

Board of Selectmen – Minutes of Meeting

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING – MARCH 23, 2012

Present: David J. Consolati, Chairman, Gordon D. Bailey, Patricia D. Carlino, Board of Selectmen.
Robert L. Nason, Town Administrator

Selectman, David J. Consolati, Chairman, opened the meeting at 4:00 PM.

1. **General Business:** The first item on the Agenda for this special meeting was the Project Engineer Selection of the Meadow Street Temporary Bridge over Powder Mill Brook. Two proposals were received; one from Gill Engineering for \$34,490.00 which includes the shop drawing review and one from Foresight Land Services in the amount of \$15,650.00 with an additional \$5,000.00 for the shop drawing review for a total of \$20,650.00. After the proposals were received the Town and MassDOT met to solidify the qualifications needed to design the project. Summary from an e-mail from MassDOT states, "if the town uses its own money, then we may choose any consultant we want...if State money is involved, then the town must retain the services of a prequalified intermediate bridge designer to do the work". Gordon Bailey stated that he is comfortable going with Foresight as they have a good track record with us. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the members voted to award the Meadow Street Temporary Bridge Engineering work to Foresight Engineering.

The second item on the Agenda was Solar Power. The Chairman of the Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee, Thomas Wickham came before the Board. The project was initially larger, but after many discussions with the Stockbridge Road neighbors, the scale of the project was lessened. The consensus of the group was "willing, but not really wanting". The proposed dog park for the Stockbridge Road property has been dropped as the neighbors were concerned over the year round access the dog park would create. Three acres of property are required for 1 megawatt of energy. Jeff LePrevost wanted the road moved down. The three locations for the solar arrays are the old landfill, The Wastewater Treatment Plant on Route 102 and the Stockbridge Road property. The amount of electrical power generated by the solar arrays will be approximately equal to the amount of electrical power consumed at the school and municipal buildings. There was discussion about contact provisions for an escrow account to make sure there is money set aside to rid the fields of the solar arrays upon the termination of our contract, or if the company goes belly-up, etc.

Roger Scheuerer, a member of the Committee, came forward to speak in favor of the Solar Power project. He commented that during the 20 year contract with Broadway, that Broadway would be responsible for all maintenance of the arrays. He stated that at the 15 year mark of our contract we could re-negotiate for another 15 – 20 years if we wished. He commented that there were 5 – 6 meetings with the neighbors.

Gordon Bailey asked that they vote to authorize the Committee to negotiate a contract before we can go forward with further discussions. Tom assured Gordon that they can finish and present one big package before the reps and the Baby Town Meeting. Gordon commented on the contract perhaps containing language regarding a lower cost as the technology changes. He wants to keep our foot in the door of any

technology advances. There was concern that the solar array would benefit others and Tom assured us that the array will not. Discussion was had regarding a way to re-open the negotiations as technology and pricing change.

Patty Carlino wanted to know what the cost of using only 2 fields would be as opposed to the three mentioned. She also wanted to know if the committee had looked at any other options other than using town-owned property.

Sal Angelo of Stockbridge Road came before the board to thank the Energy Committee for their diligence in making everything a lot better than the original master plan, even though he's not happy about it. He had two comments to make. The first being that he had no problem with the solar arrays, but did have a problem with the soccer fields. He described Stockbridge Road as being particularly dangerous for young children who may be walking or riding their bikes to practice because there is no shoulder on that particular road and he was very concerned about their safety. His second issue being that he was worried that any future development would destroy the property.

Jeff LePrevost of 325 Stockbridge Road also commended the Energy Committee; that they were very helpful. He stated that most of the Stockbridge Road neighbors are concerned with "down the road". Mostly the future of the field is everyone's major concern.

Patty Carlino read a letter e-mailed from Charlene & Kevin Bartini stating that they could not make this meeting and wanted the Board to know that, "our absence should in no way be interpreted as apathy or an endorsement of the town's latest proposal" and they are not okay with everything.

Bill Maroney, a member of the Committee, commented that the property has to be used for something. That solar is clean and produces revenue. He thinks it's a good use of the property. He thought it was good that the neighbors were focused and involved. He believes this use of the property will keep the land as pristine as it is now and that the soccer fields and solar arrays won't be there forever.

Helen Gasparian commented that a municipal golf course, the original prospect for the property, which would include year round tennis, night lights, clubhouse, etc., would not be a "money maker".

Monica Ryan thought that the use of this land is a bad idea. She stated that there are other locations that could be used and we should save this land. Her stance is to save the land, agree to look elsewhere, consider the cost, etc. She wanted to know what the cost would be to just do 2 arrays; one on the old land fill and the other on the waste water treatment plant land. She thought that the town hadn't really looked into other locations, such as the property adjacent to the Waste Water Treatment Plant, the schools, etc. She suggested that if we didn't own the property, perhaps we could lease it. She wanted a committee to be put together to research all these options.

Gordon Bailey countered, indicating to her that other alternatives were looked into. The land adjacent to the Waste Water Treatment Plant is mostly wetlands and in order to put the arrays there they had to deal with flood level elevations which would be more costly, therefore, not saving any money. Gordon told her that the Quarry Hill property already has a buyer. As the Energy Efficiency Committee did extensive

research, Gordon did not think it was worth it to have a separate committee to do the work that has already been done.

Dave Consolati wanted to know why the golf course was more "recreational" than soccer fields for the kids to play on.

John Coty commended the Energy Committee and said he admired their goal. He stated that no one has access to the land and therefore there was no revenue being generated. He determined that the project would benefit the whole town. He commented that the town could do better for the youth than playing at the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Patty Carlino commented that the whole reason the town bought this land was to save it from a developer. The original plan was for a municipal golf course 23 – 24 years ago. She stated that even though a golf course would not bring in revenue at this point, that we will come out of this economy and people will benefit. She said that when people bought their property some years ago, their real estate agent should have made them aware that this property belonged to the town and at some point there would be something there.

Tom Wickham recommended the three arrays as making the most sense economically and that he did research on other properties in town.

Bill Maroney stated that the committee is only looking for approval to further negotiate and that nothing is nailed down at this point.

David Consolati stated that he is comfortable with the Committee taking the next step in negotiating the contract and he would come back before the Board, with a contract for review.

Monica Ryan stated that the open space is beautiful and more people are against the project than the Board is aware of.

John Coty praised the Committee for keeping the lines of communication open with the neighbors to approve the revisions to the master plan.

"Buck" Donovan said he is all for the Stockbridge Road fields for the array. He believes the pedestrian safety is not a concern as the kids are driven to their location to practice and no one rides their bikes anymore to go to practices. He believes that renewable energy is where we need to be.

Gordon Bailey assured everyone that we would not rush into anything. We would get "all our ducks in a row". Patty wanted to know when to expect Tom to be back with answers; if it would be by May 10th for the Town Meeting. We need the information as soon as possible. Upon a motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the members authorized the Committee to negotiate an agreement for solar arrays at the 3 recommended sites.

Gordon motioned for the meeting to adjourn, the motion was seconded and all were in favor.

Motion to Adjourn: The Meeting adjourned at 5:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy L. Belair
Cindy L. Belair, Selectmen's Secretary

Notice of Website Posting Sent to:

Board of Selectmen
Town Administrator
Town Clerk
Town Collector
Planning Board

Board of Assessors
Board of Health
Conservation Commission
Police Chief
Building Inspector

Dept. of Public Works
Town Treasurer
Town Reps. District Chairmen
Superintendent of Schools
Town Accountant