

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
January 29, 2015**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Jack Casey (out at 8:15) School Building Committee members Denton (Bud) Butler, Roy Litchfield; Members of the Public Joe Toro, Dave Childs, Maria Moore; Member of the Press Amy Steward (Winsted Journal); Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward. Special Guest Phil Doyle, LADA.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. Mr. Jerram noted that the majority of the meeting would be devoted to the presentation of the “downtown plan” but noted that there were a few “housekeeping” items that needed to be attended to before getting to that agenda item.

Resolution: re School Building Project:

Mr. Jerram stated that the Building committee had requested that the Selectmen adopt a second resolution endorsing the Antolini School Project, noting that the Board had recently approved a resolution confirming their commitment to the roof portion of the project. The resolution that will be adopted this evening is specific for the ‘windows , ADA and HVAC’ portion of the building project.

School Building Committee Chairman Bud Butler confirmed that this resolution is for the remainder of the project. He stated that they had received confirmation from the State that the roof project can be locally reviewed and the committee is trying to receive the same kind of approval for the windows, ADA and HVAC portion of the project.

Mr. Butler read the resolution requiring approval.

“Be it Resolved, that the Board of Selectmen hereby authorizes at least the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for the proposed Windows, ADA & HVAC project at Ann Antolini School.”

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to approve the resolution as presented.

Unanimous.

Resolution re: February is Solar Energy Month in New Hartford

First Selectman Jerram reminded all present of the Solar Initiative that is being sponsored by the Town of New Hartford. He stated that there have been several residents who have expressed an interest in taking advantage of the program currently in place and promoted by the Zoning department. Land Use Administrator Steve Sadlowski is the town liaison working with All Green It Solar to assist residents with this initiative. He asked for approval of the following resolution promoting February as ‘Solar Month.’

“Whereas, the Board of Selectmen of the Town of New Hartford recognize the benefits of Solar Energy and,

Whereas, Solar energy has proven itself to be a low cost and efficient alternative power source and,

Whereas the Town of New Hartford has partnered with All Green It to provide outreach and education regarding solar energy to New Hartford residents,

We the Board of Selectmen of the Town of New Hartford proudly proclaim February as Solar Energy Month.”

MOTION: by Casey, second Kennerson to approve the resolution as read and presented.

Unanimous.

Appointment to Open Space Preservation Commission:

First Selectman Jerram informed the Selectman that a request has been received to appoint Jean Darlington as a member of the Open Space Preservation Commission. The Open Space Commission has endorsed this candidate.

Mr. Jerram noted that Ms. Darlington was very active on the Open Space planning committee and she is very active in matters pertaining to Open Space and Conservation. He fully supports this recommendation.

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to appoint Jean Darlington to fill a vacancy as a member of the Open Space Preservation Commission. Term to expire December 31, 2015.

Unanimous.

Request for Tax Refund:

Mr. Jerram noted that the Tax Collector has presented one request for refund of motor vehicle property taxes for consideration (\$277.87 to Jeffrey or Jessica Loch due to prorated after payment)

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Casey to approve the Request for Tax Refund as presented.

Unanimous.

Presentation and Discussion of Downtown Plan:

First Selectman introduced Phil Doyle of LADA and stated that Mr. Doyle was in attendance to present a revised “downtown master plan.” Jerram stated that he and Mr. Doyle had been meeting frequently over the past few months to develop this new draft masterplan. Jerram noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission is currently revising the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and that Chapter 6 of that plan addresses the downtown area. He stated that the current POCD references the 20 year old plan that has been used as a guide for the downtown area. Several components of that plan

have been put into place and it seemed appropriate to review that plan and see “what has been done?” “what are the successes?” and “where do we go from here?” Jerram stated that this revised plan is meant to be viewed as a draft to “get us talking” and “to make us think about specific concepts and ideas.” Jerram turned the meeting over to Mr. Doyle to present the plan.

Mr. Doyle began the presentation by stating that in today’s economy, the competition is on for downtown areas to be sustainable economic centers. Doyle stated that the 1995 plan took over a year to prepare. It was a thoughtful document. Doyle noted that the goal of that plan was to create a viable and interesting economic center; to preserve and protect the downtown area. A lot of the individual components of that plan have been accomplished, but there is more to do. Doyle explained that he and the First Selectman view this revision of the plan as an attempt to focus on what has been accomplished and how to continue to move on. Mr. Doyle stated that he and Mr. Jerram also looked to see if there were areas where things have changed and are there new opportunities that should be incorporated into the new plan. One thing that Mr. Doyle noted is that the trend has changed from closing off streets to traffic to leaving the traffic patterns in place; preferring not to alter traffic flow to a different area, but find a way to incorporate the traffic flow as a positive influence.

Doyle presented the plan to those in attendance. Mr. Doyle began the presentation by re-stating that the Plan is a DRAFT and is a framework for ideas.

The first area of concentration is the river. Doyle noted that the Farmington River is a natural asset to the Town center and should be showcased. He asked ‘how can one draw people to the river area in the downtown?’ A pavilion where residents and visitors could gather to enjoy the river is one improvement to the downtown area that could be accomplished fairly easily.

A second area of interest is the corner parcel located at the intersection of Routes 219 and 44. This vacant parcel has the potential to be used to create a public space; perhaps a combination of a small park like area with some additional public parking and a commercial business sharing the site.

The Library could eventually be connected via a driveway that has additional parking spaces. Further down on Main Street, the area owned by the Land Trust known as Riverview Park affords the opportunity for a pedestrian bridge that could connect span across the Farmington River, providing access to both sides of the river. The Town Garage site has the potential to be commercial property along the river. Mr. Doyle noted that there currently is a proposal headed to Planning and Zoning for multi family housing (apartments/condominiums) along the River. Also of note is the interest in a Bike/Walking trail starting in New Hartford and ending in Pleasant Valley (Barkhamsted). Both of these could be beneficial to the downtown center of New Hartford. The Multi family dwellings would positively impact the current water and sewer customer base in town. These could provide additional users to the system, thereby increasing revenue and possibly lowering the rates.

Selectman Kennerson questioned the design of the pedestrian bridge depicted in the plan, noting that she is in favor of such a bridge, but isn’t too sure about the design. Mr. Doyle replied that the type of bridge shown is illustrative in nature and that the design could be changed to whatever the public sentiment approved.

Mrs. Moore commented that she was concerned that the public will become enamored with the

concepts proposed in this plan and that putting those concepts into action would take the focus away from the town water and sewer user needs. She also noted that many of the improvements implemented in the 1999 plan were accomplished by private funding. Mr. Doyle countered that having a plan in place that promotes the downtown area shows developers that the town supports economic development. This encourages developers to make investments. It would most likely be the private developer who pays for the cost of the extension of the sewer infrastructure needed for the multi family units be developed along the river, This would be a “win –win” for town businesses and for the water and sewer customers. First Selectman Jerram interjected that the Planning and Zoning Commission will be seeking public input regarding the implementation of a zone change needed to allow for this development. He stated that the public hearing related to this change will be ‘one of the most important public hearings held in many years’ and encouraged public support of this proposed change.

The discussion of the downtown plan ended and First Selectman Jerram informed all that the Draft Plan presented will be available on the Town of New Hartford website at www.town.new-hartford.ct.us

MOTION: by Kennerson, second Jerram to adjourn at 9:05 PM.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant