

BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP
Minutes of 12-20-10
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 Palm called the meeting to order 4:15 p.m. He introduced the Board, Town Manager, and the Recording Clerk.

W 10-47 Village Pathways Committee Update

Village Pathways Committee Chair Liz Lapham updated the Board on the work of the Committee. The Meredith Walks event that was held in June was a great success. Participants received a T-shirt at no cost, which was made possible through a grant from the Lakes Region Partnership for Public Health (HEAL). The map of Meredith walkways was printed and distributed a number of times, though outlets including the Chamber of Commerce, Meredith Inns, and the community center. The Committee is exploring the expansion of pedestrian and biking paths in the community. Its next step is to identify pedestrian population areas in town, and identify how they might be connected by walking or biking paths to Town facilities. In addition, the Committee wishes to revise a historic walking tour of Meredith in a more user friendly format.

Two study groups were formed in October:

Safe Routes to School - John Corrigan of the NH Department of Transportation, coordinator of the statewide program, was the guest speaker at a meeting of stakeholders and various town officials held on December 9. The program promotes the benefits of walking to school by arranging for two adults to walk with children to school on a daily basis. There was a consensus among those in attendance that the program could work in Meredith. The Committee believes that Safe Routes to School fits under the Committee's Charge, and intends to pursue implementing the program.

WOW Trailways - Village Pathways members Jenny Lovett and Tammy Levesque have taken on the WOW Trailways study group. The issues that are involved with WOW are complex and polarizing. Ms. Lapham is concerned that involvement in the study group will compromise the energies the Committee has to focus on the projects previously mentioned.

Ms. Lapham and Town Manager Philip Warren identified two ways to approach the matter:

- Form separate committees for the Safe Routes to School and WOW; or
- Form a non-profit group for WOW that will work in partnership with municipal systems, as has been done in at least one other community.

She questions if pursuing matters associated with WOW falls within the Charge of the Committee and asked for guidance on how to proceed. The Town Manager told the Board that the Charge as it is structured at this time does not specify WOW research.

Selectman Torr would like to see the Committee continue with its present focus and form a subgroup to study WOW once a timeline is identified for an extension of the system through Meredith. Based on conversations with the Community Development Department, Ms. Lapham estimates it will be approximately ten years before the trail will be ready to be extended through Meredith.

Selectman Lovett agrees that there are very complex issues involved with the trailways system, and pointed to the recent difficulties faced at Southdown Shores in Laconia. Issues surrounding WOW, including fundraising, are far more complex than the work that has been performed by the Committee. He hopes that those working on the WOW Trailways continue to do so at this time. Ultimately, he would like to see them strengthen their membership and spin off into another organization.

The Town Manager does not favor the formation of a subcommittee, as it blurs the Charge of the Committee. In addition, forming a separate committee avoids issues concerning public records, minutes, and meetings.

Selectman Brothers supports identifying pedestrian population centers as the next logical step of the Committee. With his limited exposure to the WOW project, he agrees that it is deeply polarizing. The Village Pathways Committee has much to do within the confines of Meredith, and the matter is clearly outside the Charge of the Committee as he sees it. More general information should be known about the Trailways project before proceeding with the formation of an alternate group. Alan Beatle, the owner of Patrick's Pub, was instrumental in bringing the trail through Laconia and Belmont, and is interested in making a presentation to the Board at a workshop. Selectman Brothers is willing to pursue the matter once the 2011 budget has been finalized, if the Board wishes to do so.

Selectman Worsman expressed appreciation for the fantastic job the Committee has done to improve public ways for visitors and residents. Taking on the WOW Trailways would be a huge addition to the work they are already doing, and she does not wish to overburden volunteers. She encourages the Committee to continue working on the expansion of existing walking trails, and thinks that connecting them with Page Pond and Leavitt Park would be a wonderful addition to the Town.

Selectman Palm agrees that connecting Page Pond and Leavitt Park would be fantastic. The Village Pathways Committee has a full plate at this time. If there is an interest in organizing a group to address the WOW Trailways, he recommends that it include at least one member of the Village Pathways Committee in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

Ms. Lapham clarified that there are both manpower and time management concerns with taking on the WOW Trailways. A considerable amount of time has been spent at recent Village Pathways meetings on the WOW Trail.

There was a consensus among the Selectmen that the WOW Trailways is outside what they see as the Charge of the Village Pathways Committee as it was originally formed. The Committee should continue to focus on its work over the past couple years, and if there is a contingent with an interest in forming a separate group, it will do so on its own.

Selectman Lovett suggested that Peter Miller, who was the Chairman of the Selectboard at the time the Committee was formed, can be elaborate on the details of the Charge. He does not wish to see the efforts of those interested in the WOW Trailways undercut in any way, and believes that there are enough resources in Meredith to support both groups.

Ms. Lapham recapped her understanding of the Board's direction:

- Forming a Non-Profit may be the way for the WOW Trailways group to proceed;
- The work falls outside the Village Pathways Committee Charge;
- A representative of the Committee should be appointed to the Trailways group.

On behalf of the Village Pathways Committee, Ms. Lapham presented each Selectman with a complimentary 2011 Meredith Walks t-shirt and wished them a happy holiday. Chair Palm expressed the Board's appreciation for the Committee's efforts.

W 10-48 2011 Budget

The Town Manager presented an updated accounting of Parks & Recreation revenues and expenditures, which are consistent with the decrease in expenditures and increase in revenues in 2010. He met with a representative of Marine Patrol to explain the reasons for implementing a consistent policy for fees charged to state and federal agencies for renting the community center.

Miscellaneous

Chair Palm offered the following amendments to Budget Workshop minutes:

November 29, Page 2: "capital projects" should be changed to "debt service"

November 29, Page 4, Assessor's Office: "The new assessed valuation in 2010 increased a little over \$1 million." (Delete remainder of sentence)

November 30, Page 2, Buildings and Grounds: Change heading to "Buildings and Grounds, Cemeteries, and Public Works"

November 30: Chair Palm pointed out that there is a separate heading for Solid Waste, which is also part of Public Works. The Town Manager will make the appropriate changes.

There was an agreement among the Board to vote to accept the Budget Workshop minutes as revised at the Board Meeting following the Workshop.

Chair Palm announced that the Board will move into a non-public meeting at the completion of the Workshop.

Selectman Torr motioned to adjourn the Workshop at 5 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Worsman. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

Charles G. Palm, Chairman

Colette Worsman, Vice Chairman

Peter F. Brothers

Miller C. Lovett

Nathan J. Torr