

Minutes of the Focus Committee Meeting, August 23, 2007

Present: Bob Fichtel, Chairman; Pat Frederick, and Christina Sargent, with Town Planner Eric Smith. The meeting was held at the Stevens Memorial Library's Malcolm Stewart room.

Chairman Fichtel called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. Minutes of the July 19th meeting were distributed and read. Accepted as written.

Bob Fichtel and Kevin Lashua had discussed the title status of Kevin's land parcel on Rte.12 (Winchendon Road). Due to a 1974 error, whereby the wrong parcel was surveyed, Kevin has been paying taxes on an adjoining parcel while the Town took possession of his own land. Kevin is currently communicating with the heirs of the parcel on which he has been paying taxes.

Kevin Lashua mentioned having his land appraised for possible sale as house lots. Without Town water and sewer service, and including significant wetland, the parcel will not be of prime real estate value.

If the Town buys land for a new highway barn, an appraisal and perc test will be necessary. Construction of public utility buildings requires a special permit from the Planning Board, and possibly approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Focus Committee can send a letter to the ZBA, explaining the Committee's proposal.

The September meeting of the Focus Committee will be held jointly with the Select Board meeting, Monday, September 17th at 7:00, at Oakmont Regional High School's VonDeck room, to present everything the Focus Committee has been considering, including material from the Charette. A mandatory seminar/workshop for members of all Town boards, commissions and committees, concerning ethics and conflicts of interest (see MGL 268A and 268B) will be held on Wednesday, October 17th, at 6:00PM, also at Oakmont, in the VonDeck room.

Gil Carreiro has listed his rental house with Christina at Foster-Healey Real Estate, and may consider selling the land parcel. Annexing this to the present Highway Department parcel would enlarge that town property by 20%.

The Committee wonders if a "Neighborhood Conservation District" (as in Cambridge) could be an option for the Town Center.

Town Engineer Donald Ouellette, looking at Conceptual Floor Plan #3 for a new highway barn, suggested having offices in a separate building from the garage. The Committee believes that with restrooms as a buffer, and the mechanics' bay at the farther end of the building, there shouldn't be a noise problem for office staff sharing the building with the garage. Mr. Ouellette also recommends adding two bays for Water and Sewer Department vehicles.

Designated space in the new building should include offices for the Director of Public Works, Highway Superintendent, and Water and Sewer Superintendent; and an area large enough for four open cubicles for clerical staff. The Mechanic's office should have direct access to the garage area, and there should be one shower facility.

The Selectmen have declared that the Focus Committee shall be the Building Committee for the proposed new Highway Barn. Focus Committee must "sell" this one million dollar project to the voters. Before the Fall Town Meeting, the Focus Committee should hold an informational meeting to present any plans to the public. Any land the Committee proposes using must be surveyed and appraised in advance, so the Committee can present specific, not just theoretical plans. Christina emphasized the need for visual materials, so people can clearly understand the various aspects of the project. Eric will obtain copies of the maps drawn up at the Charette.

Bob Fichtel moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:07 PM. Pat Frederick seconded the motion; so voted by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia H. Frederick