

Minutes
Town of St. Johnsbury
Board of Selectmen
Monday, December 9, 2002

The Town of St. Johnsbury Board of Selectmen held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 9, 2002 beginning at 7:00p.m. in the Board Room of the Municipal Building.

SelectBoard Members Present – Chairperson Reginald Wakeham, Gabriel Handy, Bryon Quatrini, and Dale Urie, and Student Representative Shawna Wakeham.

SelectBoard Members Absent/Excused – Elwin Cross

Others Present: Penni Cleverly, Marlene Rock, Priscilla Messier (Zoning Administrator), Kenneth Gammell, Victor Gammell, Paul Bengtson, Robert Creaser, Steven Watson, Andy Dusseault, Karen Andrews, Gerald Zickler, Joel Schwartz (Economic Development Director), Robert Swartz, Darlene Ahrens, Wendy Donahue, Bruce Corrette, Russ Hutchins, Leonard Hychalk, Kim Achilles (Caledonian Record), Kingdom Access TV, and Mike Welch (Town Manager).

- 1) **Minutes** – The members of the Board agreed to postpone action on the Minutes from the Regular SelectBoard meeting held on November 25, 2002 until the Board members had an opportunity to review same.
- 2) **Public Hearing By-Law Amendment** – Priscilla Messier explained that the Board of Selectmen had authorized adjustments to the proposed Zoning District Boundary following the last public hearing held on the Doug Bengtson zone change, property off from Tremont Street and Memorial Drive. There were no members of the Public to comment during the hearing. Priscilla advised that abutting property owners were agreeable to the district change as revised. It was moved by Gib Handy seconded by Bryon Quatrini, and unanimously voted to approve the Zoning District as approved by the Planning Commission.
- 3) **Overhanging Sign Request – Railroad Street** - Priscilla Messier stated that the current Zoning By-Law prohibits overhanging signs. Priscilla stated that she has been approached by Karen Andrews, Frogs & Lilipads, about the possibility of having an overhanging sign that would be a logo only – without any words on it. Gib Handy suggested that the Manager and Priscilla review the requirements of the AOT Project that improved Railroad Street, because it was possible that overhanging signs were prevented as part of the conditions of accepting funds for the highway improvement. Priscilla said that if the SelectBoard is interested in having this subject reviewed, she would ask the Planning Commission to consider the issue.

Karen Andrews was present and informed that Board that for some stores in the Downtown there is not sufficient room for a sign against the building. She indicated

that an overhanging sign with good hardware, and tastefully done, could help the retailers, and would also improve the appearance of the Downtown area. Karen said that the size would not have to be large – about 24” X 32”. Following discussion members of the Board directed the Manager and Priscilla Messier to get more information on this subject, and encouraged the Planning Commission to consider language that would allow a controlled use of overhanging signs. Issues raised for discussion included – size, type of material, lettering, colors, lighting, type of hardware to be used, and logos.

- 4) **Community Health Advisory Committee – Needle Exchange Program Recommendations** – Paul Bengtson, Chairperson of the Town of St. Johnsbury Community Health Advisory Committee presented the Board of Selectmen with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee relative to the Needle Exchange Program in St. Johnsbury. (A copy of the Recommendations dated December 6, 2002 is included with these Minutes). Chairperson Bengtson informed the Board that the Committee was recommending that the Needle Exchange Program be allowed in St. Johnsbury, with certain conditions – as stated in the written report. SelectBoard member Handy stated that he would not support any program in the community that does not include a provision for one-for-one Needle Exchange. Following discussion, it was moved by Gib Handy, seconded by Bryon Quatrini and voted 4-0 (with Student Representative Shawna Wakeham signifying support of the motion) to forward a copy of the Committee Report to Vermont CARES asking them to comment on the recommendations of the Community Health Committee – with an additional recommendation to be included by the Board of Selectmen, that the program shall be a one-for-one exchange program.

Chairperson Bengtson stated that he felt the recommendations would help to improve the control and monitoring of the program. Chairperson Bengtson informed the Board that many people have devoted a great deal of time to reviewing all of the issues associated with the Needle Exchange Program – and he felt that the December 4th community discussion was very helpful.

Steven Watson pointed out that it will be up to the Department of Health to actually permit an outreach program.

Darlene Ahrens, VT Department of Health, suggested that the Board of Selectmen does not have to wait for Vermont CARES to respond to the recommendations – the Board could indicate now that this is what you have for expectations for a program to be operated in this community. The Board’s position could be a little stronger in terms of requiring that the recommendations provided by the Committee be incorporated into the program. Wendy Donahue and Ken Gammell spoke in opposition to the Needle Exchange Program in St. Johnsbury.

- 5) **Design Review – Committee Appointment and Proposed District Expansion** – Members of the Board were informed that Mark Desrochers has indicated that he did not wish to accept an appointment to the St. Johnsbury Design Review Board at this

time. Priscilla Messier informed the Board that Mr. Bruce Ralston has agreed to accept a position on the Design Review Committee if the Board appoints him. Following discussion, it was moved by Bryon Quatrini, seconded by Dale Urie, and unanimously voted to appoint Bruce Ralston to the vacant position on the Design Review Board.

Proposed District Expansion – Priscilla Messier informed the Board of Selectmen that as part of the By-Law revision process that is currently be done by the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment – there is consideration being given to expand the current Design Review District from outside of the Main Street area to include – Railroad Street (Federal Street to Concord Avenue, then up Sand Hill), Eastern Avenue, and Maple Street. Priscilla stated that the design Review Committee will be reviewing properties in this area and will issue a report to the Planning Commission for consideration. The Manager advised the Board of Selectmen that expansion of the Design Review District is one of the requirements for maintaining Designated Downtown certification. One of the criteria for meeting the “planning commitment” of the Downtown Designation – is having a Design Review District that is “essentially” the same as the Designated Downtown area. Priscilla informed the Board that the Planning Commission will consider the recommendations of the Design Review Committee as soon as their report is completed.

- 6) **Breezy Hill Speed Limit** – The Manager informed the Board that there was a calculation error on the Speed Limit report prepared by the Chief of Police. The Manager said that the average speed, based on the radar report prepared by Chief Devenger, should have been reported as 38 MPH and not 48 MPH as was previously indicated. Leonard Hychalk presented the Board of Selectmen with a petition signed by residents in the Breezy Hill area asking that the speed limit not be raised on Breezy Hill. He indicated that 98% of the people in the area were in agreement that the speed limit should not be increased. Paul Bengtson pointed out that many people do walk on the road, and there are kids on bicycles. Bruce Corrette said that residents and employees in the area walk, and run, on Breezy Hill, and with no sidewalks on the Street – increased speed limits will be promoting an unsafe situation. Robert Creaser spoke in favor of increasing the speed limit.

Following discussion, it was moved by Gib Handy, seconded by Dale Urie, and unanimously voted to keep the posted Speed Limit on Breezy Hill at 30 MPH.

- 7) **Street Name Change** – The Manager presented a request from Gilman Housing Trust that the name of Townhouse Terrace, be changed to Moose River Drive. The Manager stated that this request has been reviewed by the Post Office, and by 911 Coordinator Will Rivers, without objection. Marlene Rock suggested that this name may be confusing with Moose River Campground, in the event of a call for emergency services. Gib Handy suggested that the Manager should contact the New Beginnings Church to make sure that they have no objection to the name change. It was moved by Gib Handy, seconded by Dale Urie and unanimously voted to approve

the name change of Townhouse Terrace to Moose River Drive, subject to the review of the name change by the New Beginnings Church.

- 8) **Loan Approval Passumpsic View** – It was moved by Gib Handy, seconded by Dale Urie, and unanimously voted to authorize the Town Manager to sign the loan approval documents for the loans associated with the Passumpsic View Apartments on Railroad Street.
- 9) **2003 Budget Review** – The Board briefly reviewed the proposed budget for 2003. The Board tentatively scheduled a Budget Workshop for Friday, December 13th beginning at 3:30p.m.
- 10) **Manager's Report** – The Manager informed the Board that the Victorian Holiday celebration will be held on Saturday, December 14th in Downtown St. Johnsbury. The Manager informed the Board that final plans for First Night 2003 were underway and buttons were now on sale for \$7.00. This is the 10th Anniversary of First Night in St. Johnsbury. The Manager reminded the Board that Michelle Authier, and students from her class at Springfield College, will be hosting a discussion on their survey results on Offenders Living in the Community on Saturday, December 14th, between the hours of 1:00p.m. and 3:00p.m. at the South Church on Main Street. The members of the Board agreed to not hold a Regular SelectBoard meeting on Monday, December 23rd.

Having no further business or requests, it was moved by Gib Handy, seconded by Dale Urie, and unanimously voted to adjourn at approximately 8:10p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Michael A. Welch
Town Manager