

Dorset Selectboard
Regular Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2024

Members Present: Megan Thorn, Henry Chandler, Frank Parent, Jim Salsgiver, Liz Ruffa

Others Present: Rob Gaiotti (Town Manager), GNAT-TV, Susan Dortch, James, Michel Baumann

Megan Thorn called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

March Meeting Minutes:

A repeat sentence on the first page and typo on the third page were amended in the March minutes. Frank Parent moved and Henry Chandler seconded to approve the March meeting Minutes as amended, motion passed 4-0.

Public Comment:

None

Board Appointments:

Discussion ensued about the Planning Commission's request to reduce the number of positions on the Planning Commission from 9 down to 7. Rob Gaiotti noted that Scott Durgin was not going to continue, and all others with expiring terms were willing to continue.

- Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent seconded to reappoint Kevin O'Toole and Chip Ams to four-year terms on the Conservation Commission, motion passed 4-0.
- Henry Chandler moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to reappoint Michele Pagan and Ruth Tanenhaus to 3-year terms on the Design Review Committee, motion passed 4-0.
- Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to reappoint Liz Ruffa to a 2 year term as BCRC representative, motion passed 4-0 (Liz Ruffa abstained).
- Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent seconded to reappoint Conor Welch to the Planning Commission for a term of 4 years, motions passed 4-0.
- Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to lower the size of the Planning Commission from 9 members to 7 members, motion passed 4-0.

Short Term Rental Ordinance Review (continued):

Rob Gaiotti presented the update draft ordinance document, he noted that the \$800 per day fine was listed in statute. The Town has also developed a registration form. Discussion ensued about the registration form. Megan Thorn inquired about the definition of an STR "unit". Discussion ensued about the definition of an STR unit as listed in section 2.1 of the ordinance. It was noted that the STR units shall be defined as buildings in the ordinance and language in the form was edited to reflect this. Discussion ensued about the annual fee set at \$300 per STR unit. It was the consensus of the Board to retain the \$300 fee. Discussion ensued about the registration process and how it will help the Town gain data about STRs and the impacts on residents and Town services etc. Susan Dortch provided a list of STRs that she was able to gather online and noted that the number of STRs in Dorset is likely 30-40.

Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent seconded to approve the Short-Term Rental Ordinance with the edits incorporated from the meeting, as well as the registration form, motion passed 4-0.

Chantecleer FEMA Buyout Grant Amendment:

Rob Gaiotti reviewed the changes to the grant agreement with Vermont Emergency Management that reflects a higher 2023 appraisal. VEM will cover the local match, meaning that all funds will come from Federal and State coffers. Purchase price of the property is \$1.2 million, with an additional \$58,000 to cover the demolition of the building. Property owner Michel Baumann was present and stated that he was prepared to move forward with the buyout process. He noted that he and his family have lived and worked in Dorset for 40 years so it's an emotional process. He thanked the Town for supporting the process and noted that the property is not sellable on the open market due to the flooding. He noted that his plan would be to operate until early summer so that he can give staff some notice and allow goodbyes to many great customers they have. It was noted that the property closing would have to occur within 3-5 months and then the demolition within 3 months after that.

Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to approve the amended grant agreement with Vermont Emergency Management for purchase of the Chantecleer property, motion passed 4-0.

Dorset Town Office Guaranteed Maximum Price Contract:

Rob Gaiotti presented the GMP contract from Naylor & Breen. He also outlined the estimated soft costs. Everything is falling within the scope of what was planned from a budget perspective. Naylor & Breen deserves a lot of credit for getting 3-4 prices on each package for construction. This helped to drive costs down. Work will start around mid-May and will take 10-12 months.

Frank Parent moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve the GMP Contract with Naylor & Breen for the construction of the Dorset Town Office, motion passed 4-0.

Housing Committee Update:

Liz Ruffa gave a brief update about the efforts of the housing committee. She noted that she and Ben Weiss will attend a finance workshop being put on in Manchester next week. The Raptor Lane engineering study will start soon and should be finished by mid-summer. This will give us an idea of how many housing units can be supported at Raptor Lane. Next committee meeting is 4/24.

Old Business/ New Business 4-9-24

New Town Office

Construction Contract to be approved at 4/9 meeting!

Read Farm Lane

At the 4-9-24 meeting we will approve accepting the grant award for the higher price to purchase the Chantecleer property. We will close on the property within 3 months and demolish the structure within 3 months after the closing.

FEMA has also re-opened the Brookside Drive grant application. We will continue to pursue this in hopes that FEMA will fund the moving of the road. We would also hope to get the State to provide the match so it doesn't cost the Town anything (other than TM time).

Route 30 & Route 7 (no change):

We are planning on having BCRC update a speed study in East Dorset again to see how the median speed is looking and will be in touch with VTrans about paving plans for Route 7 in hopes that the area north of Jiffy Mart can get a "road diet" (narrowed shoulders).

Upper Hollow Lot:

Test Pits were positive, will begin to look into local permits to confirm site feasibility.

Route 30 Path:

Need to meet with BCRC and VTrans to come up with plan of attack moving forward. More to follow.

New Business:

Short Term Rental Ordinance:

Updated ordinance document and registration form attached. We did not have a ton of time to investigate vendors to perform the registry. My guess is that our staff can do it much more cheaply, and I believe we have the bandwidth. We can process payments through our same online collections vendor.

Finance Report:

Delinquent Taxes:

\$365,586 as of 4/5/24 (payment plan letters go out next month) last year \$359,448

FY24:

We are 78% expended at the 77% mark in the fiscal year. Expenses normal last month. Going to track the ZA expense as the new bylaw is expected to require extra ZA time.

Sinking Fund Balances:

ARPA: \$582,000 (\$242,000 not obligated)

Reappraisal: \$195,044

Equipment: \$195,044

Highway Paving: \$203,388

Unemployment: \$50,882

Land Records: \$30,533

Town Buildings: \$11,383

Highway Bridges: \$10,141

Debt: Equipment Loan: \$0 2021 Town Office Bond: \$3,600,000 (bond rate: 4.01%)

Assets: 10 acres Upper Hollow Road / 308 acres Raptor Lane

Henry Chandler moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the finance report, motion passed 4-0.

Town Manager's Report:

- Equipment maintenance
- Paving Bidsheet had gone out, due back mid April
- Quote/Purchase new highway truck

- DFD is applying for construction permit to possibly add 500-750k in additional work to the current project. This will allow them to maximize grants.

- PACIF meetings in Montpelier

- Housing Committee Meetings – group is making good progress. Next meeting is April 24th.

- Solid Waste Alliance meetings

- Conservation Commission had to postpone their April 4th meeting due to weather.
- Rutland magazine will be covering Owls Head Town Forest, should be a nice piece.
- Further support to the US Forest Service and Trust for Public Land as they embark on a Dorset Ridgeline Conservation project.
- Chantelceer Buyout and Brookside Drive Meetings
- Drafting STR ordinance and research related to STRs.
- Town Office number crunching and consulting with vendors etc.

Liquor Licenses:

Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent seconded to convene as the Liquor Control Board, motion passed 4-0.

Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve Liquor Licenses for:

- Chantecleer Restaurant
- Dorset Theater Festival

Motion passed 4-0.

AP & Payroll:

It was the consensus of the board to sign weekly warrants for payroll and accounts payable.

Jim Salsgiver moved and Frank Parent seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm, motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager