

Town Land Use Committee
Minutes
May 15, 2023

Present:: Tim Fiske, Scott Hecker, Kathy Boot, Paul Quinn, Lilliane LeBel , Allan Pickman, Gail Cromwell

Guests: Connie Kieley, Bruce Kullgren, Steve Andersen, Ken Caisse, Peter Allen, Gary McGonagle, Emily Sliviak, Amy Cabana

Chairman Fiske called the meeting to order at 5:32

Approval of the Minutes of April 3 was delayed because Lilliane wished to make an addition and will send a written comment to Gail for inclusion in the minutes to be considered at our next meeting.

The appointments recommended to the select board were approved at its meeting of April 18. George Willard sent an email to Gail stating that he wished to resign as of May 1.

The warrant articles that have passed town meeting were then read by Gail. The 2020 articles set up the TLUC with \$3,000 of which \$880 was spent that year with the remainder returning to the town. That was the only warrant article with a general research purpose to consider all town owned land. The articles passed in 2021 (\$45,000) and 2022 (\$249,800) created trust funds specifically to address the question of relocating the highway department. The implication is that using funds to analyze the present site is not covered. A new committee would not have funding to do that.

Peter Allen said he did not agree with this interpretation and that the town has not voted to move the highway garage. Gail said that we have not asked the town to do that, only to analyze the costs of moving it, and we have said consistently that it would be up to the town to make that decision. Without a known site costs cannot be determined and grants cannot be applied for.

The special meeting proposed by petition seeks two things: to rescind the 2023 vote of town meeting that approved a new 5 acre site on the Sklandany land, and to establish a new committee to work on evaluating "all options pertaining to the current highway department site, to include a feasibility study and cost analysis."

Amy Cabana spoke to the purpose of the proposal largely on grounds that the current site is sufficient because the town is not growing, and she wants to know what has to be done on the present site for proper maintenance and improvements.

Connie Kieley spoke to the idea that the town is not growing. We have a number of new houses this year and a planning board apparently promoting affordable housing for the town.

Tim then spoke to the idea of the present site being adequate. He has spent 35 years working there as road agent and it is not adequate. He noted that the highway department itself, three employees and the current machinery, is adequate for the town. It is the site that is the problem. Machinery needs to be stored inside, the crowding issue of machinery and various sand and gravel piles is getting worse, the environmental issues raise a significant problem, both currently and if any new buildings were put on site such as to house the equipment. To analyze the present site as the new group proposes would be very expensive and a waste of money. We already know the problems of the present site.

Allan Pickman said the site is surrounded by wetlands. The present one acre cannot be made into three acres.

Bruce Kullgren said that he and Russell Huntley have walked the site and believe that perhaps 50-75 feet could be found of not wetlands on the land to the south owned by Peggy Cournoyer. He believed that his group could analyze the site without spending money.

Scott Hecker raised the question of environmental issues. We had a serious spill some years ago and cleaned it up (at a cost of \$60,000) but what if there is another. Wetlands surround the site. A proper retention pond is needed to contain a spill and there is not room for one. It isn't just the diesel fuel tank but the oil and grease involved in the maintenance of equipment as well.

Tim reminded the group of the historical story regarding the purchase of the Sklandany land. The town voted not to buy it when the price was \$200,000, then two years later bought it for \$400,000. The town could make a similar mistake by expanding the current garage site and realizing a few years later what a mistake it was.

Ken Caisse raised the question of whether the current site is so contaminated that nothing can be built on it – if the highway garage is moved, what will be done with the present site.

Bruce Kullgren said he has the plans for a new highway garage for Andover, NH, 236 pages, with a building very similar to what we want. 50x80', steel, 4 bays. Tim has similar plans for the new Brookline highway garage.

Paul Quinn asked if our committee had ever actually voted to move the highway garage. He also suggested that with the committee should vote on officers. Gail apologized and said she forgot to put it on the agenda but can do so for the next meeting.

The next meeting will be June 5 at 5 pm. (not 5:30) The committee voted to adjourn at 6:47.

Respectfully, Gail Cromwell