

BOARD OF SELECTMEN / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Wednesday, June 14, 2023 – 6:00 PM – Hybrid

PRESENT: Alan Hanson, Chair; Neal Pilsen, Selectman; Roger Manzolini, Selectman; Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator; Kristina Huggins, Boys & Girls Club; Linsay Bouma, Film Co. Rep.; Joella Gallo, EverSource Rep.; Holly Stover; Dick Stover; Tom Grizey, Sewer Matters

Al opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

EverSource Tree Cutting Plan: Joella Gallo spoke to the issue of the tree cutting plan in Richmond which she assured the Board was to remove dead or in-decline trees and to trim back trees in contact with their lines. All cutting depends on EverSource receiving signed permissions from the homeowner on whose property the tree stands.

Holly voiced her upset with the clear cutting that has been done on Summit and Swamp Roads, which she felt was unnecessary. Neal noted that he had spoken with Joella and found her responsive to maintaining the full growth of healthy trees. A discussion ensued that talked about the process EverSource uses to obtain permission to cut trees.

Neal suggested that the next time EverSource comes to the Board seeking permission for a work project in Town that they have a written tree-cutting plan in hand. Two additional issues were raised about EverSource's work; they leave terrible messes behind including large pieces of trees and trimming work alongside the roads with no provision for traffic safety.

Special Event Permit, Alcohol Permit – Camp Russell Chowder Fest., July 14, 2023: Kristina Huggins approached the Board for a one-day Special Event Permit, Alcohol Permit. Roger asked if any changes at all from all the previous years had been made in the planning for this event. Kristina was able to assure him that no changes had been made. Neal moved to approve the one-day Special Event Permit, Alcohol Permit for the Camp Russell Chowder Fest on July 14, 2023. The motion was seconded by Roger and adopted by unanimous vote.

Filming Permit – Heirloom Fire: Linsay Bouma addressed the Board, requesting a permit for a 16-person crew to film a documentary at Heirloom Fire. Questions were raised about how the parking for vehicles and equipment would be managed to not cause any disruption of normal traffic function for the Post Office. Daniele explained the Parking Plan which would avoid any such disruption. Neal moved to approve the Permit. He was seconded by Roger and the motion was carried by universal consent.

TOWN CENTER DISCUSSION:

Invoice: Roger noted that he was in possession of a routine monthly bill in the amount of \$688,781.67, which has been reviewed and approved by the Building Committee. Roger noted that 75% of the project monies has been spent and the building project is at 75% completion, which is very gratifying.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Holly said that there should be a place online where donations for the building and landscaping can be made. She would like the Board of Selectmen to receive direct requests for donations to create a Bruce Garlow Memorial. Danielle described the process already in place for that.

Dick Stover asked about an update on 159 Willow Street and on the issue of Short-Term Rentals. Danielle advised that she has had no further word from the State and does not, therefore, have any update. Dick was upset by that response as these issues have been going on for an extended time. A discussion ensued concerning what methods might be used to determine which households were running Air B&Bs since the State is unwilling to provide that information. A consensus arose that the first step would be to ask neighboring towns how they managed the issue and then to get Paul Greene, the Building Inspector, to attend the next meeting as he would be the first person to enforce Town Bylaws. Holly suggested sending out a letter to the residents, advising them that there would be such a meeting and action is expected to be taken as a result. As for 159 Willow Street, Danielle said that the process to take the property has already begun.

Municipal Aggregate Electric Contract: Danielle noted that the contract with the Electric Company has been reviewed by Beth Goodman, Town Counselor. The Board needs to review it and decide how they want to go forward. It is a five-year agreement with compensation paid by the electric company at the rate of 0.01. The Board signed the contract.

Town Administrator Updates:

- 1. Town Hall Sale** – Danielle reported that, because the building is already assigned a non-conforming use, it could house office spaces or if to be used for retail, changes to the zoning would have to be made, which would create a commercial zone that would include Richmond Telephone Co. Neal said it makes more sense to first have an appraiser look at the property and set a purchase amount. Once that is done, a Special Town Meeting should be scheduled to obtain authorization from the residents to sell the building.
- 2. Blighted Property Bylaw** – Danielle reported that Beth does not believe that a new town bylaw should be enacted but that the Town should approach the AGL under the Neighborhood Renewal Act, which allows the taking of abandoned properties. That process is currently underway at 159 Willow.
- 3. Long-Term Town Tree Plan** – Danielle spoke to the Tree Warden about an RFP to get a company to do tree work in Richmond, either on a regular or an as-needed basis. Neal suggested having a Special Town Meeting to ask for \$50,000 to arrange for the removal of dead trees. A question was asked as to whether the State would have any interest in helping with that. Al said he would contact the State and inquire.

Selectmen's Matters: Roger reported that the BRTA needs a Board Member. That position has typically been filled by the current Chair of the Board of Selectmen. Al agreed to take on that responsibility and Roger said he will submit Al's name to BRTA.

Neal – There will be a pre-trial conference by 2:00 PM tomorrow via Zoom on the Hollow Fields issue. Negotiations continue and Neal will report back to the Board in two weeks.

Sewer Matters: Tom reported that the new pump has arrived and been installed. There is a now a problem with the other station. There are indications that water is inside one of the pumps so he is going to pull it and start looking for a replacement. Tom will put together the information necessary to replace that pump and submit it to Danielle.

There being no further business before the Board, Alan moved that the meeting be adjourned at 7:00 PM. He was seconded by Neal and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Signed:

Alan Hanson, Chair