

Pownal Select Board Minutes
December 11, 2023

Select Board: Jon Morris, Katherine Day, Andy O'Brien

Town Administrator: Becky Taylor-Chase

CEO: Ginifir Giddinge, Town Planner: Tom Ursia

Road Commissioner: Matt Nielsen

Public Present: Dick Hogue, Jesse & Susan Briggs Peters, Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest, Tricia & Mark Vachon, Michelle & Todd Harrison, David Steckler, Scott Pollock, Bob Van Milligan, Alan Stearns (RRCT), Melissa Libby (RRCT), Matt Altieri, Mark Power, Marcia Bowen, Todd Mellens, Heidi Curry, Tom Estabrook, Wellens King, Bo Chesney, Fred Fauver, Christine Watson, Bob Humphreys, Valerie ? (RRCT), Bill Schmidt, Steve Gruverman, Isabell Ochsle (IOV Community Planning), Sue Mack, Holly Morrison, Janet Lynch, Dan Brown, Orion Breen, George Camp

PUBLIC HEARING

NOTE: Questions /Comments during this public hearing have been summarized in these minutes; this meeting has been recorded and can be viewed on the Town's Website under "WATCH VIDEO".

- I. Chair Morris opened the Public Hearing - 6:00pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. **Conservation Commission (CC) Presentation / Dick Hogue & Bob Humphreys**
 - a. The CC has been working on this project for 2-3 years looking to put conservation easements on 2 town-owned forests – Elmwood Road and Sweetser Road. Putting this land in to easements with Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) is a way to preserve open space. Nothing will change – forestry plans, original trails. recreation, (hunting, fishing, hiking, etc.) will remain the same.
 - b. Q: Will the Town control/manage the activities on the trails? Would there be restrictions on the trails in the future?
 - c. Ans: No changes – trails will remain the same. If there are any changes, they would have to go before the Town Meeting for vote.
 - d. Q: Why do we need RRCT?
Ans. They would be stewards of the land, any financial burden would be covered by them. If the town owns the land, things could change in the future and the town could potentially sell the land. RRCT overseeing this legal conservation easement would guarantee that this land could never be sold.
 - e. Q. Could the Town put an easement on the land themselves?
Ans. Yes, but you would need an entity to fulfill that function. In addition, RRCT will be recognized by the courts and IRS giving proper oversight.
Q. Why are these properties important to RRCT?
Ans. Preserving and creating encroachment buffers is important ecologically, creating connectivity for trails in the bigger picture.
 - f. Q. Will there still be dumping access for public works?
Ans. There should be no issue; RRCT can make any decisions regarding that.

- g. Q: Will a trail be created on the Sweetser Road Lot?
Ans. Not currently, it will be left as is.
- h. Comment: Putting town-owned properties into conservation easements would prevent any building on them and will take away any potential future needs for the Town.
- i. Comment: Connectivity of the trails will also benefit wildlife.
- j. Other Comments: I agree to protect our land and the openness – keep things the way they are. This is an opportunity to hold on to town-owned land for recreation and well-being; we should hold on to all our town land.
- k. Q. Is RRCT purchasing these properties?
Ans. The town will still own the land, the easement will be overseen by RRCT.
- l. Q. Is the property on Elmwood Road the same property that a Real Estate Request to purchase has been received?
Ans. Yes, this is the same property, the Pownal Conservation Commission has been working on this project for the past few years; the Real Estate Request was only received recently.

NOTE: The next Public Hearing will be December 18, 2023.

IV. **Planning Board / Conservation Subdivision Ordinance / Matt Altieri, Orion Breen**

- a. Matt and Orion showed a slide presentation to better explain the basic points regarding this proposed ordinance. The premise is based on the most recent Comprehensive Plan to preserve rural character and open space while protecting property rights.
- b. This plan would include a single road to the house lots rather than multiple driveways; but there is flexibility if 2 roads would be a better solution on a particular site.
- c. Comment: I'm not for this – small lots with open space - it doesn't look good, and we don't want to be another Yarmouth. This concept could also attract younger families and more development, increasing the need for more services at a cost to the town.
- d. Answer: The Planning Board has been working on this with the idea that we "don't want to be another Yarmouth" – we are looking to have this be an improvement to our existing sub-division ordinance. The lot sizes would not necessarily be small. Smaller lot sizes are not the intent; instead of having big yards, this would create a connective open space for the homeowners.
- e. Q. Are there only 4 lots?
Ans. For this minor-subdivision ordinance it would be for 4 or fewer lots; for a major subdivision, more than 5 lots.
- f. Q. Can we be stricter as to what we allow?
Ans. Pownal has very restrictive requirements such as road frontage, etc. and we are being "density neutral" on this.
- g. Will there be any changes to the Back Lot Ordinance?
Ans. No effect, it will stay the same.

NOTE: The next Public Hearing will be December 18, 2023.

V. **TIF Presentation / Isabel Ochsle, IOV Community Planning**

Isabel explained the "Pownal Route 9 Omnibus TIF" with a Power Point Presentation.

a. Q. Is this tax-sheltered money just spent in the purple area as shown on the handout?
Ans. No.

b. Q. What is the timing?

Ans. Estabrooks is planning to start in March 2024, this will need to go to Special Town Meeting with this on January 22, 2024.

c. If the expense is beyond Estabrooks; will this impact private landowners?

Ans. It shouldn't.

d. Q, how flexible is Table 4?

Ans. It can be amended at a Town Meeting vote.

e. Comment: I appreciate all the work that has been put into this by the Town Administrator and Select Board to benefit the town.

VI. **Review of Special Town Meeting warrant articles / Becky Taylor-Chase**

a. Change the date from 2022 to 2023 at the top of the page.

b. Article 3: add: "appropriate up to \$16,000 . . . "

c. Article 4: Change \$17,000 to \$21,000 to include costs for a better server for the computers.

d. Article 5: Is an accounting correction and just needs a town meeting vote to correct.

e. Article 6. Becky sent a warrant article regarding the TIF to the town attorney who responded with edits that are a page and a half long. We can either print them as an attachment to the warrant or included in the warrant? It was agreed that this would have to be included in the warrant because residents will be voting on the article.

f. Since this Special Town Meeting warrant, the furnace and boiler system have failed. In looking into solutions, it was also determined that the chimney needs a new liner. There are 2 options: replace the boiler system for \$15,000; or, have an on-demand heater with a direct vent by-passing the chimney for \$20,000. This would be a savings over time because we wouldn't be heating water for 3 faucets constantly. This would be paid for out of ARPA funds. (There may also be grant opportunities through Efficiency Maine.) Q: Would heat pumps be an option? Yes, and we will be looking into that.

Public Hearing was adjourned, 7:55pm.

SELECT BOARD MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIR MORRIS, 8:00PM.

VII. Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrant:

a. FY24 AP Warrant #24 for \$33,691.06 was approved.

b. Payroll Journal #220 for \$9,587.55 was approved.

VIII. Minutes of November 27,2023, were approved as written.

IX. Public Comment / non-agenda items / None.

- X. Department Head reports are located on the town’s website. Nothing to report by the Select Board.
- XI. Special Town Meeting warrant: Andy O’Brian moves to include a warrant article allocating up to \$20,000 from the ARPA funds for the installation of a new boiler and hot water heater for Mallett Hall; 2nd and all voted in favor.
- XII. New Business
 - a. Federal ARPA Grant: There is about \$70,000 left in the account to spend. Becky and Tom Ursia met to discuss some potential projects for these funds to include, (1) Renovations for additional office spaces and the heating of the rooms; (2) updating the Deputy Clerk’s window; (3) look at town’s water and aquifers for future planning; (4) unforeseen expenditures for any Federal Grant requirements.
 - b. Real Estate Request Map 9 Lot 43 from Shane Brady: The town received many responses from committees, boards, departments, abutters, and residents regarding putting in a mobile home park on this property – with an overwhelming response of “NO” to the sale of this town-owned property.
 - 1. Andy noted that there is already a conservation easement project ready to be put on the Special Town Meeting Warrant; NO, we should not put this to the town to sell.
 - 2. Kate stated that based on the feedback received and the work that the Conservation Commission has done, we should not put this on the warrant for sale.

MOTION: Chair Morris moves to not move forward to put the sale of Map 9 Lot 43 on the June 2024 Town Meeting warrant; 2nd and all voted in favor.

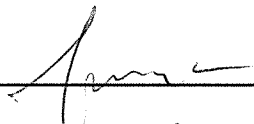
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- c. Mallett Hall Building & Grounds Committee Charge, 2nd draft, was submitted by Kathy Hogue and Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest. Jan Pieter stressed that it was important that the town and the committee have good communications. Chair Morris asked the Board to review the charge to be discussed at their next meeting.
 - d. Town Funds Investment Policy / Bo Chesney. Bo has been looking into this to see how the town is doing with our municipal financing – we are doing a pretty good job; most accounts are earning some money. The first step is to look at its investment and cash management procedures/policies, keeping it broad. Becky will investigate with other towns for structure and phrasing ideas.
 - e. BEAD Grant – there is a 46 FAQ page that Tom Ursia will review. There will be a presentation on the January 8 Select Board meeting to see if we want to proceed with the grant opportunity that would provide Fidium Fiber internet for the town.
 - f. It was moved and 2nd to move forward with Abatement Acct 913 for Map 6 Lot 33/3A to adjust the valuation on this undeveloped land to \$45,000 with an abatement of \$848.25. All voted in favor.

- g. Volunteer Form / Bob Van Milligan: It was moved and 2nd to appoint Bob Van Milligan to the Conservation Commission. All voted in favor. (Angela Horne King has stepped down from the commission.)
- XIII. Old Business
 - a. Still waiting for the estimate from Irving for the generator.
- XIII. Correspondence / none to report.
- XIV. Any other business: None


Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathleen A. Hogue / Deputy Town Clerk



Jon Morris



Andy O'Brien



Kate Day

