



Town of Underhill
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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 11, 2024, 6:00 P.M.
Underhill Town Hall

Present:

Selectboard Members: Dan Steinbauer (remote), Bob Stone, Patricia Richards

Town Staff: Brad Holden, Russ Clark

Others: Wes Carr, Dave Clift, Dori (remote), Peter Duval (remote), Sandy Wilmot(remote)

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call Meeting to Order / Adjustments to Agenda*

Bob called the meeting to order at 6:00. Brad added to the agenda authorization to spend money for a Green Up Day barbecue.

2. *Opening Public Comment (6:01)*

Peter Duval said he has a comment related to the Harvest Crossing project. The Underhill Flats area of town has no public parks, paths, trails, or recreation facilities. The Harvest Crossing group has no experience developing real estate projects. The town is undermining the orderly planning and development of Underhill Flats by supporting this project without efforts to ensure adequate municipal resources such as parks and trails to provide residents and visitors the space necessary for effective dense village development. To his knowledge, there is no plan for public facilities in Underhill Flats. The town has failed to plan for the increased flooding that is anticipated in the area of the Harvest Crossing proposal. This project is out of step with current practice. Instead of supporting the town's purchase of the last remaining open parcel in Underhill Flats for open space and stormwater management the Harvest Crossing project has demonstrated all the things we know not to do when attempting to create affordable housing – fight nature, subdivide, and pursue costly infrastructure and sprawling building types. Many people would like to think of this as a community effort to help neighbors while leveraging municipal resources to draw down state and federal funding. The Jacobs property, once extensive, and offered to the town in totality three decades ago, was reduced by repeated subdivision to less than 9 acres of soggy land. If returned to its natural state it would be even soggier. It's not like there aren't other parcels to work with, such as the church's mostly empty parking lot or old buildings in the Flats that could benefit from replacement with safe, modern multi-family structures. In committing to the extension of new roadways the town commits to maintain them forever. He feels it would be more cost effective and productive to address barriers to affordable housing in Underhill and address the upset that has occurred in recent years to the town's critical area zoning strategy.

Sandy Wilmot said she wanted to let the selectboard know about some activity going on in town centered around local food and farms. It started with the town plan in Underhill, which calls for helping to support local farmers, and with some of the work Jericho has been doing. A loose group of Jericho and Underhill residents is forming what they are calling the Jericho-Underhill Food Hub. They have a support group that is trying to do more outreach so people will know where farms are and be more connected to the farms. They have held one farm forum and will be doing another this Saturday to hear what support farmers need and try to tie together local foods and community building activities. The group is not connected officially with the town but at some point there may be opportunities to work more with the town.

3. *Follow-up to April 5 Harvest Crossing Public Hearing – Consider Authorizing Vermont Community Development Program Resolution for Implementation Grant for Harvest Crossing (6:10)*

Brad said the hearing last Friday was to take public comment on the grant application. The only way to apply for the Vermont Community Development Program grant is through the town. The town will pass the funds to the Harvest Crossing group. That is the only way nonprofits can apply for this money. The project still has to go through a full DRB plan review. It has sketch plan acceptance but that is not approval. There are still 2 more steps. The DRB will be thoroughly looking at this project. If it meets our rules it should get approved. The hearing had nothing to do with the development of the land. It was just to get public comment on the grant.

Patty moved and Dan seconded to authorize the chair to sign the Vermont Community Development Program Resolution for an implementation grant application for the Harvest Crossing affordable housing initiative.

Patty said she thinks the project is consistent with our town plan in increasing affordable housing. She supports applying for the grant. Dan said all the work that went into the planning and analysis and study is consistent with the town plan. He is in favor of going forward with the project.

The motion was passed.

4. *Committee Appointments (6:15)*

The meeting packet included a letter from Planning Commission chair Brian Tijan recommending appointment of Geoff Markowski, as well as Geoff Markowski's interest letter and resume. **Bob moved to appoint Geoff Markowski to the Planning Commission, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.**

5. *Adopt 2024 Local Emergency Management Plan (6:16)*

The 2024 Local Emergency Management Plan was included in the meeting packet. Brad said Patty is willing to be the EOC Coordinator. Previously it was Dan. The Emergency Director will be Bob. Brad will be the Safety/Security Officer. Sherri Morin will be the Call Taker.

Bob moved and Patty seconded to adopt the 2024 Town of Underhill Local Emergency Management Plan with the changes described by Brad and any other edits needed to ensure the information is up to date. The motion was passed.

6. *Authorize SFY25 Grants-in-Aid Letter of Intent (6:17)*

Bob moved to authorize Brad to sign the letter of intent to participate in the SFY25 Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

7. *Review and Consider Tree Removal Quotes (6:19)*

Russ described the 4 locations where hazard trees need to be taken down. He said he met with tree warden Don Tobi and got his approval to remove all of them. There are also two ash trees on Stevensville Road that Don would like removed as long as the tree service is there. All the landowners agree to the removals.

On A Limb gave a quote of \$8,950. We would need to supply traffic control. They expect the work would take 2 days. The quote from DJ's Tree Service is \$10,750. We do not need to supply traffic control. They would have 2 crews working and expect the work to take maybe half to ¾ of a day. Vallancourt Tree & Landscape Service would charge \$225 per hour, with the total not to exceed \$7,200. Russ recommends using DJ's Tree Service because of their equipment and the size of the trees. They have the equipment to do the job quickly without blocking roads for as long. And we would not have to supply two people for traffic control. We have about \$30K left in the tree cutting budget line. Vallancourt doesn't supply traffic control either. Dan asked the cost of the traffic control time. Brad said if we were responsible for traffic control it would either be done by the town road crew or we would hire someone. Russ said ADA Traffic Control

charges \$125 or \$150 per hour. He noted that Vallancourt thought the work would take a day and a half to two days.

Bob moved to accept the tree removal proposal from DJ's Tree service, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

8. *Spending Authorization for Green Up Day Barbecue (6:32)*

Brad suggested having a barbecue again for people bringing in trash on Green Up Day. He also suggested we could take the green bags to Casella ourselves in the morning. If the dumpsters are still there for the grader shed we could use those. **Patty moved to authorize Brad to spend funds for Green Up Day commensurate with past Green Up Day expenditures, Dan seconded and the motion was passed.**

9. *Closing Public Comment Period (6:34)*

No members of the public wished to comment.

10. *Warrants and Minutes (6:35)*

Bob moved to approve the warrant dated April 1, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the payroll warrant dated March 2, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the payroll warrant dated April 8, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the warrants dated April 3, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the warrants dated April 1, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the minutes of March 21, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the minutes of March 27, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

11. *Member Items, Correspondence, Announcement, Schedule (6:40)*

Brad mentioned there was some animal control correspondence in the packet.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be May 9 but if there is business that needs to be attended to before that the board may need to schedule another meeting.

Russ said on behalf of the Town of Underhill he wants to thank the people who helped out this winter with plowing – the Frenches, Wade Bosley, and Jed Abair. It was a great help to the road crew.

12. *Adjourn (8:03)*

Patty moved to adjourn, Dan seconded and the motion was passed at 6:41.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

Read and approved as submitted/amended:

Bob Stone, Chair

Date Signed

Date Approved