

• **January 11, 2007**

Present: First Selectman Richard C. Sears, Selectmen Nicholas N. Solley and Mark E. Lyon.

Press: Ann Compton-VOICES, Jonathan Shugarts-Waterbury Republican

Public: Jack Field, Dan Sherr, Dick Carey, Susan Payne, Carlos Canal, Mark Krentzman, Janet Wildman, Diane Dupuis, Ken Cornet, Joe Mustich, Valerie Andersen, Janet Buoniauto, Jeri Seger, Phil Dutton, Peter Pappas, Chris Charles.

Call to Order: First Selectman Sears called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Minutes:

- **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the December 28, 2006 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. By Mark Lyon, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

Communications:

- **Email from Ken Cornet, Joe Mustich** to the Selectmen regarding the letter from Ray Kozak about the boat launch project on Lake Waramaug. Dick Sears reported that this email expressed support of Mr. Kozak's letter.

Visitors:

- **Valerie Andersen** attended this meeting to present an alternative plan for affordable housing in the Town of Washington, other than the Potter Farm Proposition or other projects that have been sponsored by the Washington Community Housing Trust. Her plan, which she submitted to the Housing Commission on January 8th, deals with ownership as opposed to rental. A copy is attached to these minutes in the Town Clerk's Office. Dick Sears thanked Valerie for her presentation and said the Housing Commission would be studying it further.

Appointments/Resignations: None.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Potter Farm Proposition:** Dick Sears began today's discussion by stating that the Board of Selectmen was not prepared to set a date for a referendum at the present time. He explained the Proposition was announced to the public at a Special Board of Selectmen's meeting on November 9th. Since that time there have been 3 informational meetings-a lot has been learned, changes have been made i.e. building envelopes have been "fixed", environmental reviews will be done, legal documents need to be finalized after further legal counsel is obtained from the Town Attorney. There will be an informational fact sheet given to the public and perhaps one more informational meeting prior to any vote being taken. Mark Lyon felt that if there were to be another info meeting it should be done after the environmental review is done and a report submitted. He feels there are many differing opinions and many questions dealing with the costs associated with the project as well as how much will be allocated for the affordable housing lots and how much for the easements - just how is the Town's \$1.5 million being spent? Mark stressed the importance of this being presented clearly. Mark also spoke of the importance of having a clear estimate of the costs of development. Nick Solley felt some of these costs can be determined by contacting excavators, looking into possible drainage needs, and obtaining assurances that the 5 "affordable" lots can be developed "affordably". Dick Sears felt the WCHT could be asked to do this research. Dick

acknowledged that many questions that have come to his attention have had to do with other properties that may be available in Town. He would like to think of the Potter Farm Proposition as a model not as a precedent and stated the facts should be presented to the townspeople and let them decide if they meet the needs, objectives and goals of the Town. Information on other properties have been passed on to the Open Space Committee, Housing Commission and the WCHT. Other ideas are always welcome.

Susan Payne read a statement she had prepared as Chairman of the Conservation Commission regarding the "Vetting Process for the Potter Farm Proposal". She feels that it is "important that the public understand that the process (of the Potter Farm presentation) did not include any evaluation of either its conservation values or its true development potential." A copy of her statement is attached to these minutes in the Town Clerk's office. Diane Dupuis felt another informational meeting would be advantageous and the Conservation Commission should be included in the presentation.

Carlos Canal read a statement he had prepared as a resident which outlines why he feels there is considerable confusion about the Potter Farm Proposition and why he feels it is "tainted". A copy of his statement is attached to these minutes in the Town Clerk's office.

Dick Carey stated he would like to compliment the Board of Selectmen on their now obtaining a more thoughtful approach on this proposition. He used the subject of the boat launch as an example and how the Planning Commission has "amended" their initial report to include Mr.Kozak's report. He feels strongly that any municipal acquisition needs to be proven and cautions the Selectmen to take their time and verify all the facts.

Mark Krentzman feels that affordable housing should be looked at as its own entity as should open space and they should not be combined. He suggested the Selectmen move slowly, perhaps withdraw this proposition and carefully examine all alternatives.

Phil Dutton inquired about a wetlands issue that the Potter's may have violated. He was advised to speak with Mike Ajello (IW Enforcement Officer).

Ken Cornet suggested the Potter Farm Proposition be withdrawn until all pieces and all proposals can be examined thoroughly.

Janet Buoniauto stated she agreed strongly with Mark Lyon and the suggestion that the land be looked at by an engineer, and costs should be gotten for drainage, driveways, septic, etc.

Jeri Seger complimented the Board of Selectmen on their hard work but feel they should take their time and examine all the proposals very carefully. It is a great deal of money to ask the townspeople to spend and decisions should not be made quickly.

Chris Charles offered an observation that not all the people who have spoken on this subject have spoken knowledgeably. He feels that often "concerns" become "facts" and have been used to try to stop the proposition. He feels all who have been involved in this process (particularly the volunteers) have worked extremely hard. He feels affordable housing and open space can be partnered if planned correctly.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Survey, Titus Road property.** Dick explained that two proposals have been received. One submitted by Arthur Howland, P.C. of New Milford is for \$3,000 and can be completed within two weeks.**Motion:** To accept the proposal and hire Arthur Howland, P.C. to survey the town property on Titus Road. By Dick Sears, seconded by Mark Lyon and unanimously approved.

- **Elementary Schools:** Jack Field presented an update on the two options available to the townspeople of Region #12: 1)a consolidated school on Roxbury property (evaluation of the land is occurring). 2)Build-to-suit which would mean each Town would build and pay for their own elementary school. As the latter was discussed, the complexities of legal issues have become more apparent. The Board of Education has requested that the three towns in the Region come together to negotiate an Intermunicipal Agreement with the Board of Ed being the fourth party in the Agreement. Roxbury's Barbara Henry has agreed, Washington's Dick Sears has reluctantly agreed and Bridgewater's Bill Stuart's decision is unknown at this time. Jack cautioned that with the current environment this may not work. After considerable discussion on the proper format, it was decided to have an Open Forum - informational meeting - with the Board of Education reps from Washington, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance. There would be a presentation of the two options, what would be in the Intermunicipal Agreement, what are the questions to be asked, etc. This will be held on Wednesday, January 24th, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Town Hall.

Adjournment:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m. By Dick Sears, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Greene

Selectmen's Secretary