

Plainfield Select Board Meeting
August 8, 2016
Approved Minutes

PRESENT: Ross Sneyd (Select Board Member), Bram Towbin (Select Board Chair), Betsy Ziegler (Select Board Member), Joe Staab (Videographer), Cindy Wyckoff (Minutes Recorder), Tim Phillips (Resident).

Bram Towbin called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

AGENDA

- Announcements/Public Comment
- Town Clerk's Report
- Road Report
- Solar Charger – Inverter Problem Being Fixed
- Gallison House Update
- Brief Overview of Auction Process for Houses on Creamery Street
- General Discussion of Town Website
- Emergency Coordinator Position
- Update on Cameron Road House
- Minutes
- Adjourn

Ross Sneyd made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Towbin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

- Towbin noted that tomorrow, 8/9/16, is Primary Election Day. The polls will be open from 9am to 7pm.
- Towbin announced that host families are being sought for two Chinese students who will be attending school in the area. Anyone interested should call the Town Clerk's for the contact information.
- Towbin reported that there has been a series of car break-ins in the Village and urged residents to keep their cars locked. An attempted break-in at the Plainfield Co-op was thwarted by the alarm going off. Towbin has talked with the Constable and local police about the situation.
- Ziegler announced that all registered voters in the Town of Plainfield have received the Resiliency Survey in the mail and encouraged everyone to take the time to fill it out. Completed surveys can be returned to the Town Clerk's Office, the Cutler Library, or the Plainfield Co-op. Additional copies are available online or at the above locations. The deadline for returning surveys is 9/17/16 at the Old Home Day event. Ziegler explained that the purpose of the survey is for the Town to be better prepared in the event of an emergency situation in the community. Towbin underscored the importance of community preparedness.

- Ziegler noted that Plainfield Old Home Day is coming up on 9/17/16 and the organizing committee is looking for more interested participants to join. Ziegler outlined the day's events planned so far, including a variety show the evening before.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

- Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells was not present.

SOLAR CHARGER – INVERTER PROBLEM BEING FIXED

- Towbin reported that Wells had noticed that the amount of power coming from the Solar Charger was not what was expected due to a problem with the inverter shutting down. The inverter is under warranty and will hopefully be repaired soon.

ROAD REPORT

- Road Foreman Mike Nolan was not present.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

- Towbin reported that the radar sign is malfunctioning, possibly due to it being struck by a pumpkin last fall.
- Towbin noted that the new stop sign at the corner of Main and Creamery Streets was knocked down again. The Road Crew has put it back up again.
- Ziegler remarked that the roadsides have been trimmed. Towbin explained that the person the Town has for many years contracted with can no longer do the work due to not having Workers Comp insurance. A special piece of equipment was rented and the Town Road Crew did the trimming. Agreeing that it was important for vendors to have Workers Comp insurance, Towbin stated that when the Road Crew has to do that work, it takes time away from other work it needs to accomplish, which has more of a negative impact on smaller towns like Plainfield. Discussion followed on the overgrown burdock between the cemetery fence and the municipal parking lot, including ideas on how to remove it.
- Towbin noted the need to demolish the pavilion structure at the Rec Field due to the eroding bank between it and the river. A member of the community is willing to take some of the materials in return for helping to dismantle the structure, however, two problems need to be resolved: 1) the telephone poles that hold up the structure need to be pulled out, which hopefully the Road Crew will be able to do; and 2) the poles are covered in creosote and considered hazardous waste that needs to be disposed of properly. Towbin would like the work to be completed before the Old Home Day event and will discuss it with Nolan.
- Towbin reported a problem with people using Positive Pie's private dumpster that is situated behind the restaurant. In addition, Ziegler noted that neither Positive Pie nor the Plainfield Farmers Market had emptied the trash bin last week at the Mill Street Park as had been agreed upon. Ziegler has followed up with them and the trash has been removed. Discussion followed on the practice of people leaving items on the Methodist Church stone wall. While not condoning the practice, Towbin requested that those who do leave items on the wall check back the next day and remove any items that have not been taken. In addition to taking unwanted items to the Restore in Barre or advertising on Front Porch Forum, Ziegler noted that a rummage sale will take place on the church lawn on Old Home Day providing opportunity for people to contribute items to benefit the church.

GALLISON HOUSE UPDATE

- Towbin briefly reviewed the Town's recent exploration of purchasing a property on Route 2 across from the Town Hall Opera House to provide additional parking during events. After entering into a purchase and sale agreement between the Town and the property owner, a preliminary inspection of the premises revealed that the house was not as structurally sound as was thought and was filled with trash. As a result, the Town requested renegotiating a lower price, which the seller considered a breach of contract. The Town will no longer be pursuing the purchase at this point. Discussion followed regarding the results of both the engineering and asbestos testing done on the house and the value of that information if the Town wishes to reconsider purchasing the property at some later date.
- Towbin noted the potential of selling 2.2 acres of Town-owned land behind the School Street Apartments on Route 2, which is currently assessed at approximately \$6,000. It was thought that proceeds from the sale might go toward the Gallison house project. Despite no plans to proceed on the Gallison property purchase, Towbin will contact the current owner of the School Street Apartments to ascertain if there is any interest in buying it.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF AUCTION PROCESS FOR HOUSES ON CREAMERY STREET

- Towbin explained his view of the flawed system involved in the recent auctioning off of two separate vacant houses on Creamery Street, citing several impediments in the process and undisclosed requirements for potential buyers. Towbin voiced his dismay that the Town and neighborhood residents have to bear the burden of living with derelict properties as a result of a drawn-out, opaque process. Sneyd suggested that the Select Board might write a letter outlining the problem to the department responsible for banking regulations and copy Vermont's Congressional Delegation. It was agreed that Towbin and other Select Board members would draft a letter to be reviewed at the next meeting.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF TOWN WEBSITE

- Sneyd noted that his recent discussions with various people who deal with the Town website revealed varying viewpoints in terms of its value and usability. The Town of Corinth's website has been cited as a good example and Sneyd is waiting to hear back from its designer regarding a few questions he has posed. Once he has that information, Sneyd would like to convene several public information sessions with those who have some kind of interaction with Plainfield's website to discuss both their challenges with and hoped-for improvements to the site. Sneyd would then like to solicit for a new round of proposals to either make the current site work or embark on rebuilding the site, and expects the process to take place throughout the fall. He urged those who may have ideas for the site to contact Select Board members or the Town Clerk's office.

EMERGENCY COORDINATOR POSITION

- Towbin noted that there is currently one candidate for the Emergency Coordinator position. Going forward, Towbin sees the role becoming more robust given the greater threats the area faces. Towbin urged anyone interested in applying for the position to contact the Select Board. A brief discussion followed on some technical and certification requirements for the position and specific challenges that Plainfield faces in an emergency event.

UPDATE ON CAMERON ROAD HOUSE

- Towbin provided a brief background on the situation with the house on Cameron Road that is perilously close to falling into the Great Brook and on the work being planned with a State entity to address the issue. Towbin reported that two riders to the contract made by the Select Board had been accepted, which basically stated that signing the contract did not commit the Town to spending money and that any money that is spent be reimbursed promptly. He reviewed the current status of the process, including the requirement to do environmental testing and possibly an archeological survey of the property, and potential catastrophic and costly results if no action is taken.

ADDITIONAL MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

- Sneyd cited plans to further discuss issues presented by a property owner residing adjacent to the Town Forest. Sneyd will facilitate the discussion at the 8/17/16 Conservation Commission meeting. Towbin noted the recent social media postings by the property owner specifically pertaining to firing guns in the Town Forest.
- Noting two projects in process, the Pedestrian Bridge across the Winooski River and the Lower Village Sidewalk Study, Ziegler asked if there are other grants for which the Town should be applying. Towbin recommended talking with Dan Carrier about relevant grant opportunities and discussion ensued on the status of the Pedestrian Bridge project.

MINUTES

- **Sneyd made a motion to accept the minutes from the 7/25//16 Select Board meeting as drafted. Towbin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35pm on a motion by Ziegler. Sneyd seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Wyckoff