

**Town of North Yarmouth  
Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
December 17, 2013  
7:00 p.m.      Town Office**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Palmer (Chairman), Mark Girard, Paul Napolitano, Clark Whittier,  
Darla Hamlin (arrived late)

OTHERS PRESENT: Katie Murphy, Linc Merrill, Blaine Barter, Paul Hodgetts, Peter Lindsay, David Perkins,  
Bill Hopkins, Andrew Walsh,  
Interim Town Manager Marnie Diffin

**I.      The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Palmer**

**ADMINISTRATIVE:**

**II.      Consent Agenda:**

Mark Girard moved and Paul Napolitano seconded to approve the following consent agenda items: **Payroll Warrant #30 and Accounts Payable Warrant #31.** The vote was 4 Yes. (Darla Hamlin not present for this vote).

**III.      Public Comment on Items Not Part of the Agenda and Not Relating to Personnel Matter**

Katie Murphy, Mountfort Rd resident and President of the North Yarmouth Historical Society commented on the Selectmen's discussion regarding the Wescustogo Hall lot to be given to the Historical Society to locate the Old Town House. She gave an historical overview of the objective of the location to be used as community space and that this should remain as part of the original agreement. She also commented on the synergy needed with the various spaces within the town buildings. The Historical Society is supportive of this.

Paul Hodgetts, Sligo Rd extension resident, commented on the business property taxes and stated that he had not heard back from any member of the Selectmen regarding his questions. He would like to hear further on this issue. Steve Palmer stated that the Selectmen did not have an answer to his question at this time.

**IV.      Recommendations From the EDSC: (Economic Development and Sustainability Committee).**

Steve Palmer gave an overview of this committee's charge and work to date.

Dave Perkins and Bill Hopkins gave an overview of the report regarding their proposal. Dave Perkins stated that there has been some trimming in order to put a bridge over Toddy Brook to create additional walking path. This is phase one of the project which is now on hold given the fire at Wescustogo. Other phases deal with Memorial School and Cassidy Pit. They had a public meeting to gather feedback, which was successful.

Bill Hopkins described the 3 proposed options. 1. A defined Town Center. 2. Placement of the Old Town Hall.  
3. Gym.

1. Town Center- to create Economic Development, there needs to be an obvious town center. Town Hall needs to be more visible. With the loss of Wescustogo Hall, this is an opportunity to create something in that location. They envision a new Wescustogo Hall would be a function space as in the past. They also suggested that it be built near town hall so that it could serve as some additional town hall space as well. (i.e. meeting space). By doing so, it would extend the life of the current town hall and help some of the problems. This would require an additional study. They would like to see more thinning of the triangle, the ability to drive through this area. They would like to see more development in this area in the future.
2. Placement of Old Town House could be moved to the old Wescustogo lot. There are no recommendations for Sharp's Field.

3. The group does not suggest a new gym but rather a use for this. There is a great deal of support to find a way to be used and separated from any future development of the school. This would require additional study.

Dave Perkins stated that by moving Old Town House to the Wescustogo lot, this would allow a better use and location for the Historical Society. Wescustogo Hall was being used in the right way and created the community energy they believe the community wants.

They recommend the following:

1. The new Wescustogo Hall be located near the current Town Hall for better use, access and parking.
2. Old Town House be moved to the Wescustogo lot for use by the Historical Society.
3. Privatizing Memorial School. This is most readily available space for potential business development. Senior housing, Think Tank business services space are options to consider based on conversations with possible interested parties.
4. Would like to seek Board of Selectmen approval for the tree thinning around Route 115 in the Spring. This would make the area more visible. The funding is approved and the landscape architect. They recommend waiting on the bridge given Wescustogo and public comment.
5. Once a TIF is in place, then development work on Cassidy Pit should be done.
6. Find a better space for Public Works building.

Darla Hamlin asked about parking and would doing so require additional pavement. Bill Hopkins stated that there would be additional parking needed. Darla stated that Toddy Brook's impact would need to be considered.

Steve asked if conditions need to be imposed on the private development of Memorial School to protect the gym. Dave Perkins stated that they are looking for a good partner to have use of this.

Mark Girard asked about the range of value on the school. Dave Perkins said that the school is being given to the town and has issues and that the town shouldn't hold on to it for too long. Initial discussions with developers would be good to do to maximize redevelopment to create more taxes and fits with what the community wants.

Steve Palmer asked about the TIF perimeter location. Dave Perkins stated that they believe the Selectmen should get more expert information to help them determine the best way to do so. Darla Hamlin stated that she and Audrey Lones attended a workshop on TIFs. Audrey stated that 25% of the location must be for business use. She suggested Shana Cook Mueller, the presenter, and resident is willing to speak to the Selectmen as a resident to give them an overview.

Mark Girard asked if there is any information on the developed value of the school. Dave Perkins stated that they have some basic information which he can provide. Bill Hopkins stated that the housing guidelines have changed to favor communities like North Yarmouth. Steve asked about the total acreage. There was a discussion on the space use options.

Steve Palmer thanked the group for their efforts. He expressed some concerns about rental use of Wescustogo Hall with not much return to the town and that this should be considered. Darla asked if a developer has approached a committee member about the building. Dave Perkins said that they have received 2. Clark Whittier stated that the most important this is to be aggressive about getting development in the school. Paul Napolitano asked if the committee would endorse an RFP as a signal of the town's interest in getting this developed. He also asked about the 1999 Town Meeting vote regarding the Wescustogo Hall agreement.

Dave Perkins stated they aren't making any endorsements but that the most important signal is that the Selectmen is interested in conversations with developers on further development for the school.

Audrey Lones, Baston Rd resident, stated that the town needs to get professional help for every step of the way. Questions surrounding the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Ordinance and the like will need to be considered as the discussions progress.

Peter Lindsay, Mountfort Rd resident, stated that he supports this plan. The Comprehensive Plan will need to be reviewed as the last changes allowed this possibility. Water use issues need to be considered as they are intertwined with these plans. Steve Palmer asked if Land Use and Zoning was reviewed in consideration of what is permitted to be done.

Andy Walsh, Firefly Lane resident, commented on the Wescustogo replacement and that if done properly, the new building could be a low cost and low maintenance building. He urged the Selectmen to review carefully the Memorial School property as to how much land would be available to developers.

Linc Merrill, North Rd resident, stated that he could help gather information regarding comments around financing for senior housing for Memorial School as he serves on the Maine State Housing Board. He asked the Selectmen to consider looking at this project in parts rather than as a whole as has been presented. He would urge them to fast track the Old Town House move to the current Wescustogo lot. He had a discussion with an architect on some ideas. As the Historical Society has limited funds, the sooner the Selectmen make this decision, the better it would be for them to get funds.

Steve Morrison, Brown Way Dr. resident, believes that the next step is to have the Selectmen gather more professional guidance. He commented on density related to economic development. He is unsure that the town is ready for this type of economic development. Audrey Lones added that TIF funds could be used to fund a part-time development employee if needed.

Steve Palmer stated that a workshop on this will follow regarding this topic and gave an overview. They will also review the 1999 Grange Hall agreement regarding this as there are some specific items

**V. Interim Town Manager Report:**

Ms. Diffin stated that the Selectmen members will need to do some online FOAA training.

**VI. Board Written Correspondence/ E-Mails Received/ Verbal Reports/Comments:**

**Response from Vision Government Solutions, Inc.:** Ms. Diffin stated that there is a negotiation to finalize the penalty but it is not finalized.

**Response From MMA Insurance Regarding Wescustogo Hall**

MMA representatives will be meeting at Town Hall on Friday.

**Other:**

Mark Girard commented on the Yarmouth Water District on the monitoring of wells. He suggested a meeting January 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> to meeting with them.

Clark Whittier commented that there are concerns that the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board minutes have not been posted on the Town's website.

**VII. WORKSHOP:**

**Decision Making on Approach to NYMS**

**Clark Whittier moved and Mark Girard seconded to adjourn the meeting to move into a workshop session to discuss the decision making approach to the North Yarmouth Memorial School. The vote was 5 Yes.**

Steve Palmer gave an overview of the options regarding accepting the Memorial School property. He asked the group to discuss the options.

Darla Hamlin asked what happens if they abandon the property. Ms. Diffin provided some basic information on demolition option and an asbestos abatement. She commented on "mothballing" the building and that there are degrees of this option. She outlined what that would entail (i.e. insurance, shutting off the water and sprinkler system, plowing). She also has had a discussion with MSAD 51 to cost share to have someone check on the building should any issues arise. The research she has done does not include rental of the gym space and the like.

There was a discussion on the snow load of the building. Mark Girard stated that it appears that it would not be an issue. The main issue with the building is the inefficient and old heating system. Ms. Diffin agreed with Mr. Girard and that shutting the system down would minimize potential repairs if the building is not actively being used. Steve asked if there is a risk to various parts of the building should the heat be turned off. Mr. Girard stated that the interior finishes would be impacted by the temperature change but it would be unlikely that future developers would not be using them in their project. The gym would need some additional thought if the town wants to keep it. Clark Whittier agreed that the town should budget funds to close the building. He also stated that this is a good opportunity to do this right to get the building developed. Mr. Girard reminded the group that the School Board voted to give the building only on Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> and the town has not yet accepted this. He also reminded the group that there will likely need to be several Town Meetings regarding this building to move the potential project along.

Steve Palmer asked to get some direction in the event that no developer would be interested. Would burning the building down in this case to make a lot available be something to consider after a period of time? He asked if the land would be more valuable without the building. Mark Girard stated that he doesn't see that as a decision to be made as he believes it is an ongoing process. Paul Napolitano suggested an RFP be sent out to gauge potential developer interest. Darla Hamlin stated that it would be important for the Selectmen to educate itself about all the options as the idea of an empty building is not something that should be considered.

Marnie Diffin suggested that Dave Perkins' and Paul Napolitano's approach about getting the word out is similar but it's only the approach that's different. Mr. Napolitano stated that it's important to capture the economic development potential tax revenue for this property to grow the rest of the town. Darla Hamlin stated that leadership and expertise in the area (i.e. TIF district, etc) is important for the Selectmen to do. Mark Girard stated that the group needs to determine the critical points of the project (i.e. aquifer, what can be done in this district). He expressed concerns that spot decisions on parts of the process. He believes that they are working on the process to move this along and outlined the steps taken thus far.

Audrey Lones stated that a timeline of the project needs to be done to include all the items. She commented on the costs of closing the building and the potential assets that can be used. Dave Perkins stated that if an RFP is to be done, a specific use that the town wants needs to be done. He stated that there is some interest in the land. Steve Morrison asked when the town needs to let the MSAD know about accepting the building. He also asked about any hazardous materials assessment. Mark Girard stated that there is not a significant amount in the building. Steve stated that this assessment would be necessary to determine any potential demolition costs.

There was a discussion on developing a project plan for this property.

#### **Budget Timeline & Dates**

Marnie Diffin gave an overview of the budget timeline and dates. She expects to have the bulk of the preliminary budget before the end of the year and will present it to them at the January 7<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen's meeting. Ms. Diffin will propose a series of meeting dates to review the budget.

Steve Palmer asked who in the group would like to sit down with him and Marnie to help develop a timeline for the Memorial School and other parts of the project discussed at the meeting. Mark Girard suggested a workshop focusing just on this. The group agreed to January 14<sup>th</sup> for the workshop.

There was also a discussion on the timeline for closure of the school. Paul asked that the Grange Hall agreement also be discussed at the workshop. There was a brief discussion regarding this.

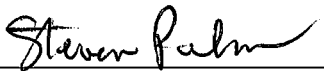
**VIII. Adjournment**

**Paul Napolitano moved and Clark Whittier seconded to adjourn the meeting. The vote was 5 Yes.**

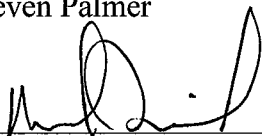
The meeting ended at approximately 9pm.

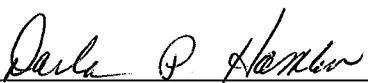
APPROVED:

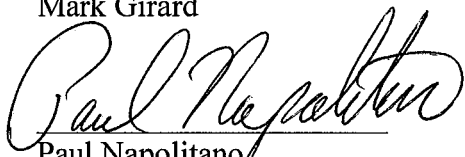
CONSENT AGENDA ITEM: January 7, 2014

  
Steven Palmer

  
Clark Whittier

  
Mark Girard

  
Darla Hamlin

  
Paul Napolitano