

TOWN OF THORNTON

December 12, 2006

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

5:30 The meeting was called to order.

Board members present: Arthur Gross, Ralph Perron and Lee Freeman

Also present: Administrator Andrew (TA); Gary Roberge and Loren Martin from Avitar Associates of NE, Inc., Sean O'Brien, Director of ADAPT, along with ADAPT Board Members Sean McDaniel, Holly Boyd, Angela Adams, and Melissa Rivers

Assessing. Gary Roberge and Loren Martin from Avitar Associates explained that there is no new tax on views. It is a methodology of assessing a property according to state law to address the added market value on a property that results from varying views. View has a big impact on what people are willing to pay for properties. Gary agreed that there is very little about assessing that is not subjective. The assessing firm tried to take those attitudes about value to build a model throughout a community. Judgement calls are required on unusual properties.

Assessing documentation and manuals are constantly being updated to better support the end result. It is a good process and manuals will be part of their defense when Avitar goes to court to defend assessments. He continued a lot of people especially the elderly are struggling with a tax structure where exemptions have not changed equitably to property value increases. They are looking at a system where exemptions are changed to a percentage basis vs. a dollar value. State law would have to change to accommodate it.

In reviewing the state's questions and concerns relative to the Town's assessing contract with Avitar Associates, it was noted that the state has no authority to tell the Town what to do, however the State is trying to protect the Town. The State wants the Town to enter into a five-year contract recognized as a cyclical revaluation. There would be significant bonding fees if the Town does as the State wants. Avitar is doing data verification for accuracy of the Town's data. The State wants to be able to say that the town is doing a complete revaluation in a period of time. Once every five years the Town has to meet certain State criteria. Accurate data will allow that to occur. Avitar has used the current contract format for last 15 years and no towns are currently requiring a bond. Avitar will post a bond if the Town requests it, but the town would have to pay for it.

Gary noted that the State recommends bonding to protect the communities. Avitar will do whatever the Selectman want. He cautioned that if the Town follows the States recommendations too closely the Town would be bound to a long-term contract. Loren stated that the current contract methodology protects your interest in that Thornton can get out of the contract if the Board so desires The Town would not be bound to have Avitar do an update under the current arrangement.

Gary noted that the market is apparently softening so he is not too concerned with the equalization ration changes.

Selectman Freeman stated he is comfortable with keeping the language as stated in the contract renewal that the Board signed for 2007 assessing services. All agreed.

6:00 Sean O'Brien and members of the ADAPT Board came forward to discuss the Neighborfest organization status. Selectman Perron noted that conversations have gone on for years relative to Neighborfest funding and operations. Selectman Perron continued that there has been discussion about the land Neighborfest owns in Thornton and what they want to do with it. Selectman Perron stated he wanted to hear ADAPT's viewpoint on where to go. The Board invited Sean O'Brien and ADAPT's Board of Directors come to a Selectmen's meeting as the Board of Selectmen strongly support ADAPT and the Board of Selectmen is concerned with a possible duplication of efforts that would in effect cost the taxpayers additional monies. Sean O'Brien stated that Neighborfest wanted to utilize ADAPT's programs in an effort obtain funding matches. Sean O'Brien noted that recreation opportunities is what ADAPT provides. The organization is interested in working with Neighborfest. ADAPT has not had the money or facility to support Campton residents to this point.

Selectman Perron inquired if anyone from Campton has asked if ADAPT was interested in working together? They have not heard from anyone from Neighborfest or Campton. Selectman Freeman explained he is Thornton's liaison between the Neighborfest Board and the Board of Selectmen. The Neighborfest committee is looking at different models. There have been questions about ADAPT's potential interest. Most of the participants of the Neighborfest committee would entertain participation by ADAPT though one was vehemently opposed.

Sean McDaniel inquired if they could sell the property. Selectman Freeman responded that their charter talks about liquidation of assets and does not specifically cover selling the land. It was noted that Neighborfest came to the Thornton Board of Selectmen. In March or April they had decided to give the property to the Town of Campton, but the process got slowed down. Neighborfest was doing something completely contrary to their mission. Selectman Freeman continued the land is theirs, and the Selectmen do not have any control over what they do with it. Some felt Neighborfest would like to be the management company for the Campton Parks & Recreation Department.

Sean McDaniel noted that Neighborfest raised a lot of money and has already spent it.

Sean O'Brien noted that ADAPT was organized in 1989.

Selectman Perron noted that the Selectmen did not want to jump on board with any Neighborfest plans without first talking with ADAPT representatives to see if there was interest. He stated he would listen to ADAPT's lead and vote accordingly.

Angela Adams inquired about Campton's position. Selectmen Freeman and Perron responded they appear to be in favor of Neighborfest managing their parks and recreation program.

Melissa Rivers wanted to know were ADAPT fits in with Neighborfest's plans. Selectman Freeman responded that Neighborfest is looking at a facilities management and a programming goal. ADAPT would fit in under Neighborfest in the programming. The three Neighborfest directors have been very open about not being good in programming.

Selectman Perron suggested that Sean O'Brien and the ADAPT Board of Directors discuss the options and come back to the Selectmen with options. Angela Adams stated that ADAPT and Neighborfest people need to sit down and discuss direction and options. Sean McDaniel stated that ADAPT needs to think about what is best for the kids in the long run.

Sean O'Brien stated that ADAPT has requested \$5,000 funding the last few years. Grant monies are drying up and it is getting more difficult to come by. It costs \$20-\$25,000 to run the summer programming alone. ADAPT will have a firmer number by the 1st of the year for the 2007 budget request.

The TA requested purchasing 2 new fireproof cabinets if funds are still available next week. APPROVED (x3)

The Board discussed utilizing surplus monies against 2007 appropriations.

Zip Code. Selectman Freeman confirmed Thornton is getting a zip code. The number 03285 has been requested but will not be acknowledged until spring and will become effective July 1, 2007. Selectmen Gross and Perron asked to go on record commending Selectman Freeman for all his work to obtain a zip code.

Budget Committee. John Carpenter came before the Board to discuss the committee. Selectman Perron stated that the town voted a 9-member Budget Committee several years ago. We need to have 9 members, so we need to have more members or reduce the number of members required. Selectman Freeman noted it is an advisory budget committee and when established there was an adversarial attitude in town and that is where number of members probably came from. Ron Jansen and Jim Parziale are current members who are very interested. Barry VanDeMoere has not said, but his responsibilities on the School Board may preclude his participation. Selectman Perron stated he would like to see the Selectmen place a warrant article reducing the number to 3 people. Selectman Freeman stated he would like to see how much interest there is before town meeting.

Mr. Carpenter found out about the committee from Barry VanDeMoere. Mr. Carpenter is responsible for 45 budgets at Loon Mountain can take his experience from there to put to

work for the Town. Selectman Freeman noted that the Town is compliant with GASB 34. Mr. Carpenter requested copies of financial statements for this past year along with the budget, and footnotes.

Respirator. Selectman Freeman reported he has researched some options for the Highway Department's purchase of a respirator. It was research only and Selectman Freeman has no monetary gain from helping with the purchase.

Ambulance. Selectman Freeman had an opportunity to talk with Chief Tobine and let him know that the Board wants it to be really clear that Board has done it's homework in researching options for Thornton tax payers.

Web site. Beverly Chappell updated the Board on the site. She noted that a big challenge would be getting minutes forwarded to her from each of the boards and committees. She noted that she is finishing some things for the Police Department's site.

Ms. Chappell noted that now the web site is live she could start accumulating statistics to present monthly relative to total page views. There is a place for public notices for holiday hours, etc.

Transfer Station driveway. The Board congratulated Transfer Station Manager, Dave Hilliard for requesting and receiving a permit for relocation of the driveway.

Master Road Scholar. The Board congratulated Road Agent, Tom Dubey for attaining Master Road Scholar status.

APPROVALS:

Police Department Appointments:

Mark A. Jones	Full Time Police Officer
Kevin J. Kellenberger	Part-Time Police Officer
Patrick J. Wetmore	Part-Time Police Officer

Building Permit

10 1 5-03	R. Welch	garage & breezeway
17 4 19	D.Delp	house & garage
7 2 7-08	R. Valenti	house & garage

Abatements

10 2 5	C.Zwahlen	wrong lot transferred
10 2 3	R.Beaton	wrong lot transferred

Supplemental Tax Warrant

R.Beaton & C.Zwahlen correct above

Resolution adopting Hazard Mitigation Plan

8:00 It was moved to adjourn. PASSED (x3)

**The next scheduled Selectmen's Meeting
Will be
December 19, 2006
5:30 PM at the Municipal Building**