

Vershire Selectboard minutes for 9/15/20 - Approved

In attendance (via Zoom) Vernal Stone-Chair, Marc McKee, Sarah Thrasher, Alan Lyford-HW Foreman, Gene Craft-Administrative Asst., Debra Kingsbury-sec'y. Guests: Laura Craft, Ken Bushey, Aaron Hoopes, Laurie French, Andi Wasserman, Michelle Massa, Rubi Gemmell, Suzanne Lupien, Tonya Gunn, Jean MacDonald, and Reva Seybolt (at 8:18)

Vernal Stone called the meeting to order at 7:06pm. He stated that the Board was in receipt of a petition submitted to the town clerk in reference to 815 VCR. Stone asked for questions from the guests. Laura Craft asked for a brief synopsis of what was going on with the subject property and what research had been conducted. It was stated that soil/test borings had been done at the site, approximate location for the garage had been staked out. Due to the wetland area, and placement for the garage and the sand/salt shed areas brought into question, the best driveway access would require the removal of the house. Lupien asked if the Board had any plans to act upon the submitted petition. McKee replied that the petition was unclear as to what they were asking for. Lupien stated that townspeople/voters have rights to participate in decision making process when it comes to real estate conveyance and expressed concern about the intent to auction off the log cabin home at 815 VCR. Craft stated the statute governing conveyance of real estate and that advertising to seek interest and terms had been reviewed with town counsel. Lupien stated that the townspeople need to know whether the Board is considering differing plans than what was presented at the last Town Meeting in March of 2020. Craft stated that Covid-19 has complicated interactions. Stone stated that the Board is researching the best use of the land and collecting facts at present. He added that they had just received the soil test results and also acknowledged state requirements to stay clear of the noted wetland areas. Stone concluded by saying that the best option is still in the research phase. Massa questioned why the topic of removing the house has come up. Stone stated that driving the large trucks /equipment behind the house to access sand and salt, which the plan was to keep those out of sight, would be difficult keeping in mind where the septic and well are at present. Massa thanked Stone for the explanation. Hoopes stated that from the Town Meeting information the original idea was for the road crew to utilize the house or perhaps rent the house out and wondered why the change of potential use. McKee stated that was an idea they all originally liked, yet the main purpose of the purchase was to build a new garage. Lyford stated that the wetland buffer zone was tight to the house front porch and that perhaps it made sense to re-approach ANR and work with them on the driveway issue. Stone stated that once they settle on an actual plan then we'll know how best to utilize the area, but that was still a long process. Lupien stated that posting the ad to remove the log cabin prompted the petition action. Laura Craft asked if the house remains a problem, what the options are. Wasserman felt there were many options, and asked if it was viable to rent out to a family in need. The Board noted the insurance liability aspect of renting out the home where heavy equipment is being driven by etc. Gemmell expressed her thoughts that the meeting minutes didn't give enough information/details about the subject. Gunn added that posting time frames for

the meetings and the agenda to the list serve would offer better transparency for those seeking to stay on top of town issues. Craft stated the agenda and minutes are posted on the town website and that Covid-19 has made many tasks more difficult and more things require use of the internet. Thrasher wanted to clarify that the Board knows where and how the soil and buffer zones are mapped out and welcomes people being involved in meetings. She added that sending a petition was unnecessary and that anyone is welcome to join the meetings. French asked about putting the cabin up for bid and what the terms would be. Craft stated that the information was put out there to determine interest and then if a potential buyer were to be found, the actual terms of sale would be clarified by the Board, noticed to the public at large, then potentially go to a vote, if one was petitioned at that time.

French asked why the garage couldn't be built behind the existing house. Stone explained that there is a brook back at the rear and the septic location make that option non-viable. Stone shared that the Board had asked for volunteers for a garage committee and got a great group together after the initial purchase of 815VCR, and they are still working together to put a plan in place that can be submitted to the appropriate agencies to obtain the required permits. Jean MacDonald wanted to point out that all meetings are open and the Board is moving forward and she welcomed the opportunity to meet as a large group tonight via zoom. McKee reaffirmed that the Board meets every other Tuesday evening at 7pm and that information is on VershireVT.org. Thrasher wanted to make clear that we can still build a garage at the site and might have to impact the buffer zone. The Board all agreed that there is still research to be done. Wasserman expressed her appreciation for the Board's efforts trying to use the land in the best way. Stone stated that the Board is trying to come up with the best facility they can without increasing taxes. Laura Craft asked what the next step was. The Board will interact with the garage committee, eventually finalize a location at the site, and move forward with proposed drawings. Gunn suggested an update/overview be posted on the list-serve. MacDonald stated that the town came together over the recycle/trash collection site and we can pull together again. Hoopes thanked the Board for listening to concerns and stated that building a new garage was supported by the community.

Highway Foreman report: Lyford stated that progress had been made on the beaver dam on Eagle Hollow Rd and that the water level was down about 5 feet, and hoped that the road bed would stabilize in that area. Ditching continues and stone lining as well. Lyford will take photos to send to TRORC for verification. The crew needs to grade the roads, but they are too dry at present. Lyford has been checking on the progress on the Mero Rd repairs. There needs to be interaction between the landowner, the town, and Patrick Ross at the state for full resolution.

Lyford stated that he needed a check to pick up the yolk rake that the town had successfully bid on. McKee moved to authorize a check for \$1200 for the purchase. Stone seconded and all were in favor. Lyford stated that the crew had mowed Goose Green again today, and that the Chelsea highway crew is willing to haul gravel in return for borrowing our tractor/mower. Five hundred more yards of sand will complete the winter stockpile. The crew has worked on Eastman Cross Road and Mountain Ash

Road to improve travel vision and plans to hydro-seed the ditched areas when weather allows. Lyford stated the metal dumpster at recycling was full and asked if we should get another one there until Nov. 1st. The Board authorized another dumpster for metal recycling.

Craft informed the Board that there is grant funding, in the amount of \$21K, to digitize a portion of the land records, but the grant requires that the work be completed by 11/1/20. Craft stated that COTT can perform the needed work and that once complete, this will enable some title searches to be done without access to the vault. Massa asked if that information will feed into the parcel mapping program statewide. Craft said that researchers using the system will pay for access and that those fees come back to the town. Stone moved to apply/accept the grant funding to digitize land records back to 2007. McKee seconded and all were in favor. It was noted that the current recording fee per page was \$15 and that part of those funds are to be used for the restoration and digitization of land records.

Stone asked that Ken Bushey attend the next Board meeting to review the soils report for 815 VCR and he said he could.

Orders are to be reviewed and signed when the Board members can go into the town office individually.

Meeting adjourned at 8:44pm.