

**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE
SELECTBOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 4, 2006**

Approved 10/23/06

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

ADMINISTRATION: Dean Bloch, Selectboard Assistant.

OTHERS: Robin Reid, Karen Frost, John Owen, Rachel Gill (Charlotte Citizen), Edd Merritt, John Hammer (both Charlotte News) and guests of John Hammer's from Honduras.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Russell, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

2. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

A few informational and scheduling items were added—see below.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

John Hammer introduced David Zacarro, the Mayor of Tela, Honduras, who is visiting to thank Towns and the Rotary for the assistance that has been provided to his town.

4. VCLT ANNUAL MEETING

Ellie Russell stated that Ed Stone will be attending the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VCLT) annual meeting representing Charlotte, and Ed had asked how he should vote on various issues that will come up. Ellie stated that it is her recommendation that Ed can use his judgment as to how to vote, and asked others what they thought. Others were in agreement.

5. SELECTBOARD MEETING ON OCTOBER 9TH

Ellie stated that the next regular meeting falls on October 9th, which is Columbus Day. There are not many items that are on the agenda so far, so she wondered whether other members wanted to cancel the meeting. The one item that she thought might warrant holding the meeting on October 9th is if J.P. Bettencourt can come to discuss the Emergency Management Plan, potential grants, and establishing a “chain of command” during emergencies. The Selectboard’s schedule will be getting busy later in the fall, so she feels it would be good if the board can do this now. Ellie will ask J.P. if he can come on October 9th, otherwise the meeting will be cancelled.

6. DINNER AT JACK AND LYDIA CLEMMONS’

Ellie reported that Jack Clemmons has invited the Selectboard to a dinner for the Rogers (who are visiting from Lumberton, Mississippi) at his house. He wondered what day

would be best. Most felt that Sunday would be a possibility. It was stressed that town business could not be discussed if a quorum of the Selectboard attended.

7. ADVISORY BALLOT FOR THE BURNS PROPERTY

Ellie stated that she and Charles had re-drafted the proposed motion, which had been approved in concept at the Selectboard's meeting on September 25th. The motion includes a description of the master plan, with five affordable dwelling units. The "4-6" and "7-9" options were eliminated, and the "if you voted no" options were also eliminated.

Frank asked for a clarification of the wording. Ed asked why they chose "five units". Jenny asked how much agreement was there by the Burns Property Committee on its recommendation.

John Owen (who is on the Burns Property Committee) stated that Steve Libby (one of the consultants) used nine units for the budget pro-forma. John stated that infrastructure costs will need to be spread among the houses, and that the costs could be substantial, and that limiting the number of units to five might make it difficult to keep them affordable.

Karen Frost (who is also on the Burns Property Committee) said that there was not agreement among the Committee, particularly with committee-members who live nearby. She said that she is more comfortable with this ballot because of the simplification. She did say that the number seems somewhat arbitrary, since it should be based on information which is not yet available, including the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment.

John Owen stated that he thinks it would not be acceptable to approve five dwelling units now with the idea of coming back for more later. He feels that voters would feel that the Selectboard is trying to sneak something past them.

Jenny stated that she thinks the Selectboard should try to make it a positive situation. She said that five is a number that seems reasonable, and the neighbors are more comfortable with it.

Karen Frost stated that the scale of five is not as "scary".

Robin Reid asked if voters determine that housing is unacceptable, would adding a duplex to the trailer site (on the Burns parcel) be possible?

Jenny said that she doesn't believe the master plan recommended housing in that location.

Karen Frost asked if there should be language allowing the conservation of the clayplain forest even if the vote is "no"?

Charles stated that the goal has been to try to simplify the ballot, and that would make it more complicated.

Frank asked how the ballot will be distributed?

Ed stated that the Burns Property Committee did a study over four years, and they recommended nine dwellings. John Owen asked why not use what the committee originally proposed?

MOTION by Mr. Russell, seconded by Mr. Thornton, to specify “five dwelling units” in the advisory ballot.

DISCUSSION ON THE MOTION: Ed stated the motion could say “five acres” and not describe the number of dwelling units. Frank responded that people won’t know how many dwelling units will be built (with Ed’s proposed wording). Ed asked what about five units close to the road.

VOTE: 2 AYES (Mr. Russell and Mr. Thornton) and 3 NAYS; the motion was defeated.

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Russell, to make the ballot as follows:

“Should the Selectboard convey five acres in the northwest portion of the former Burns property to a non-profit housing organization for the development of up to nine affordable dwelling units, reserving the remainder of the 55 acre parcel for future town use? ___ YES ___ NO”

DISCUSSION ON THE MOTION: Karen Frost stated that it seems momentum has been building to go forward with the development, even though some neighbors object. John Owen stated that the process so far has involved a small minority of the Town, and that the rest of the Town should have input. John Hammer asked if there is going to be a special town meeting? Charles stated that he feels a question should be put on the ballot for Town Meeting, which would be very specific, in accordance with the statute (24 VSA 1061).

VOTE: 3 AYES (Mr. Stone, Ms. Cole and Ms. Russell) and 2 NAYS; the motion carried.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Russell, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: 5 ayes; the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Dean Bloch, Selectboard Assistant.