

**SELECTBOARD MEETING  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2003  
6:45 PM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A regular meeting of the St. Johnsbury Board of Selectmen was held Monday, October 27, 2003. Chairman Gib Handy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Present were Mr. Handy, Dale Urie, Bryon Quatrini, Elwin Cross and Reginald Wakeham. Also present from the town were Town Manager Mike Welch, Economic Development Coordinator Joel Schwartz, tree warden Jeff Briggs, zoning administrator Priscilla Messier and secretary Ida Rainville.

Others present were: Chamber of Commerce Director Darcy McCann, Alan Boye, Dorothy Weinstein, Cheri Spaulding, Arthur Arnold and Isaac Olson from the Caledonian Record.

The minutes of the September 22 meeting were approved as presented (Quatrini/Wakeham). The Board approved liquor licenses for Wildflower Inn (catering) and Porter and Craige, 107 Eastern Ave.

**Welcome Center – Darcy McCann**

Darcy McCann reported a tremendous increase in visitors to the downtown with the opening and directional signage for the new Welcome Center. The Center opened officially on September 27 and the visitors for each of the following weeks doubled over any previous numbers for the former information booth. Darcy reported that several of the downtown merchants had also reported a marked increase in business. Gib Handy pointed out the town is applying for signage to be added to the interstate to direct motorists to the Welcome Center. Mike Welch mentioned that people were stopping there before the directional signs were up, as soon as the sign on the building was in place. Overall the Welcome Center is deemed a resounding success.

**Passumpsic Valley Land Trust – Alan Boye and Dorothy Weinstein**

Dorothy Weinstein and Alan Boye were at the meeting to present the tract of land known as Arlington Woods Park, a 32-acre parcel owned by the Passumpsic Valley Land Trust, to the Town of St. Johnsbury. This parcel is close to the municipal forest and may be adjoined. The donation included an endowment to assist in the property's upkeep. There are existing trails through the property, and no hunting allowed. Chairman Handy thanked the Trust on behalf of the Town and the Board voted unanimously to accept the property (Quatrini/Urie).

The Land Trust had prohibited hunting, fishing and trapping on the property and was deeded to the Town with the same restrictions. Since it is close to and may be adjoined to the Town forest, and because more hiking trails are being developed in the Town forest, Dale Urie moved to prohibit all hunting in the town forest as well as the new tract of land. After a second to the motion, it was moved (by Bryon) and voted to table the motion until the next meeting to gather input from the public. No further action was taken.

Jeff Briggs volunteered to work up a management plan for the Arlington Woods in conjunction with the Town Forest plan.

**Zoning Amendment – Priscilla Messier**

Priscilla presented a request from Arthur Arnold to change the zoning designation of a parcel of land owned by Mr. Arnold that abuts Sherman Drive and continues to Route 5 near the Mountain View Apartments. It is currently in Residential Town, and Mr. Arnold requested a designation of Health Services so the property could be developed in connection with other health services available off Sherman Drive. On a motion by Reg Wakeham, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the Board unanimously voted the change of zoning.

**Animal Shelter - Cheri Spaulding**

Cheri Spaulding has been spearheading the committee to build a regional animal shelter in St. Johnsbury. Cheri and Mike Welch reported the progress made toward building the shelter, including the acquisition of property on Route 5 south near the Corrections Center for the location, and the willingness of the

Corrections facility to supply the man power for building and staffing the shelter once it is completed. Other local professionals have volunteered their time and services to see the project completed. A public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 30 to present the project to the public and begin soliciting funds. It is projected that the shelter will serve a wide area and include several towns. Representatives from Black River Architects will also be available to answer questions on the proposed design. Cheri reported she sees this as more than a shelter for dogs and cats, but a place to take in all types of animals, and offer training and guidance in caring for pets.

#### **Rails to Trails –Lamoille Valley Railroad**

Mike read a letter from the Agency of Transportation Rail Section describing the proposed abandonment of tracks between Swanton and St. Johnsbury, Vermont. The letter included a request for input from towns on the rail line to identify potential effects it may have on various uses of land, transportation systems, water systems, wetlands, and others. The Selectboard signed a letter of support to the Agency of Transportation for the project. The question of extending the rail abandonment east of St. Johnsbury was also raised but not answered because of lack of information.

#### **Appointments**

A letter from Bill Vermeulen indicated his intention to resign from the Planning Commission effective November 1, 2003. The resignation was accepted with thanks for all he has done for the Town (Quatrini/Cross).

On a motion by Bryon Quatrini seconded by Dale Urie, the board voted unanimously to appoint Gary Reis to fulfill Bill Vermeulen's seat on the Planning Commission.

#### **Goals Status Report – Mike Welch**

The Board briefly reviewed goals that had been set for 2003, breaking down into three sections: completed and on going, unanticipated, and not completed.

Several areas are completed, or nearly so: capital improvement plan for downtown district expansion; corrections committee; visitor center; upgrading GIS; Railroad Street Mall.

Unanticipated: Microdata's move; W.T. Solutions took over Quality Control Stitching and saved up to 70 jobs; real estate brokers looking at properties and interest of large retail store in the area; non-profit institute wishing to move downtown.

Incomplete: Riverfront expansion study; South Pearl Street parking; New promotions for Industrial Park and assistance to bring broadband to the park.

Joel mentioned the possibility of getting local power production for the industrial park on-site. Gib mentioned working with the Railroad for development and use of railroad land and access to cross the tracks. Mike mentioned that he was surprised to discover from a survey of their website, the City of Burlington's number one subject on municipal web site hits is for recreation.

Mike reported that a meeting of the committee to study uses of the Pomerleau Building would be held Wednesday, October 30.

The East St. Johnsbury waste disposal system is on line and the St. Johnsbury Center Water project is now under construction. This completed the review of 2003 goals.

Mike presented a tentative schedule for budget review through November. On a motion by Reg, seconded by Dale, the Board voted unanimously to accept requests for 2004 special appropriations if the request is for the same amount approved in 2003 or less. If any organization has a new request or increase over what was approved in 2003, a petition signed by 5% of valid voters will be required to get the article on the agenda for vote at the March town meeting.

Mike reviewed the list of properties that will be sold at public auction on November 25. Notices have been sent to abutting property owners and posted in the Caledonian.

**Manager's Report**

Mike reminded people of Community of Concern events coming up; the animal shelter meeting on Thursday, October 30; the State of Vermont report on Memorial Bridge needing repair; non-renewal of insurance through our current insurance company; meeting of VLCT legislative session here on October 29; water/sewer abatement requests – Elwin and Reg agreed to meet with complainants.

**Other Business**

On a motion by Reg, seconded by Elwin, the board voted unanimously to enter into executive session at 8:10 PM to discuss negotiations for a real estate transaction. Joel Schwartz was invited to the meeting.

At approximately 8:30 PM on a motion by Dale Urie, seconded by Bryon Quatrini, the Board voted unanimously to go back into regular session. The meeting adjourned with no further business transacted.

Respectfully,

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Ida W. Rainville, Recording Secretary