

*Board of Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
7:00 p.m., March 24, 2008
Town Hall, 3rd Floor Meeting Room*

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order and Roll Call

Laura Francis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

John Szewczyk and James McLaughlin present.

Approval of the Agenda

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO APPROVE AGENDA. 3 AYE

Public comments

Resident Joan Zito read from a February 1, 2008 article written by Governor M. Jodi Rell about towns holding the tax line with school districts; don't raise taxes, don't add unnecessarily, and don't over expend; 3% cap on property taxes will pass because Governor Rell will work with legislature. J. Zito stated she was not aware the Board of Selectmen knew about the Board of Education's slush fund of \$800,000 and thinks that it is time schools are held accountable to taxpayers for every dollar. She then asked the Board of Selectmen if they can cut the town budget further. She also is upset with past town officers taking 3 ½ years for seniors to get a tax break stating she feels they have not been overly generous with seniors.

Donia Viola spoke about putting breaks on spending; she met with the Board of Finance urging them to restrict raises - 3% being the maximum increase; and to do away with 3% increases for everyone unless job duties increase. She asked the Board of Selectmen to attend the last Board of Education budget presentation and take a stand.

Donia Viola also spoke about the proposed purchase of the Durham Meadows Superfund Site stating she spoke with the DEP who said they will be doing site sampling this spring; she also spoke with Anni Laughlin from DEP who stated they have not determined a method of resolution or a final cost estimate. She also spoke with Mike Beskind and Robert LaFrance who are working with the Chamber of Commerce to get this resolved; they stated the Chamber has not heard from town officials and D. Viola feels if the Board of Selectmen spoke to them they would move forward on the project. She asked the Board of Selectmen to put money in the budget for this specific need; she feels the town does not need a middle man and the town should reap the benefits.

Recreation Committee appointment

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO APPOINT TOBY BATES TO THE RECREATION COMMITTEE FOR A 2 YEAR TERM TO EXPIRE DECEMBER 2009. 3 AYE

Clean Energy Task Force appointment

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO APPOINT KATHERINE CONROY TO THE CLEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE FOR A 3 YEAR STAGGERED TERM. 3 AYE

Ethics Commission appointments

Laurie Stevens and Michael Geremia have been notified and are still working on potential candidates. Tabled until next meeting.

Disband Senior Tax Relief Committee

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO DISBAND WITH GRATITUDE THE SENIOR TAX RELIEF COMMITTEE. 3 AYE

Tax Refunds

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO APPROVE (10) TEN TAX REFUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,555.60. 3 AYE

Re-adopt Fair Housing Resolution, Fair Housing Policy Statement, Title VI Equal Opportunity Statement

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO RE-ADOPT FAIR HOUSING RESOLUTION, FAIR HOUSING POLICY STATEMENT, AND TITLE VI EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT. 3 AYE

Approval for First Selectman to sign Affirmative Action Policy Statement

J. Szweczyk stated for the record that he was opposed to some language within the policy statement.

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO GRANT APPROVAL TO THE FIRST SELECTMAN TO SIGN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY STATEMENT. 3 AYE

Designate the Month of April as Fair Housing Month

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO DESIGNATE THE MONTH OF APRIL AS FAIR HOUSING MONTH. 3 AYE

Proclamation designating the month of May as Older Americans Month

L. Francis will contact Janet Muraca and Elaine Melvin to discuss planning an event in April.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Durham is a community in which 700 citizens age 65 or older make their home, and

WHEREAS, older adults in Durham and throughout the United States are a growing population with evolving needs, and

WHEREAS, older Americans are valuable members of our society who are rich with experience and deserving of our respect, and

WHEREAS, the number of baby boomers reaching traditional retirement age continues to increase, a fact that spotlights the need for increased attention to the needs of older adults, and

WHEREAS, our older citizens of today and tomorrow promise to be among the most active and engaged older adult populations in our Nation's history, and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of this and all United States communities to work together and prepare for changing older adult populations by modernizing systems of care and providing consumers with more control over their lives, and

WHEREAS, overall quality of life can be greatly enhanced when supportive communities help their older citizens obtain:

Evidence-based approaches to making behavioral changes that can reduce risk of disease, disability, and injury.

The tools to make informed decisions about, and gain better access to, existing health and long-term care options.

More options to avoid placement in nursing homes and remain at home as long as possible.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, the Board of Selectmen, of the Town of Durham, do hereby proclaim May 2008 to be Older Americans Month. We urge everyone to take time this May to honor our older adults and the professionals, family members, and citizens who care for older adults.

Laura L. Francis
First Selectman

John T. Szewczyk
Selectman

James W. McLaughlin
Selectman

Dated in Durham, Connecticut, this 24th day of March 2008

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO ACCEPT PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF MAY AS OLDER AMERICANS MONTH. 3 AYE

Permission to serve wine at reception exhibiting the art of Richard Wilbur, Saturday, May 3, 2008 at the Durham Public Library

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO GRANT PERMISSION TO SERVE WINE AT A RECEPTION EXHIBITING THE ART OF RICHARD WILBUR, SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2008 AT THE DURHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY. 3 AYE

Local Traffic Authority approval of permanent road signs for Bear Rock Road

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO APPROVE PERMANENT ROAD SIGNS FOR BEAR ROCK ROAD. 3 AYE

Lake Grove false alarm fee discussion

L. Francis stated she received a request from Lake Grove to waive false alarm fees in the amount of \$700.00. She referenced the town's ordinance which states the Board of Selectmen serves as the appeals board and also enforces the ordinance. L. Francis referenced (7) chargeable offenses May 15, 2007-November 26, 2007 for improper maintenance or intentional misuse and it was decided by the Board of Selectmen to deny the request. L. Francis will send a letter to Lake Grove.

Merriam Manufacturing discussion

L. Francis brought the Board of Selectmen up to date on the agreement. She stated she spoke with Anni Laughlin from the DEP who confirmed the town is not the owner of the property and it is not the town's responsibility to clean up. L. Francis stated she cannot find a reason that this agreement would be bad for the town; it would result in putting the property into the hands of someone who is knowledgeable. J. McLaughlin asked about the town's right of first refusal. L. Francis referred to Item #3 of the agreement.

J. McLaughlin stated he felt it is a good idea; Mr. Exman has the ability to accelerate a solution. When he spoke with A. Laughlin at the DEP she stated a 7 year cleanup timeline. He feels in the end the town will benefit from either tax income or town land use.

Joan Zito asked how the property was going to be cleaned up. L. Francis explained there is still a testing phase and the plan could be altered due to possible changes at any time. J. Exman stated the DEP will issue a final engineering report with details of the final cleanup identifying the level of cleanup and use. J. Zito asked how this would affect the neighbors on both sides of the property. J. Exman explained the source of contamination needs to be identified and removed to the best of their ability. J. McLaughlin asked J. Exman if there would be residual liability. J. Exman stated no, they would still monitor the site.

Donia Viola stated her understanding is Mr. Exman will not start working on the project until he hears from the DEP and questioned why the Town shouldn't wait for the DEP to do their testing in turn the state would have to do the cleanup; why would the town hand this over to Mr. Exman when the cleanup would be the same amount of time. J. Szewczyk explained the course of action gets sped up knowing there is a plan in place.

L. Francis referred to the following Board of Selectmen Resolution:

RESOLVED: Having reviewed the agreement between the Town of Durham and Pownal Development, we hereby direct that a Town Meeting be called to approve the Assignment of Tax Liens on 275 & 281 Main Street, Durham to Pownal Development Corp with the terms of the proposed agreement. The First Selectman is authorized to finalize and execute the agreement on behalf of the Town of Durham and thereafter proceed to call the Town Meeting.

MOTION BY JOHN SZEWCZYK SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO BRING TO TOWN MEETING. 3 AYE

Set date and approve agenda for Special Town Meeting

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JOHN SZEWCZYK TO SET DATE OF MARCH 31, 2008 AND APPROVE AGENDA FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING. 3 AYE

Elected officials salaries

L. Francis explained that Randi Frank attended and discussed the salary survey report that she prepared to the Compensation Review/Personnel Policy Commission at their meeting on March 20th and now have a recommendation after 2 years. She also commented that non-union job classifications were updated and upgraded per the findings of this report effective July 1, 2006; elected officials were put off until the last election. The recommendations have high percentages because of the delay but noted they will be implemented over two years.

J. Szewczyk question the Town Clerk Plus position stating it should be rated for the position and not for extra duties and asked if a stipend would be better. L. Francis responded that had the town hired a new town clerk there would be no town clerk plus position and explained the rating schedule was used as a safety net. L. Francis further stated she asked R. Frank if this was appropriate and was told yes; in smaller towns functions get absorbed; larger towns have technology departments and not stipend positions.

J. Szewczyk questioned why Durham has a 40 hour per week tax collector when similar towns have 20-25 hours per week. L. Francis stated as a town we have made a decision to have a full service tax department and remembers in the past when it was part time residents would be upset. J. Zito questioned if there was a need for a tax assistant. L. Francis stated the tax assistant works 20 hours per week; the position has been upgraded over the years and seems to be working well.

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JAMES MCLAUGHLIN TO SEND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE. 3 AYE

Capital Planning process

L. Francis asked the Board of Selectmen how they would like to proceed with the findings of their meetings on capital planning. J. McLaughlin stated the decision needs to be made by the Board of Selectmen, noting concerns being exclusive to each group; the board should get together and work out a plan then bring to a public hearing. J. Szewczyk suggested taking minutes of the meetings and the public hearing to develop a plan. L. Francis will compile notes and set a Saturday date for a workshop.

Approval of Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes of March 12, and 13th, 2008

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS TO APPROVE MARCH 12, 2008 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES. J. SZEWCZYK AND J. MCLAUGHLIN ABSTAIN, NOT AT MEETING.

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JOHN SZEWCZYK TO APPROVE MARCH 13, 2008 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES. 2 AYE J.MCLAUGHLIN ABSTAIN, NOT AT MEETING.

Approval of Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of March 10th, 2008

MOTION BY LAURA FRANCIS SECONDED BY JOHN SZEWCZYK TO APPROVE MARCH 10, 2008 MEETING MINUTES. 3 AYE

Old/New business

L. Francis discussed the following old business.

- 1.) The neighborhood CrimeWatch Meeting held on March 11th was a success with 25 residents in attendance.
- 2.) L. Francis met with the First Selectmen from Guilford and Madison to discuss the walk of the boundaries, renamed to the Re-enactment of Perambulation in Celebration of CT Trails Day, June 7, 2008 at 10:00.

L. Francis discussed the following new business.

- 1.) L. Francis and Len Baginski attended an information session in Newington about the impact of the Digital Media & Motion Picture tax credit legislation and how Durham could benefit from this. She asked the Board of Selectmen to think about if this is a fit for Durham; maybe partnership with Middlefield to form a Commission on the Arts or a Film Commission. L. Francis and L. Baginski will research.

Selectmen's comments

None

Public comments

None

ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:05 P.M.

Executive Session - land purchase

Adjourn

ADJOURNED MEETING AT 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Moncata