

TOWN OF THORNTON

January 16, 2007

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); Carelton Kilmer; Budget Committee members Ron Jansen and Dave Lewis; Jim Demeritt; Julius Feinleib; and State Representative, Bob Matheson

Mill Brook Road survey. Lee Freeman stated that Burd Engineering's owner has cancelled for this Selectmen's Meeting as he is in New York. The subcontractors have stated that the work is complete. Selectman Freeman stated his understanding that Mill Brook Valley Property Owners Assoc. would like a copy of the survey when complete and one will be provided for cost. Selectman Freeman continued that the intent is to establish the actual right of way so that it can be properly maintained. Mr. Kilmer stated that at the annual meeting of the association, a committee was formed to stay in touch with the town and have input relative to any Mill Brook Road work that is proposed. The committee, made up of Carelton Kilmer, Julius Feinleib, and Jim Demeritt, recognizes that safety and maintenance issues will have to be dealt with, but they would like to see the historic aspects of the road retained. Mr. Kilmer stated the group wants less vs. more without waiving safety and maintenance issues.

Selectman Freeman stated 240 cars passed the electronic speed sign on Mill Brook Road this past weekend according to Police Chief Joyce. Selectman Freeman continued sale or development of the Sullivan property in Mill Brook Valley might change how the road would have to be treated due to the population increase that would be caused. Mr. Feinleib stated we would agree to pay for less improvement. Selectman Freeman suggested that the Mill Brook Valley property owners could submit a petition to take over ownership of the road.

Mr. Kilmer inquired if the marking ribbons could be removed at some point? He would volunteer to take them down when the time comes.

5:50 Budget Committee. Ron Jansen expressed concern with the funding for road maintenance and paving and questioned if the town is falling behind in those efforts. The board confirmed. Selectman Freeman stated that establishing a road paving capital reserve account beyond the block grant amount would allow the issue to be debated at Town Meeting and more monies added if the voters chose to. He continued establishing a capital reserve for paving will allow unused funds to remain in that account. Jim Demeritt stated that paving estimates are fluid because of the cost of petroleum based products. Selectman

Perron stated that \$20K of the 2006 budget was encumbered for Waterthorn Road paving. A road list is in place as a guideline indicating maintenance needs.

Mr. Kilmer inquired if there is a town rule about accepting a road only after it is paved? Selectman Perron stated that the Selectmen have not established a criteria for road construction, but the Planning Board requires new subdivisions to have pavement. Selectman Freeman stated he would not encourage the acceptance of any road without proper construction including pavement. Mr. Feinleib inquired who engineers the roads? The developer is responsible for engineering his roads. Selectman Freeman stated an expert would be hired prior to accepting a road if there were a question.

6:00 ADAPT. Sean O'Brien and Sean McDaniel presented the ADAPT budget. Their fiscal year runs July to June. 95% of past funding has been the result of grants and fundraising. \$5K is being requested from both Lincoln and Woodstock. \$20K has been requested from Linwood schools. Sean O'Brien's office is at the Linwood School as a student assistance person. Selectman Freeman inquired if Linwood School had been requested to contribute before. NO. Selectman Freeman inquired what happens if ADAPT only has partial funding approved? Mr. O'Brien responded ADAPT would have to start cutting back programs and he would have to look for employment elsewhere. Mr. O'Brien is the only fulltime employee. There are about 15 part-time employees and another 12 summer employees.

Jim Demeritt asked how much grant funding needs to be made up for? Selectman Freeman verified that ADAPT is asking for an additional \$20,000 from the Town of Thornton. Mr. O'Brien confirmed. ADAPT is losing \$37,500 of grant funding. There is a grant application due tomorrow that, if received, will account for \$70,000/yr for the next four years.

Selectman Perron stated he supports the ADAPT organization He suggested keeping regular funding in the budget and funding the increase with a warrant article so that voters are aware and don't think the Board is tucking money here and there. Selectman Freeman stated 100% should be included in the general budget. He continued he is comfortable with the reason for the requested increase. Selectman Freeman made a motion to place the entire ADAPT funding in the general budget article. Selectman Gross agreed. Selectman Perron stated he would support ADAPT funding either way, but the increased funding should be separately addressed. PASSED that total ADAPT funding will be part of the general budget line in the warrant. (x2)

Mr. Kilmer inquired if ADAPT is a DARE program? NO, it is after school and summer recreation programming. Mr. Feinleib inquired how many children utilize the program? Mr. O'Brien responded that 100-130 kids from Thornton participated last year.

Selectman Perron inquired if ADAPT representatives have contacted Neighborfest? NO. Selectman Perron stated that Board of Selectmen need to hear from ADAPT that they

can, cannot or do not wish to work with the Neighborfest organization. The Neighborfest organization is awaiting a reply from the Selectmen.

6:20 Selectman Freeman requested the Police Chief come to the 1/30 Selectmen's meeting to have a discussion about the calculation of holiday and overtime pay. It is not consistent. Selectman Gross agreed that the rules should be applied fairly across the board.

Selectman Freeman stated that the Police Chief mentioned at his budget presentation that the Road Agent is utilizing the Grafton County Dispatch and it is wrong to have an officer go out to check roads to call the Road Agent. Selectman Freeman stated the RA should utilize his cell phone and be available. The Board requested the RA come to the Selectmen's meeting on 1/30 to discuss call out procedures.

6:25 Bob Matheson, State Representative. Mr. Matheson came in to introduce himself to the Board. He stated that school funding and balancing the state budget are two of the biggest items on the agenda. Gambling is on the table. Selectman Freeman requested Rep. Matheson vote yes to gambling. Sweepstakes tickets are being sold thus the state already has gambling. Gambling locations will be important and it could be a boon to some areas such as Berlin and Pease. Rep. Matheson stated there is a question about whether gambling, if allowed, should be state run or a tax on private enterprise. Selectman Freeman stated that there is already a mature Sweepstakes Commission in place.

Rep. Matheson stated that property tax is suffocating our citizens. He continued that the "view tax" is just a way of picking up market value increase due to a property's location. Selectman Freeman stated that it is subjective methodology and the pendulum may have swung too far. He continued that the state is losing working farms. There needs to be a substantial benefit for farmers to keep the open space.

Rep Matheson stated that an organization recognized as the Carbon Coalition is requesting a warrant article in many towns recognizing global warming as an issue. Selectman Freeman stated he would be hard pressed to sign onto anything that would have a long-term commitment without understanding its total impact.

Rep. Matheson stated he is on the commerce committee. There are over 100 bills for this session. He is concerned about health insurance availability. Selectman Freeman suggested that the state allow small businesses to form health insurance groups through Chambers of Commerce.

Other concerns. The Selectman requested help with having Route 3 repaired. Senator Reynolds has addressed the issue with Carol Murray from the Department of Transportation. Ms. Murray is looking to see if she can find funds for resurfacing the highway. Selectman Freeman stated the road needs to be ground and rebuilt.

Jim Demeritt has an issue, and that is the Division of Fish and Game. Mr. Demeritt would like to sit down and discuss utilization of their funding with Rep. Matheson.

6:55 General issues. The TA is to sign Sue Lyons time sheet and confirm Chad Downing's hours with the RA.

An appointment was presented for Helen Steele for the Supervisors of the Checklists. The town has not yet received a written resignation from Dot Drake. The Board will not sign an appointment for replacement until a written resignation has been received. There was discussion about posting the opening if a resignation is received.

Councilor Ray Burton urges the Board to send a letter to Governor Lynch to support a \$.05/gallon gas tax increase. Currently 70% of the tax goes to highways. Selectman Perron would support. Selectman Freeman stated that if it were to be enacted the tax should be put into effect when gas prices go down. It would hit people on the low end of the socioeconomic scale hardest. Selectman Gross stated no more taxes. There was no consensus of Board members.

Has the TA has a response from counsel relative to placing liens on Burd Engineering?
NO

The TA is to let Conservation Commission members know that Town Meeting represents the legislative body. A warrant article will need to be posted to redirect current use penalty monies to a conservation fund.

The Board discussed capital reserve accounts vs. lease purchase arrangements for capital equipment. Capital reserve funds can only be used for the final payment on lease/purchase arrangements. The TA was directed to prepare a warrant article to rescind the Ambulance Capital Reserve account. Monies from the liquidated capital reserve account will be utilized to offset the purchase price of the proposed ambulance. APPROVED (x3)

7:10 It was moved to enter non-public session for land negotiations. The Board of Selectmen and TA were present. 7:15 The Board returned to public session. It was moved to seal the minutes. PASSED (x3)

7:22 It was moved to adjourn. PASSED (x3)

**The next scheduled Selectmen's Meeting
Will be
Tuesday January 23, 2007
5:30 PM at the Municipal Building**