

**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE
SELECTBOARD MEETINGS
JULY 23, 2007**

APPROVED

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Russell, Chairperson; Jenny Cole, Winslow Ladue, Ed Stone, Frank Thornton.

OTHERS: Andras Kirchner, Ellie Russell, Carrie Spear, Martha Perkins, Robert Chutter, Jack Pella, Dorothy Hill, John Hammer, Charlotte News; and others.

(NOTE: the agenda was heard out of order, but appears in order for continuity.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Russell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ADJUSTMENT TO ADENDA

Additions:

- Recreation Coordinator – Job Description was deferred to the next Board meeting
- WWI Monument Repair –Curbing Discussion (Selectboard Updates)
- Peter Schneider and Jessica Donavan

3. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Ms. Cole, seconded by Mr. Stone, to approve the Selectboard minutes of 06/11/2007 as amended.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to approve the Selectboard minutes of 06/25/2007 as amended.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

5. THORP BARN

Martha Perkins and Robert Chutter, Thorpe Barn Committee members, reviewed a written memo, dated 07/20/2007, regarding a proposal for the future use of the Thorp Barn. Outstanding issues continue to be access to the barn, required permitting, electricity and security. A motion detection light was deleted from the proposal.

There was lengthy discussion regarding a location for signage, which the committee suggested on the Route 7 side of the barn as a free-standing sign; operation dates (Mr. Stone suggested opening to the public in April [page 3, #8]); a suggested that when tours were scheduled the abutting neighbors should be notified as a courtesy (Ms. Cole expressed concern and suggested that neighbors could be notified for major events); a question if there was a Town policy of public notification for Town events (Mr. Pella said

that if there were only 5-10 people touring the barn during the daytime then there was no concern); and a process for review by the Selectboard, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission related to the Thorp Barn proposal.

Mr. Ladue asked if the conversation was about restoration of the barn, or the use (as a museum/storage space of farm equipment). Mr. Chutter replied that the first step was restoration of the barn. The barn leans toward the west due to poor control of water. A previous Thorp Barn Committee raised public funds in the amount of \$65,000 to stabilize the barn. A 1950s shed addition on the west side is pulling the barn out of square.

There was further discussion regarding the value of the 1950s shed; clarification of \$15,000 in Town funds raised for repair of the barn roof, of which \$7,500 was remaining (Mr. Chutter explained that the roof was patched versus replaced); and an estimate/quote of \$250,000 to restore the barn.

Mr. Ladue briefly reviewed a history of the barn, which came to the Town with the Charlotte Park acquisition. Mr. Ladue asked for clarification of the current discussion. There were two separate items, which included:

- Case 1 - the barn restoration for visitors to see
- Case 2 – restore the barn with electricity to house equipment and farm implements

Mr. Ladue pointed out in addition there is the on-going maintenance costs, and the use of the structure as an educational facility. What is the advantage of placing the barn on the State Register of Historic Places, and what are the obligations, asked Mr. Ladue. Ms. Perkins explained that the designation would allow the Town/committee to apply for federal or state grants and fund raising.

Mr. Russell reviewed a break down of an estimate to restore the barn, which did not include the shed addition. Mr. Chutter explained that there was an on-going debate on whether to remove the shed, or not. A Billings Farm representative recommended retaining the shed for extra storage/use. The shed housed cows when the farm was a dairy and is a part of the evolutionary history of the barn.

Mr. Ladue asked if the barn would have septic for bathrooms. Mr. Cutter replied no. It is hoped that the Planning Commission will designate that the structure is not a public building. The Thorp Barn Committee is seeking Selectboard support for a basic restoration at a cost of \$180-190,000.

Mr. Stone pointed out that the Town voters (at Town Meeting) were told that the barn roof was going to be replaced/fixed and that obligation should be fulfilled. Mr. Russell clarified that the roof was an example of what the money could be used for. If the barn is restored then it should have a new roof.

There was lengthy discussion regarding the two case scenarios as noted by Mr. Ladue and what would be a better selling point for raising funds (Mr. Chutter replied Case 2 would be a better selling point from the viewpoint of applying for grants and fund

raising.); fund raising for Phase 1, which was successful; next steps that included defining the project, solving access and parking issues before engaging in more fund raising; parking options that included parking off Greenbush Road and walking up hill to the barn, limited parking at the barn for those that are “less able” and event workers; meetings held with the Vermont Land Trust regarding limited use of the barn that would fit with restrictions on the property; potential parking on the Varney Farm on a grassy area to fit within the nature of the park; and a suggestion to tell the agricultural story and history of the Thorp Barn at a different location, such as the Charlotte Museum (Mr. Thornton explained that the Thorp Barn is the oldest barn in Town and the story of farming is best told at the barn).

Mr. Russell asked if people parked at Greenbush Road and walked through the park to the barn would that alleviate concerns of the neighbors. Dorothy Hill, abutting neighbor to the Thorp Barn, stated that the Shelburne Farm was located three miles away and the same story is told at that location. Mr. Thornton pointed out that Shelburne Farm barns had a “wow” factor related to the show place architecture of the Breeding or Coach barns versus a working farm barn like the Thorp Barn.

Mr. Stone suggested that the committee raise funds and then fix the barn. Discussion regarding access to the barn is premature. The committee could say “here is the barn, behind it is the view and this is Charlotte.” Mr. Chutter reiterated that in order to raise funds there must be a vision of what to do with the barn.

Carrie Spear asked how the committee would fund future maintenance of the barn and expenses, such as electricity. Mr. Chutter replied that a capital plan, or endowment, might be needed for future maintenance.

Mr. Pella asked how people who use the park could use the barn, especially if there is limited access from May to October. Mr. Chutter pointed out that proposed restrictions for the use of the barn has come from requests by the neighbors.

Ms. Hill stated that vacant structures are a target for vandalism, like the ice skating rink warming hut.

Mr. Russell asked if it made sense to present the proposal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Planning Commission before fund raising. Ms. Perkins agreed that it would make sense to have permits in place first.

Ms. Cole said that she would like to take the proposal to the Land Trust and to gather input from the CCMPO. Following a discussion with the CCMPO regarding technical assistance for potential uses we could approach Clark Hinsdale III (regarding access on the Varney Farm).

Mr. Russell said that he was not in favor of an access off Route 7 at the curve.

Mr. Stone suggested contacting the state regarding a clarification of the state permitted use of an existing agricultural access off Route 7 onto the Thorp farm.

It was decided that the Thorp Barn Committee would research further possible uses of the barn.

The Selectboard took no action on the proposed use of the Thorp Barn.

Ms. Hill said that she would like to know the maximum number of days that the Thorp Barn would be open to the public and how many cars could park at the barn.

6. ADDITIONAL TRAIL MAINTENANCE WORK IN CHARLOTTE PARK

Ms. Cole read an e-mail received from Jim Sestokas regarding trail maintenance work (brush trimming and spreading wood chips on the trails) in the Charlotte Park. Mr. Sestokas has presented an estimate for \$720-920 spreading additional wood chips and installing water bars where the trails get steep and slippery.

Ms. Cole said that there were wood chips already in a pile stored at the park.

Mr. Ladue asked for clarification regarding a trail maintenance budget. Ms. Cole explained a budget line item of \$10,100. No invoice has been received for the work already done. There should be a discussion on whether Jim Sestokas should take over maintaining the trails.

Mr. Ladue suggested waiting for the Town Highway crew to start their road clearing and wood chipping in the fall versus purchasing additional wood chips. Mr. Russell said that the wood chips on site should be used to at least cover all trails for proper maintenance now.

John Hammer, resident, said that a friend took a trail building course. It was learned that wood chips were round and tended to blow or wash away. It is best if the wood was shredded material to make the chips last longer.

Mr. Ladue suggested that it might be more worth while to reshape trails at the first curve by the bridge where there were dual grade slopes (steep and sloping at the same spot) while the bobcat was at the park.

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to approve an amount not to exceed \$1,500 by Picture Perfect Landscaping for the purpose of upgrading the work in the Charlotte Park trails as presented.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

7. PETER SCHNEIDER AND JESSICA DONAVAN – APPROVAL OF CONSERVATION AND AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY EASEMENT AND RESTRICTION

The Selectboard took no action on a request for approval of a conservation and agricultural/forestry easement and restriction by Peter Schneider and Jessica Donovan.

8. ANDRAS KIRCHNER – HEARING FOR APPEAL OF DENIAL OF SEWAGE PERMIT (as Board of Health)

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to recess the regular meeting and convene as the Charlotte Board of Health.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

Mr. Russell reviewed a letter received from Joseph Fallon, appellant's attorney, requesting a continuance.

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Ms. Cole, to open a Public Hearing regarding an appeal of a denial for a sewer permit for Andras Kirchner.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Thornton, to continue a request by Andras Kirchner for a Public Hearing regarding an appeal of a denial for a sewer permit to Monday, September 13, 2007 at 7:30 p.m..

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Thornton, to adjourn as the Charlotte Board of Health and reconvene the regular Selectboard meeting.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

(NOTE: the Chairperson called a break from 7:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.)

9. SELECTBOARD UPDATES

A) World War I MONUMENT

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Thornton, to approve an amount of \$485.00 for the purposes of removing old and damaged material around the World War I Monument, located at the intersection of Greenbush Road and Ferry Road, and to finish concrete and material to upgrade the curbing and to beautify the monument.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Stone explained proposed work to remove and replace damaged curbing at the monument to delineate the corners of the monument to prevent Town plow truck and delivery trucks from hitting the monument.

Mr. Russell suggested that the curbing should be high and strong enough to keep trucks from hitting it. Mr. Stone replied that the issues were discussed with the contractor hired to do the project.

Ms. Cole said that Alexandra Lehman, a Greenbush Road resident, volunteers to plant and landscape around the monument, which she has done for many years. Ms. Lehman suggested that the monument should be moved back out of the way of traffic.

Mr. Russell suggested that the curbing should be rounded in the corners and if holes/piping were placed in the pavement then fiberglass reflectors could be put in to clearly identify the curbing. Mr. Ladue said that a plug or screw cap at the piping tops would prevent debris from falling into the pipe when the reflectors were removed.

Ellie Russell, resident, said that the Selectboard had discussed moving all the monuments to one location in the past.

There was further discussion regarding the intersection of Greenbush Road/Ferry Road that included failure of motorist to heed the stop signs and flashing red signal light at; a dumpster at the Old Brick Store that has been moved and takes up parking spaces; Old Brick Store employees who are to park at the Fire Station versus at the store (Mr. Russell said parking at the store needs to be addressed); and when the trash removal company come to empty the store dumpster the truck blocks the roadway, which creates another safety issue.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

B) RECREATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Ladue said that the process used to eliminate Robin Reid's position could have been handled better. The outcome should be revisited. An option, for example, could be a transitional phasing of the Recreation Coordinator as a supervisor of the beach crew.

Mr. Ladue said that the Robin Reid serving as Chair of the Recreation Committee and as an employee of the Recreation Committee is a situation that should be avoided in the future. Robin agreed with that. Mr. Russell pointed out that it is a job that has no job description. It could have been handled differently and is under discussion.

10. BILLS AND WARRANTS

The Selectboard signed Bills and Warrants as presented.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kathlyn L. Furr, Recording Secretary.

These minutes are subject to correction by the Charlotte Selectboard. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board.