

*Joint Board & Commission Meeting
7:00 p.m., Monday, January 7, 2008
Town Hall, 3rd Floor Meeting Room*

Meeting Minutes

Laura Francis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending. John Szewczyk and James McLaughlin were in attendance.

L. Francis started by stating the Board of Selectmen would be starting to work on the budget shortly and that the process was altered slightly from last year in which the Board of Selectmen would be submitting their entire budget proposal to the Board of Finance by February 15th. Their focus is to streamline the process with no duplication of effort on both boards' parts. The Board of Selectmen has scheduled budget workshops and Maryjane Malavasi has sent out budget packets to all chairs. She further stated that the Board of Selectmen would be focusing on the Capital budget separating items between operating and capital. She then put forward a challenge to all chairs to add a project or enhance a current service that they currently provide with a discussion to follow at the next joint meeting in June.

James McLaughlin commented how nice it was to see how many people were in attendance.

L. Francis then introduced chairs and asked for their comments.

Kim Garvis - Town Clerk

Town Clerk Kim Garvis started by giving out some important dates. January 15th, absentee ballots should become available for the February 5, 2008 primaries and noted that her office is already accepting applications for absentee ballots for the presidential preference primary. January 31st is the deadline for all boards and commission to submit 2008 schedule of regular meeting dates. New hours for the Town Clerks office beginning February 1st will be Monday, Wednesday through Friday 8:30-4:30 p.m., Tuesday 8:30-8:00 p.m. February 5th, 2008 unaffiliated voters have until noon February 4th to affiliate with a party in order to vote in this primary.

Maryjane Malavasi - Finance Director

Budgets are due on January 15th. She expressed that justification on line items would eliminate questions. She also talked about the capital budget explaining that she would like to see all documentation associated with the item along with 10-15 years of detail. She noted that the finance department was available to all for any questions that they may have.

Valerie Kilmartin asked if there was a source available to her to help with capital building issues at the library. L. Francis stated that she was working on an in house maintenance schedule of town owned buildings and asked Bill Milardo and Dick McManus to meet with Valerie to discuss her needs. M. Malavasi commented that she should include those items that she is currently aware of in this year's capital budget and work towards other items that may arise from the maintenance schedule.

Steven Spooner - Emergency Services Facilities Committee

Steven commented that their committee was waiting for the Board of Selectmen to restate the committees charge or offer guidance to move forward. L. Francis said that she has asked Steven to keep his committee active to work on an additional proposal with realistic budget figures.

Ron Capozzi - Senior Tax Relief Committee

Ron starting by saying that this committee would not need a budget. He stated that it took six months for the Board of Finance to approve the proposed freeze ordinance and was asked to rework the income limits on the proposed deferral ordinance; hence it is too late this year to start the deferral program. He suggested bringing the freeze ordinance before the town. L. Francis requested his committee to bring the both ordinances forward to a public hearing at that point the Board of Selectmen would be happy to move forward. R. Capozzi agreed to hold a public hearing within the next month.

Kate McLaughlin - Recreation Committee

Kate explained that the committee's main focus was on maintenance of Allyn Brook Park on several issues, one being new signage. They are doing research on a skateboarding park and also walking trails.

Duncan Milne - Historic District Commission

Duncan stated that the commission was continuing a very quiet procedure of watching Main Street properties. L. Francis proposed the idea of guided walking tours in conjunction with the recreation department.

Brian Ameche- Conservation Commission

Brian stated that the commission has moved from an acquisition phase to a management phase and has established a program with stewards to look at maintaining current properties. The commission is currently looking at four properties, getting appraisals done, and are looking forward to a major acquisition proposal within the next three to four months. L. Francis asked if the commission was willing to provide passive recreation to residents on the property currently owned such as walking paths, bird watching, etc in conjunction with the recreation department. B. Ameche agreed and invited Sherry Hill to attend a meeting to brainstorm.

Elaine Melvin - Senior Citizen Board

Lainey brought everyone up to date on the senior programs currently being offered and stated that the board is actively seeking land for a senior center.

Frank DeFelice - Public Safety Committee

The Public Safety Committee is looking at five to six projects this year. 1.) To develop a crime watch for Main Street businesses and to create a database of business contact listings. They would like to do presentations to the business owners and safety assessments upon request. 2.) To create a database of vehicular accidents and highlight areas of specific concern. 3.) Block Watch Program - Part 2, Home Security education. 4.) Updating the Crime Report bringing it up to date with current information. 5.) Finding ways to obtain additional police protection whether it being; contracting for an additional resident state trooper, constable, regionalizing, or additional grant money. 6.) Capital Equipment; new SMART Machine, Laser speed gun for the resident state trooper. He finished by saying that the committee would like to develop traffic calming methodology and determine what can be done. The committee has been working on a sign board and stressed education.

George Eames - Planning & Zoning Commission

Planning & Zoning has been very active with the Silver Eagle Development Project; proposed are three commercial buildings on 11 acres on land, January 16th being the last public hearing that they will hold on this matter. The commission has sixty-five days to render a decision. They have hired an outside traffic engineer to review information that the applicant has submitted and stated that Town Engineer, Brian Curtis has also been very active on this project. He went on to say that the commission would be involved in a project on the south end of Main Street in the next couple of months; divided into two parts, seven acres - residential, eleven acres - residential/commercial. They have an application for a doggy daycare which will also be on the Public Hearing on the 16th, and are looking at the adaptive reuse of Main Street Buildings.

Bob Fulton - Ethic Commission

Bob started by restating the commissions charge saying the commission has completed their task by submitting their report to the Board of Selectmen and were awaiting a response.

John Hogarth - Zoning Board of Appeals

John stated that the ZBA held eighteen public hearings last year and are continuing their job as charged.

Jane Ericksen - Library Board of Trustees

Jane stated that the library continues to grow and has a large effective staff. The circulation and usage is non stop resulting in wear and tear on the building. The outside of the building was painted last fall and the carpeting needs to be addressed this year.

Valerie Kilmartin, Library Director talked about having an exciting year, addressing three new projects with minimum effect on the budget. The library has private funding to 1.) Create a self check unit and 2.) Reduce and repair or replace the front desk to make it more effective for both employees and patrons. She also noted that the reference section was not being utilized at all and she would like to reuse this space to combine all computers in the library and create a computer lab, stating convenient location for staff to assist and also security for younger users.

Nancy Cuomo - Republican Registrar, Natalie Church - Democratic Registrar

Nancy commented on several items within the registrars' offices stating that their goal is to educate residents on what the registrars do by putting additional information on the town website. The office has undergone change with new voting machines; there are no longer lever machines. They recently received a new computer but stressed that they are experiencing a storage issue. She asked the audience to help with the recruitment of personnel to go to moderator training, and poll workers, all paid positions. They are currently getting ready for the February 5th primary.

Dave Monroe - Skating Pond Committee

Dave updated everyone on the status of the skating pond. This year extensive structural repair was done to the berm. New lighting is scheduled to be installed next week. Three sets of stairs have been constructed and numerous benches were put around the pond. He expressed his thanks to the public works crew for building a shelter and making fire pits. He hopes to finish up the weir project by mid year and would like to put signage up. He remarked that his wish list would be for additional parking.

Frank Behrens - Fire Company Board of Trustees

Frank commented that the Board of Trustees had nothing on the table for long range planning as they are waiting on a decision on the report issued by the Emergency Services Facilities Committee. The firehouse driveway is finished and a temporary storage building has been put up. L. Francis asked about the volume of requests for use of the building. Frank said that the same groups use the facility year after year for the same events, only open to non profit organizations.

Wendy Manemeit - Treasurer

Wendy stated that she works closely with the Finance Officer, Bookkeeper, and the Board of Finance. She is currently working on a project to take over short term bonds from the Building and Health department and the Mary Webber fund.

Bill Milardo - Sanitarian

Bill read from a synopsis that he prepared stating that a slow down in new residential construction gave way to an increase in commercial and industrial construction. He talked about the large scope of current proposals and their potential impact on the town and how they must be closely reviewed noting that properly sized and designed sewage disposal and water supply systems are necessary to minimize or prevent impact on the community. Also, the State of CT was considering the development of wastewater management districts but did not materialize; technology increases so does the complexity of the systems, therefore operation and maintenance need to be monitored. The State Department of

Public Health would like to develop software for subsurface sewage disposal system management but has not received funding yet; it is anticipated that health departments will face the purchase of this tool in the near future. Bill then went on to discuss water supply systems in categories and classifications, private and public. He also updated everyone on the recently completed reconstruction of the public water system that serves Durham center saying that the new system is operating as well as expected however the cost to comply with the water quality regulations of the State of CT is onerous for such a small number of customers. He ended by stating that the CT DEP has earmarked some grant money for the Town of Durham to further study the feasibility of a water system extension from Middletown; a formal application for the funds is being prepared for submittal.

Dick McManus - Building Official

Dick pointed out that there has been a surge of commercial building and that remodeling is very strong. He stressed the importance of serving Durham's residents with excellent customer service. He also agreed to work on establishing a baseline for town owned buildings.

Richard Hanley - Economic Development Commission

The commissions focus has been on getting a strategic plan in place. They will be having their last meeting to finalize their plan and will then present to the Board of Selectmen. He commented on the many new businesses on Main Street over the past year and said that he would like to work with Planning & Zoning on the appropriate reuse of property, specifically the Grange and Lake Grove School. The commission is currently talking to existing business owners about expansion possibilities noting that there is very little non-residential land available and they need to start looking at this issue.

Martin French - Tax Collector

The office has expanded to full time hours and the need to continue to expand hours in the future. Martin commented on the excellent collection rate but said there is always money that can be collected.

Bill Witecki - Deputy Fire Marshall

Plans are underway to streamlining operation with public information.

Peter DiGioia - Resident State Trooper

Demands on his time have grown dramatically over the last year. He is looking forward to working with the Board of Selectmen and other boards and commissions this year.

Scott Wright - Durham Volunteer Ambulance Corps

Scott stated that the Ambulance Corps is in dire need of a new facility. Another bay is needed to house an additional ambulance and they hold all meetings and training at the fire house. Although they have a very dedicated group of working individuals because of the large volume of calls, over 500 this past year, the corps needs personnel. He noted there is a stipend program with Insurance.

Harry Hall - Fire Chief

Harry stated that the Fire Company has had a very successful year. They awarded a bid for a new tanker replacing a 1988 tanker with a brand new Spartan. They will be forming a committee to work on the next vehicle that is due to be replaced. He stated that the closing of Lake Grove School has greatly impacted the amount of calls from 307 in 2006 to 258 in 2007. He continues to have daily staffing issues noting that the average age of fire company personnel is 49 years which he takes issue with; stating that there is no affordable housing in town for younger people to reside. A retention program has been put in place that hopefully will help.

Francis Willett - Department of Emergency Management

Francis updated everyone on the reorganization of the LEPC Committee. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and Emergency Management Department were consolidated into Department of Emergency Management as per Section 6.22 of charter revision. Members of the Department of Emergency Management are appointed positions and other emergency services and town

office officials and are as follows: Dr. Steven Levy Director, Christopher Soulias Deputy, Dan Murphy Deputy, Francis Willett Deputy, Susan Wimler, Dan Geary, Ralph Chase, Cathy Chase, Sue White, Board of Selectmen, Harry Hall, Scott Wright, Bob Morpurgo (or Bill Witecki), Kurt Bober (or representative), and Brad Wilkinson (or William Milardo). He also commented on the state of the art emergency operations center with staff that can operate the equipment housed at the fairgrounds. He ended by saying that emergency management is interested in working with the building committee on the Emergency Facilities Services Committee.

Meeting Adjourned 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Beth Moncata