

Town of Craftsbury Selectboard Minutes

~unapproved~

November 14, 2017

Agenda

- Approve Minutes Last Meeting
- Committee Gathering
- Village Designation
- Town Truck Repair
- Heater & Dehumidifier for Garage
- Committee Reports
- Road Foreman's Report
- Clerk Report
- Walk-in that have business to come before the Selectboard
- Other

The Selectboard met at the Craftsbury Town Hall on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 7 PM. Selectboard present were Bruce Urie, Jim Jones and Susan Houston. Ned Houston, Kristy LaMare, Rob Libby, Jodi Smith, Kris Coville, Aliena Gerhart, Celidh Galloway-Kane, Tim Patterson, Farley Brown, Joe Houston, Dave Stoner, Michelle Warren, Eloise Girard, Stark Biddle, Kevin Gregoire, Tom Silva, Emily Maclure were also present.

Approve Minutes Last Meeting:

Jim made a motion to approval the October 17, 2017 minutes as printed, seconded and approved.

Committee Gathering:

See attachment (starting on page 3).

Village Designation:

Susan made a motion to move ahead for East Craftsbury's Village Designation, seconded and approved.

Truck Repair:

The \$25,000 body repair estimate for Steve's truck will need to be added to the 2018 budget later.

Heater & Dehumidifier for Town Garage:

The Selectboard has a rough \$10,000 estimate for the heater & dehumidifier replacement for the Town Garage and will keep in mind for the budget. The Energy Committee will check with Efficiency Vermont as well.

Committee Reports:

The Selectboard will ask Eric Britton if he is interested to be on the Planning Commission.

Michelle will ask Hester Fuller if interested to be on the Website committee.

Road Foreman's Report:

Steve absent, no report given.

Clerk Report:

Yvette absent, no report given.

Walk-ins that have business to come before Selectboard:

None

Other:

None

The Selectboard Meeting adjourned 9:15 PM. Next Selectboard meeting is scheduled 7 PM Tuesday, Nov 28, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle Warren, Clerk of the Select Board

Upcoming Projects:

- Review Updates on Town Calendar
- Town Hall Sandwich Board
- Paint Town Hall front next year
- Storm water concerns in Village

SELECTBOARD MEETING ATTACHMENT — COMMITTEE GATHERING

November 14th 2017

Craftsbury Selectboard Meeting

Selectboard Members Present: Bruce Urie, Susan Houston, Jim Jones

Guests Present: Ned Houston, Kristy LaMare, Rob Libby, Jodi Smith, Kris Coville, Aliena Gerhart, Celidh Galloway-Kane, Tim Patterson, Farley Brown, Joe Houston, Dave Stoner, Michelle Warren, Eloise Girard, Stark Biddle, Kevin Gregoire, Tom Silva, Emily Maclure

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm. The Selectboard approved minutes from the previous meeting and thanked Michelle for her good work. Susan began with a welcome to representatives from Town Committees. Susan noted that there are 12 or 13 groups represented at the table. About half of these groups are long-standing town committees and groups, and the other half are groups that “bubbled up” from the Community Visit two years ago, and are still meeting regularly. Additionally, Aliena is present to represent the Public Library.

Susan shared 3 goals for the meeting:

1. To hear from committee chairs and group members, who will share current work and priorities
2. To identify opportunities, challenges, and needs
3. To discuss ways we can keep the momentum going around civic engagement

Library

Aliena kicked off the discussion with a report from the Craftsbury Public Library. The Library is experiencing significant growth, especially in terms of children’s programming (perhaps because of Bruce’s direction to “go forth and multiply” at Town Meeting two years ago). There is a large and growing after school program that serves students from Craftsbury Academy who have a safe and nourishing place to go after school. There is also a strong technology program, including computer and internet access that many townspeople depend upon. Much of the Librarian’s time is spent assisting patrons with technology needs. Next year, as a fundraiser, Susan O’Connell, the Librarian, will be leading a group to Ireland. The fundraiser last spring was a blast and will be held again next year as well. Town support, as voted at Town Meeting, is also essential. Michelle asked about new technological systems at the Library, and Ned noted that there is a new online catalog system being implemented, and there is improved access to many collections. Susan asked about outside groups using the Library as a meeting place, and Aliena noted that groups can contact Susan to reserve space in the Library.

Community and Schools and Recreation

Celidh reported out on what was originally the “building community and schools” group from the community visit, now split between “recreation” and “community and schools”. Celidh explained that Kris (also present) joined the recreation committee to provide support to Jodi, and will report separately on initiatives like Open Gym. Celidh noted that the “community and schools’ group has identified the need for social justice initiatives in light of vandalism and other incidents last fall.

Jodi next gave an overview of Recreation Committee activities. Old Home Day is the big one, and the committee also plans to organize PeeWee basketball and Family Movie Nights. After school and in the summer there are bike parties on the Common, and the possibility of a paddle party also. Jodi noted the need for kids to learn sports before 5th and 6th grade.

Kris added that the community and schools taskforce has really joined forces with the Recreation Committee. She voiced the possibility of there could be an official “melding” of the taskforce and the Recreation Committee, into something like “Community Life and Recreation”. Nat Bacon and Emily Maclure are taskforce members who are regularly involved. The intention of the taskforce in melding with the committee is to support long-standing traditions and events, while adding people-power for additional activities, like Open Gym and free-play for toddlers and families, and supporting events like the Block Party and Winter Mitten festival. Kris also noted that if there is a group of people who want to make something happen, she and others are available to offer assistance, and possibly provide some access to funding. Other initiatives include a mentorship database that Sharon Moffat is working on, the Kickball tournament and other events, and the potential for longterm ideas like a skate-park, outdoor basketball court, skating rink on the Common, walking path from Village to Common, etc.

The group has amassed a lot of equipment, such a free-play items that were bought with money from Good Neighbor Fund. Kris noted that if anyone wants to throw a big party in town, in all likelihood things are here and available! Bruce noted that Anne-Marie Keppel bought a speaker system for Antiques and Uniques, and that this system may be available for events as well. Dave asked about funding for the committee. There is regular support from the Town at Town Meeting, plus the aforementioned Good Neighbor Funds used to purchase toys, etc. Emily suggested summer Pee-Wee soccer as an additional idea, and Jodi agreed that this is something that can happen!

Community Visit Follow-Up

Emily Maclure reported in her role as the Community Visit Chair on how Craftsbury has carried along momentum from the Community Visit, and how Craftsbury is seen as an impressive example of a Vermont town that has come together with the spirit of civic engagement and volunteering to make a lot of progress on community initiatives, collaborations, events, and other activities. The Vermont Council on Community Development, which helped organize the Community Visit, is available for help with follow-up, potentially including opportunities to apply for funding via grants and other sources. Susan emphasized that groups in town should not hesitate to seek help for funding. Michelle noted that if anyone tries to reestablish the fishing derby at Rainbow Pond it would be important to ask permission from the landowners.

Forest Committee

Rob Libby next reported for the Forest Committee on behalf of Jim Moffatt, who is busy with Christmas trees. There are a lot of Craftsbury tree photos on the Town website, examples of special trees. If anyone has special trees on their property and would like to take a photo, that photo could be added to the Town website. The Committee also maintains trees around the Common, a complicated task for reasons including wet areas, global climate change, and the need to plant a diverse variety of trees, including trees that usually have a more southerly range. Many people have been involved with tree-care and planting on the Common for many years, including Stuary LaPoint. The Committee would like to do a better job of long-term forest management. There has been one significant salvage cut on Town forestland after Hurricane Floyd, plus a planned cut on Coburn Hill. There has been a resurgence of interest on the School Forest property on Wylie Hill, and the School Woodlot is a good place for older folks to walk on level and maintained paths. The original owners of the property that is now the School Woodlot cut lumber for the original WW II gym floor in the previous gym at Craftsbury Academy, and wood for the new gym floor was also harvested on that land. Previous cuttings were done without a long-term management plan, and there is the hope that the County Forester, Jared Nunnery, will help with a management plan. Kris asked where the trailhead is, and Rob explained that there is a nice trailhead out at the end of Wylie Hill Road. There is a Town Road that has not been thrown up that is one of the boundaries of the School Woodlot.

Playground!

Kristy reported about new Town playground equipment! The group received \$12,000 from the Town and \$8,000 from the school to install Playground equipment at the elementary school. Geri Wahlberg also spearheaded a grant for \$20,000 to install additional playground equipment, and the group is considering the installation of additional playground equipment at the Common, perhaps even including a climbing wall or a “Gaga ball”, recommended by Senta Augsberger, the elementary gym teacher. Kristy hopes to get feedback from middle and junior high school children about what sort of equipment they may want to have. The group wants to make sure that equipment installed on the Common will be appropriate and useful in the future if changes occur, such as younger children attending school on the Common due to space considerations in the Village. Dave asked about Dustan Field, and Kristy said the group has talked about possible additions to that area. Kris noted that currently middle school students don't have the space or equipment to run around and play a lot, as middle schoolers in Albany tend to.

Saplings

Eloise reported from Craftsbury Saplings, the new pre-school. The school opened its doors this year. There is space for pre-K and a waiting list for toddlers. There is a good food program with local food from Pete's Greens and Salvation Farms, and the group has applied for a child nutrition grant to increase Reva Reynold's hours, add initiatives, and do more collaboration with the Care Center. Two Sterling College students come and volunteer regularly at Saplings via the College's work program. The Craftsbury Outdoor Center recently donated a van, which will enrich the programming. About 90 people attended the first Saplings community dinner, which is planned to become a monthly event. There is a steering committee partnering with Albany on joint projects, including a family event calendar, and there may be opportunity for connection with the Craftsbury Recreation Committee. Next steps include working on Stars, a qualification program that opens up more funding opportunities and involves a lot of paperwork and documentation. The group is also applying to be a licensed pre-K program, which would unlock \$3,000 per kid. The biggest long-term need is to identify and secure a permanent location after the 3-year agreement with the East Craftsbury Church wraps up, and Saplings has been communicating with groups like the Care Center, Library, and School about establishing a permanent location. Saplings has raised money to launch, but needs to establish more funding streams to maintain viability. There is still a lot of work to do, but there is a great Board and Staff in place. Saplings is currently a tax-exempt non-profit group. Kevin asked how many families and kids use Saplings. Eloise answered that there are currently 17 part-time kids, with openings for more Pre-K kids.

Energy Committee

Kevin and Ned reported from the Energy Committee, a group that has been around for about 10 years. The focus has been on education - helping people to be more comfortable and save money via workshops and events, many of which involve collaboration with organizations like Efficiency Vermont. The Committee is well-known in Vermont as a very active and productive group that is helping to advance State goals around energy. Ned noted that Craftsbury generates over $\frac{1}{3}$ of all electricity used in town via solar, and that Kevin has helped identify opportunities to help the Town buildings transition to homegrown renewable energy. The efforts of the Committee are split between education and work on specific projects, such as efficiency measures at the Town Garage. Funding for Energy Committee projects has come from the Good Neighbor Fund.

Kevin added that weatherization is an important priority, and other upcoming events include a pollinator event in collaboration with the Conservation Committee, and the bi-annual energy fair has been successful as well. Kris asked about potential for larger solar arrays that could include net-metering of community solar projects. Ned noted some tension between State incentives and mandates and the capacity of local utilities. Group net

metering is a good idea, in Ned's opinions, but small utilities like Hardwick Electric need help to figure out how to work well with net metering projects. Kevin noted that the State is also trying to incentivize rooftop solar v. large ground-mounted solar fields. Emily asked if adding solar panels in town increases electricity costs for consumers, because net-metering forces Hardwick Electric to raise rates. Ned answered that this concern comes up, but that Hardwick Electric has not raised rates in 7 years, and that a lot of eventual efficiencies depend on infrastructure investment.

Road Safety

Stark reported out from the Road Safety group. The group was set up a few years ago to address road safety concerns and concerns re: increased vehicular traffic. Last year the group made 15 recommendations, and 7 have been implemented, and the Selectboard has been very helpful, especially because some recommended implementation steps are controversial, and require careful diplomacy and coordination. Implemented steps include school warning signs, crosswalks on the Common, crosswalk warning signs, speed warning signs, recommendations for vehicular flow in the Village, and reduction of redundant signs by the hard-working Town road crew. Future priorities include complicated issues such as the installation of sidewalks on the Common, the extent to which we implement recommendations from Local Motion re: vehicular flow in the Village, details of speed warning sign installation and ownership financing, improved management of vehicular traffic on gravel roads, possible implementation of an innovative sort of speed-bump "platform", and forward-thinking design when the time comes to replace a bridge into the Village. Dave testified that the portable speed warning in East Craftsbury really slowed him down and is very important with Saplings and the Care Center right there.

Website

Michelle reported from the Town Web Committee. Every committee in town can have a presence on the town web page, and needs to connect with Michelle to update the content of their page. Photos and non-recurring feature events can be added. Michelle can help add events, including Facebook events, but she needs to be contacted ahead of time.

Broadband Taskforce

Dave gave an update from the broadband taskforce, a group that started with about 20 people and is now down to 3. The focus has been on broadband, not cell service, in part because of limited capacity and in part because once broadband is established, some cell phones will work over the internet. A network is being built that uses the fiber that goes down Craftsbury Road. This is about a \$500,000 project. Federal grants have covered a good chunk of this amount. Town funds have also been contributed, and in-kind donations make up the difference. The design of the network is within the scope of the budget, and utilities have been contacted. The group plans to add 13 miles of fiber to the town, and after putting the project out to bid is in final negotiations with a company to build the network, and plans to connect to 320 telephone poles, 12 of which need to be replaced. All utilities have been helpful, with the notable exception of Fairpoint. The hope is that a contract will be ready for presentation to the Selectboard in a matter of days. The plan is to build the fiber out this winter, so that people in town can be connected next spring, if they choose to opt in. Business development is the focus of the federal grant, and so the first priority will be to hook up businesses. When finished, about half of the residences in town will have access to the fiber network. Dave noted that this is an important project for the future of the town, because fiber will encourage people to move to Craftsbury and work and stay in the areas. Kevin asked about underground sections. Dave answered that when there are existing aerial connections those must be used, but when there is an existing underground connection that must be used. There will be underground work to the Public Library, and down Dustan Road and Church Road.

Conservation Commission

Joe reported out from the Conservation Commission. The goal of the commission is to protect the natural heritage of the Town Of Craftsbury. The committee has organized several well-attended speaker events. Via grant funding, the committee did a survey of the Black River from the headwaters up to the Albany border, identified places where conservation measures should be implemented, and did some tree planting below the Town solar tracker. A fund has been established to promote conservation efforts. The commission does not ask the Town to contribute to the fund directly, but some donations have arrived, and the commission is in the process of developing a framework for funding applications. The commission has also identified problem areas where ATVs are entering the Wildbranch, and plans to establish signage to discourage such practice. Farley and Joe noted that the commission is also working on education and coordination re: invasive species, and has weed-wrenches for loan. Rob noted that a fairly large patch of milfoil was recently discovered in the South Bay of Big Hosmer, dangerously close to the outflow that leads to Little Hosmer, and so milfoil may spread to Little Hosmer next year.

Planning Commission

Farley reported from the Planning Commission, which has been around for almost 20 years. One of the challenges is that we need to fill 2 open positions on the Planning Commission. In recent years there has been much work on the newly updated Town Plan, which was approved in 2016. The State has now come out with Act 174, which relates to Energy Siting, and so now the Energy Section of the Town Plan can be updated under the guidelines of Act 174. This is an optional approach, but by engaging in the process of updating the Town Plan via Act 174, the Town would have a greater say in future energy project siting. The Planning Commission has voted to pursue this update to the Town Plan, which is a big project, and we are lucky to have the help of Alison Low of NVDA. There will soon be a lot of joint work on an Enhanced Energy Plan between the Planning Commission and the Energy Committee. Craftsbury does not have zoning, and the energy siting standards do not constitute zoning. There is a mapping process that must be done to identify constraints and preferred sites for energy projects, and work to address infrastructure challenges re: energy transmission. The other project the Commission is working on is a village center designation for East Craftsbury, a non-regulatory designation that could allow for tax incentives for projects in the village center. The Commission has completed a brochure for land use planning in Craftsbury - "Do I Need A Permit". The only town regulation is floodplain regulation.

Land Conservation

Susan presented on behalf of Carol Maroni from the Land Conservation taskforce from the community visit project. A survey group collected information about opinions and attitudes re: land conservation, and a group is producing a document about land conservation - guide to Craftsbury, and a group that is organizing a land discussion series.

Final Notes

Susan introduced a new neighbor, Tom Silva, who has recently moved to the Village.

Susan ended the discussion by encouraging the group to stay involved, and said she would share minutes.

The meeting ended at 8:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Patterson