

Town of Sherman
Board of Selectmen
Regular Monthly Meeting
22 August 2019
7:00 PM. Mallory Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Bob Ostrosky, Selectman Kevin Keenan

Audience and Invited: Liz LaVia, Eric Holub and audience of approximately 17.

CLERK: Linda Whitney

CALL TO ORDER: First Selectman Lowe Called the Meeting to Order at 7:01p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC COMMENT:

P. Schaer expressed her intent to request support from the Board during the CLA weed mapping agenda item.

CORRESPONDENCE:

D. Lowe read a letter from the Friends of Happy Acres expressing their interest in supporting new ideas for the use of the farm in the future. They would like to be a part of the planning process with the town.

D. Lowe read correspondence from P. Schaer expressing concerns the CLA has with regard to the change in methodology on the surveillance of invasive species in their annual weed mapping. The new methodology, supported by First Light, doesn't allow for a continuum of information that has been collected for the last 12 years. The CLA is requesting five thousand dollars from the town to continue the old methodology.

D. Lowe read correspondence from F. Frattini that described the newly proposed carry in/carry out garbage policy at town parks. This would mean the removal of garbage and recycle cans at the town parks. The proposal stems from a problem with people dumping their household garbage in the park cans.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the Board of Selectmen Regular Monthly Meeting minutes of 25 July 2019 was made by K. Keenan.

Seconded by B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: Unanimous

Motion to approve the Board of Selectmen Special Meeting minutes of 17 August 2019 was made by K. Keenan.

Seconded by B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: Unanimous

TAX REFUNDS:

D. Lowe **made a motion** to grant the tax refund in the amount of \$206.44.

Seconded by: B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: Unanimous.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUMMARY REVIEW:

L. LaVia reported that the General Fund came in at about \$112,000.00 better than budget in the last fiscal year. The town audit will be completed in a few weeks. E. Holub reported that the revenue will be reported on after the audit is complete.

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

SVFD

The Fireman's Ball was a big success.

HAPPY ACRES BARN reorganization progress report:

D. Lowe presented his very preliminary plan for the reorganization of Happy Acres. The plan covers 4 main objectives:

1. Simplify the town's responsibility at HAF.
2. Streamline the management of the property.
3. Create perpetual funding for the farm without burdening the public.
4. Create a public friendly environment at the farm.

To meet these objectives the First Selectman has a local farmer who is interested in purchasing the cows and is willing to keep some at the farm under his care. A property manager would be offered the house rent free and a consultant salary to care for the property properly. Activities sponsored and funded by independent entities would be sought for the farm. Funding for these objectives are ball parked at about \$90,000.00 a year, ½ would come from HAF trust and ½ from cell tower revenue.

There was discussion about the preliminary plan. B. Ostrosky stressed the need for the town to be explicit in any/all agreements to allow the town to have some flexibility. There was discussion on the possible change in insurance coverage needed if the farm is to be open to the public. K. Keenan asked for clarification of any restrictions regarding the use of the farm in our agreement with Tony Hapanowich. E. Holub responded that there are not restrictions but guidelines are documented in the town ordinance for the HAF.

S. Geenbaum, Peace Pipe Lane, commented that there are 2 farms in Kent open to the public and that e may want to ask them how their insurance is handled.

J. Wozniak-Brown, Chapel Hill, commented that any vendors sponsoring activities at the farm may carry their own insurance.

J. McRoberts inquired about the annual revenue from the HAF trust and asked if it would cover ½ of the expense of the reorganization plan.

E. Holub explained that Tony Hapanowich put requirements on the trust created which became a town ordinance that allows for spending the principal but requires a town meeting approval before any money can be appropriated.

C. Schulman asked if D. Lowe would be presenting this plan in the paper, if a deal had been struck for the cows and if there was a possibility of community gardens at HAF.

D. Lowe responded that he has an informal deal regarding the cows and that he will share his preliminary plan. B. Ostrosky recommended that the BoS assess liability before outlining any specifics of the plan.

J. Wozniak-Brown, Chapel Hill, asked about an asset inventory and expressed concern in soil depletion due to over farming. She would like to see programs that support sustainability.

T. Hahn, Pepper Pond Rd, asked about the importance of maintaining the cell tower at the farm.

J. Freed, Church Road, expressed her concern that the cows are ruining the pastures and would like to see lower impact animals, such as sheep, at the farm. She requested transparency with any plans for the farm.

P. Schaer asked about the possibility of a CSA organic farm.

E. Holub recommended that the BoS consult with the town attorney to determine what decisions can be made by the BoS and what decision have to go to town meeting.

There was discussion regarding the possibility of hiring someone now to take care of the property and fund it as project based work.

HAPPY ACRES BARN REPAIR:

More information will be reported at the next meeting.

HAPPY ACRES SILLO DEGENERATION:

There was discussion about the silo being too weak to support the cell towers at HAF. Estimates have been solicited for building a new silo that come in about \$150,000.00 but they don't include taking down the old silo as it would remain standing. E. Holub asked if a mono pole could be used for a lesser expense. T. Hahn will look into this as a possible solution. K.Keenan suggested having a structural engineer evaluate the possibility of building something inside of the existing silo as it is not used to hold grain. T. Hahn asked if it were possible to send the T-Mobile report to a structural engineer for ideas for solutions. J. Freed added that AT&T has approached Naromi Land Trust in the past requesting their land as use for a tower and offered to pay to build a barn and silo to house the tower. J.Weider asked about the expense of building a new silo and if that expense would be covered by the cell contract income stream. D. Lowe explained that the annual income from the cell towers is about \$48,000.00 but that the town has already signed contracts with the companies and now has a responsibility to honor them and maintain future investments. K.Keenan responded that the BoS will continue to investigate options to repair the existing silo.

MALLORY TOWN HALL,ESF FACILITY, PLAYHOUSE WATER/WELLS:

There was discussion on the Special Meeting on 17 August 2019. D. Lowe reported that the necessary trenching has been approved by the state. As a result of that meeting the course of action to be followed is

the drilling of a new well for the Playhouse and the ESF and the well at MTH will be dealt with a later date.

B. Ostrosky made a motion to bring to town meeting the appropriation an amount not to exceed \$15,000.00 from the Capital Non-Recurring Fund for a new well, including trenching, drilling, and pump installation, to service the Playhouse and the ESF.

Seconded by: D. Lowe.

Vote For: All.

REQUEST FOR FUNDS FROM CLA FOR INDEPENDENT WEED MAPPING:

P.Schaer reported that for the past 12 years the CLA and First Light have hired an independent contractor to map the invasive weed species in the lake. This mapping is used for monitoring the solutions and their effectiveness in keeping the lake clean. This mapping report is also used to determine the timing of the annual draw-down of the lake. This year, First Light hired a different consultant, who used different methodology in mapping the invasive species, and the CLA is concerned that this difference will make evaluating and controlling the invasive species impossible. The CLA is requesting funding from the municipalities surrounding the lake to continue the original mapping. The use of the sterile grass carp seems to be effective and the lake is cleaner than it has been in years but the results need continuous, consistent monitoring to sustain these results. The CLA is requesting \$5,000.00 from the town.

D. Lowe responded that this funding has not been budgeted for this year and could the CLA add it into its future budget and fund the testing this year in its existing budget.

A discussion followed. P. Schaer responded that this problem arose after the budget had been passed and that the CLA doesn't have the money in this year's budget to fund the mapping.

D. Weider commented that an impartial, consistent reporting on the health of the lake is in the best interest of the town and is in support of appropriating the funding to continue the original mapping.

C. Diamond responded that she felt an independent report is essential to save the lake and is in support of the town funding the original mapping.

R. DiMateo asked if the new consultant hired by First Light is the same consultant in favor of using chemicals in the lake.

P. Schaer explained that the CLA is concerned that First Light is moving toward discontinuing the draw-downs of the lake to save money and that this would adversely affect the cleanliness of the lake.

D. Lowe made a motion to bring to town meeting the appropriation of an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 from the Capital Non-Recurring Fund to the CLA for Invasive Weed Mapping.

Seconded by: K. Keenan.

Vote For: All.

SECURITY SURVEILLANCE PROPOSALS IN TOWN PARKS:

There was discussion regarding piloting security surveillance at Veteran's Field and Volunteer Park.

B. Ostrosky made a motion to bring to town meeting the appropriation of an amount not to exceed \$2,000.00 from the Capital Non-Recurring to implement security cameras at Veteran's Field and Volunteer Park.

Seconded by: K. Keenan.

Vote For: All.

J. Freed, Church Road, asked what types of problems there have been that necessitate security cameras at the town parks.

B. Ostrosky responded that there have been instances of vandalism, theft, garbage dumping, dog ordinance violations, driving on the fields and a host of other issues.

VOLUNTEER FENCE PROPOSALS TO CONSIDER FOR TOWN MEETING:

There was discussion on the fence proposals received by the town. The BoS agreed to award the job to the lowest bidder, Addressi Fence, in the amount of \$6,100.00 for a residential style fencing system.

D. Lowe made a motion to bring to town meeting an appropriation of an amount not to exceed \$7,000.00 from the Capital Non-Recurring Fund for fencing at Volunteer Park.

Seconded by: B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: All.

NEW GARBAGE POLICY AT VETERAN'S FIELD:

There was discussion about the proposed new policy of Carry in/ Carry out for garbage at Veteran's Field. This new policy would include the removal of the garbage and recycling cans at the field. There has been a problem with people dumping their household garbage at the field. B. Ostrosky recommended holding off on approving this new policy until the security cameras are installed as we may be able to solve the household dumping problem through the use of the cameras. The Board of Selectmen are in agreement with this plan of action.

SIDEWALKS:

B. Ostrosky is waiting on the plans to be completed and will then submit them to the state.

RIGHT TO FARM ORDINANCE:

D. Lowe reported that he would like to put off a decision on this until he has consulted with the town attorney. The Board is in agreement with this plan.

C. Schulman requested that the town move forward with this ordinance to preserve farming in our area.

J. Wozniak-Brown commented that this ordinance may help Planning and Zoning with regard to farming.

REPORT ON FEASIBILITY COMMITTEE FOR CHANGING THE SENIOR CENTER LOCATION:

D. Lowe reported on the committee's progress. The JCC has been looked at as a possible alternative location but no decision has been made yet. There are some on-going concerns about using the JCC that have not yet been resolved. He added that moving to a larger facility will enable us to enhance our services and better serve our seniors.

E. Hayes remarked that moving the location of the Senior Center may not happen quickly and agreed with D. Lowe's assessment of the JCC as a possibility.

S. Greenbaum commented that the current location works but a larger facility may encourage more seniors to get involved in the Senior Center. He would like to see Park and Rec involved in Senior Center activities.

R. DiMateo asked if our senior population is growing.

D. Lowe responded that in 4 years time approximately 50% of Sherman's population will be over the age of 65.

J. Wozniak- Brown asked if the K wing at the school could be used.

E. Hayes remarked that the JCC is not the only location being considered.

HAPPY ACRES FARM REPORT:

There was no farm report submitted other than a veterinarian's report that the herd is healthy and well managed.

C. Fasig asked if a second cutting of hay should be done.

D. Lowe recommended that hay production stop since the cows will be sold. He also said that the hay is J.Motsinger's and he should decide if another cut should be done.

OTHER BUSINESS:

D. Lowe mentioned that the utility bills have been exorbitant and that perhaps the town should investigate using solar power. B. Ostrosky suggested reaching out to the COG and inquiring if they know of anyone who has successfully implemented the move to solar power.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

S. Greenbaum recommended looking into battery walls as well as solar power.

J. Wozniak-Brown agreed that the chairman of the COG is a good resource.

S. Zeitler asked if the BoS had any concerns regarding the use of 5-G coverage in our area. She is concerned about the health and environmental hazards it poses. There is a 5-G summit on 26 August 2019. She shared that anyone interested in learning more can visit : 5GSummit.com. She would like our town leaders to learn more and become involved in protecting the town from the negative effects of 5G coverage.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn: D. Lowe at 9:30 PM

Seconded: K. Keenan

Vote For: Unanimous

The next Board of Selectmen Regular Monthly Meeting is scheduled for 26 September 2019 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Whitney