

WEST WINDSOR SELECTBOARD

Draft Minutes

February 9, 2009

Present: Phil Arvidson, Nancy Gaynor, Tom Kenyon, Martha Harrison, Cathy Archibald, Bob French, John Abrahamsen, Gareth Henderson, Mike Spackman, Jim Kenyon, Dave Halpert

- 1) Call to Order – Selectboard Chair Phil Arvidson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
- 2) Changes/Additions – 911 Coordinator, tree cutting, pellet plant, alarms
- 3) Public Comment – Jim asked Nancy and Phil to bring in their emergency management handbooks for updating.
- 4) Final Highway Access: Trace TanCreti – Tom noted that he is an abutter. Mike said the access is not really done. Mike said Trace needs to slope the north side of his access to divert the water before it gets to the road. Mike said Trace also needs to slope his road away from the Town road. Nancy asked why Trace is requesting final approval now; is there a time factor. Mike said yes. Martha said applicants are supposed to complete their accesses and apply for final approval within a year. Phil said his understanding is that the Planning Commission has recommended this as well. Martha said it has been awhile since they looked at it. Mike suggested not giving final approval until summer because it is hard to tell what needs to be done this time of year. Nancy said she would feel more comfortable deferring the decision on this if it is not going to hold Trace up. Martha said she does not think it is going to hold him up, although he is planning to use it for logging. Mike said that's fine. Nancy and Phil agreed since he has initial approval. **Nancy moved to defer action on Trace TanCreti's request for final access approval until next month and to review what time requirements are involved. Phil seconded the motion, which passed with Tom abstaining because he owns property abutting Trace TanCreti's property.**
- 5) Albert Bridge School – Phil said he would like to compliment the school on their scores on the recent NECAP tests.
- 6) Application to amend Highway Access: Dunkel – Phil said his understanding is that the Planning Commission has recommended this. Martha said the Planning Commission just approved Paul Dunkel's subdivision, which is slightly different than it appears on the map attached to the application for an amended access, but the access portion is still the same – it's an existing access. Martha said the Planning Commission was more concerned with the width and grade of the drive, which has now been altered to their satisfaction. Mike said as far as he's concerned it's good. **Tom made a motion to grant final approval of the amended highway access from Paul Dunkel of 228 Coon Club Road. Nancy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 7) Town Clerk/Treasurer's Report – None
- 8) Highway Foreman's Report – Loader: Mike said it cost \$5,000 to repair the diesel injection pump on the Loader, which now runs better than it used to. Phil noted that the Loader was no longer under warranty. Sand and gravel: Mike said it's time to solicit sand and gravel bids and he doesn't expect prices to come down. Mike said he thinks the Town has enough sand. Tree inventory: Mike and Tom agreed to look at trees within the next month or two. Roads serving one residence: Nancy asked when the Selectboard is going to look at a list of roads that only serve one residence. Phil said let's put it on the agenda for next month. Tom said he would like to see a list of all the roads that fit that description. Phil and Nancy agreed. Phil said we need to notify the property owners affected that they're going to have to do their own plowing next year. Mike said when you turn a road into a trail, all maintenance ceases. Phil asked if they are going to be trails

or class 4 roads. Nancy said she thinks the Selectboard needs to consider each road individually. Mike and Phil agreed.

- 9) Certificate of Highway Mileage – Phil noted that the adjustment for the reclassification of the section of Blood Hill Road that runs through the Novello property is reflected on the Certificate. **Tom made a motion to sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage for the year ending February 10, 2009. Nancy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 10) West Windsor Mutual Aid Agreement for Area Highway Departments – Jim said the agreement hasn't changed; he'd just like it to be signed again. Regarding #6 on the agreement, Tom asked who the "authorized representatives" from the neighboring towns are. Mike said he assumes that Regional Planning has a list. Phil asked Martha to get the list. Nancy asked if the agreement will go in the emergency management books. Jim said yes. Nancy said the contact list could go in as well. Mike said every town pays their own employees and is responsible for their own equipment. **Tom made a motion to reaffirm the West Windsor Mutual Aid Agreement for Area Highway Departments with the understanding that there will be an attached list of the authorized representatives of neighboring towns. Nancy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 11) Municipal Planning Grant – Phil said West Windsor has received notice that we will be receiving a grant of \$8,700 from the state.
- 12) Discussion of Historical Society lift – Tom said it is the intent of the Historical Society directors to proceed with the installation of the lift and put a temporary office in the main hall upstairs. Tom said they have a price from Allways and they are planning to proceed using the funds available. Tom said, considering the financial times, the Historical Society doesn't think they can raise enough money to do the rest of the project, but it's important that the office and museum are accessible, so they're going to proceed with the lift.
- 13) Correspondence – Phil said the Selectboard received a copy of a letter from Jill Arthur about a school matter. Phil said the letter is basically applauding the efforts of the school.
- 14) Other Business – Dave Halpert said he is concerned that financial information from the town has been publicly discussed and that information was incorrect and some of the information wasn't even publicly available. Dave said he would like to know what the Selectboard has to say about that, particularly financial information from the 1990 Town Report. Dave said he is referring to Tom's article in the *Vermont Standard*. Tom said if Dave wants to talk to him, as the writer of the West Windsor news, he'd be happy to talk. Dave said he is talking to Tom, as a Selectboard member, since some of the information Tom published is information that Dave doesn't believe is publicly available. For example, Dave said, the amount of taxes that are paid to the state of Vermont, is that publicly available information? Tom said it's in the Town Report. Dave asked Tom to show him where it says in the Town Report that the school is paying \$3.8 million to the State of Vermont. Tom said that's the amount of money that is raised in West Windsor to support education. Dave said the quote that he is referring to is, "\$3.8 million that is sent to the state of Vermont." Phil said he thinks this a matter between Dave and the press, not between Dave and the Selectboard. Dave said if the Selectboard chooses to disclose information that is incorrect, it's a Selectboard issue. Phil said the Selectboard did not choose to disclose or not disclose information, that is a matter between Dave and the press. Phil said the Selectboard has taken the position, unanimously, that they are not going to take a position on the issues between the press and the school board. Dave said when a Selectman quotes a number from the town budget that is incorrect, the Selectboard has no comment? Phil said when a member of the press... Dave interrupted and asked when a member of the Selectboard quotes a number from the town budget that is incorrect, does the Selectboard have anything to say about it? Phil said he doesn't know whether it is correct or incorrect because he has not studied the problem. Dave said Mr. Kenyon's article in the *Vermont Standard* quotes the 1990 amount to be raised by taxes by the school board of \$103,000. Dave asked Tom if that is what he wrote in the article. Tom said it is, but he has

corrected that in this week's Standard, after seeing Audrey's letter in the paper. Tom said the \$103,000 was the amount of taxes that had to be raised *in addition to the other number*, and that part was deleted, but that's the additional amount of taxes that had to be raised because the town was broke and didn't have enough money to pay the school their full funding. Tom said he has made it very clear at every school board meeting that he is not there as a Selectman, he is there as a member of the public and a concerned citizen. Phil said he is not aware of any fiscal information that is not publicly available. Phil said he does not want to get the Selectboard involved in the issue of the school situation, and the Selectboard unanimously agrees. Phil said that is not what the Selectboard was elected to do, that is what the school board was elected to do. Dave said when incorrect information coming from public financial information from the town is disclosed, the Selectboard should make some effort to correct the information because the Selectboard is responsible for all the financial information published for the town. Phil said the financial information is publicly available and the people who are involved in this should straighten out the problem. John Abrahamsen said this thing with Tom being able to take his Selectboard hat on and off is, to those of us who are parents at the school, a complete farce. John said Tom writes articles as a Selectboard member and says to those of us who are dealing with the division that he created at the school, today I'm a Selectboard member and tomorrow I'm not. John said, with all due respect, that's a crock. Phil said he respectfully disagrees; a Selectboard member does not give up his or her civil rights to comment on an issue because they are a Selectboard member. Phil said it is Tom's right as a citizen of the town to comment on an issue. Phil said he is not saying who is right or wrong, he is just saying that you don't give up your civil rights by being elected as a Selectperson. Bob French said we have freedom speech, right? John agreed, but said the manner in which Tom behaves in public – he's still representing himself as a Selectboard member. Bob disagreed with John. Dave asked if it's okay for a Selectboard member or a private citizen to quote numbers that are incorrect without a retraction or apology. Dave said he questions Tom's independence as a taxpayer when he is also a Selectman. Nancy said the Selectboard is not involved in this situation. Ralph suggested that the Selectboard move on.

- 15) Minutes: January 5, 2009: **Nancy made a motion to approve the minutes of January 5, 2009. Tom suggested a clarification and then seconded Nancy's motion, with the understanding that the clarification will be made. The motion passed unanimously.** January 12, 2009: Tom made a motion to approve the minutes of January 12th. Phil suggested an addition. Phil then asked about the status of the alarm systems. Jim said he talked to someone at Countryside Alarm today; they have all the permits and will be here on February 23rd. **Nancy made a motion to approve the minutes of January 12, 2009 with Phil's addition. Tom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** January 15, 2009: Phil asked Mike where we stand with the presser. Mike said he hasn't pursued it yet, but he has it on his "to do" list. **Nancy made a motion to approve the minutes of January 15, 2009, as written. Tom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** January 29, 2009: Phil suggested a couple of changes. **Tom made a motion to approve the minutes of January 29, 2009, with those additions. Nancy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 16) Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending – Phil said the Listers have requested that the Selectboard sign a certificate, which goes to the state every year, that there is no appeal or lawsuit pending with regards to the Grand List. Phil said it doesn't specify the 2008 Grand List, but that's obviously what we're talking about. **Tom made a motion to sign the certification of the 2008 Grand List, noting that there are no appeals or suits pending. Nancy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 17) Pending Litigation – Phil said he doesn't think any discussion is necessary.
- 18) 911 Coordinator – Nancy said she would like the Selectboard to send Andrea Sullivan a thank you letter for her work as 911 Coordinator. Phil said he will send a letter to that effect. **Nancy made a motion to appoint Martha Harrison as 911 Coordinator. Tom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

- 19) Pellet plant visit – Phil said there is an application before the DRB to convert the former talc plant to a pellet plant. Phil said members of the DRB, the Planning Commission and the Selectboard visited the pellet plant in Jaffrey, NH, which was quite educational.
- 20) Town Constable's Report – Ralph said the delinquent taxes that he mentioned at the meeting last month have been paid.
- 21) Adjourn – **Nancy made a motion to adjourn, subject to signing the Town Clerk's orders and the other documents that need to be signed. Tom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison