclusion of the season, the watercraft will be returned to H&K Powersports for maintenance and sale. Any promotional materials will be supplied by H&K Powersports.

Chair Palm pointed out that the size of the watercraft limits how it can be used. The Chief explained that although it has its use limitations, it will enable personnel to respond to a water emergency quicker, and stabilize victims until additional help arrives. The coverage at the downtown station is very good during busy periods on the lake.

Selectman Worsman expressed concerns with limited storage capabilities and the time it takes to change into swimwear before using the watercraft. The aluminum boat has better storage capabilities and can accommodate more people in a dry environment. She questions if it makes sense to take on the additional piece of equipment for two months. The Chief explained that the aluminum boat is very shallow and has limited horsepower. He believes the personal watercraft would be an improvement over the aluminum boat.

In response to an inquiry by Selectman Worsman, the Town Manager explained that for liability reasons, he does not recommend taking over privately owned watercraft in emergency situations.

Resident Jim Hughes does not support keeping the aluminum boat at the Meredith Center station. He cited an example of a delayed response to an emergency call on Lake Waukegan as a result of limited station coverage at the Meredith Center station. The Town Manager pointed out that the Rowing Club and Water Department boats are available for emergencies on Lake Waukegan.

Selectman Brothers thinks it is wise to spread the resources out so they can be most effective.

Selectman Torr supports a one-year trial basis. The arrangement can be evaluated at a later time.

There was general agreement among the Board that they support the arrangement on the basis that it is for one season, followed by a full evaluation, and no further commitments. H&K Powersports will be responsible for summarizing and winterizing the watercraft, and the only expenses to the Town are registration, fuel, and boating licenses for fire staff. The Chief will implement a Standard Operating Agreement that includes a provision that all operators must be licensed. The Town Manager will present the signed contract to the Board for their review.

W10-28**Abatements**

Due to time constraints, the review of the abatements scheduled for this workshop will be postponed until the workshop scheduled for Monday, June 21.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Dialogue ensued regarding fire warden/special agent status. There are two individuals listed as fire wardens/special agents for the Town of Meredith that are not recommend for renewal. There is no record of either individual being approved by the Meredith fire department. One of the individuals is a resident of Center Harbor and member of the Center Harbor fire department, and the other resides in Meredith. Chief Jones will work with the Town Manager to notify the individuals by mail that they will no longer have fire warden/special agent status with the Town of Meredith.

Selectman Brothers motioned to adjourn the Workshop at 6:40 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Lovett. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

Charles G. Palm, Chairman

Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

Colette Worsman, Vice Chairman

Peter F. Brothers

Miller C. Lovett

Nathan J. Torr