

Fire Facility Site Selection Committee
Minutes of August 19, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office. Present were committee members PJ Ryan, Diane Cushman, Chris Griggs, Liz Herrmann, Shawn Oxford, Gerry Slager, Brett LaRose, Kevin LaRose and Alan Huizenga. Also present was Administrative Assistant Jen Stetson, Town Administrator Bill Bryant, Porter Knight, Naomi Drummond, Randall Freeman, Kenneth Thompson, Eve Thompson, and Mary Arbuckle filming for NEAT TV.

Alan Huizenga motioned to approve meeting minutes from the August 5, 2013 meeting. Chris Griggs seconded, all were in favor (9-0). So voted.

The committee discussed outstanding sites that the committee hadn't received a response from yet. Shawn Oxford had spoken with one member of the Recreation Club and they said to leave it on there until the Recreation Club met this month. Brett LaRose had spoken with Tanych's on North Street and they said they would discuss it, and would be in contact with the committee within a week. Kevin LaRose had not gotten information for the property on the corner of Pine and North Street. Chris Griggs had spoken with Bob Bernstein and he would be open to having his property on the list. Chris suggested that this lot is very similar to the Dike property so they could see how that might compare. Brett LaRose said the Selectboard had met last week and decided to remove the Landfill site from the list. Diane updated the group on her meeting with the Lister.

Liz Herrmann had worked with a few properties creating a visual of the property being considered. She added setback boundaries based on the zoning regulations. This would determine the buildable area on the lot. She also included a gray box that would determine the parking. The green buffer determines the 25 foot buffer if a non-residential property abuts a residential property. Liz Herrmann said that she would complete this project for more sites based on the spreadsheet results.

Porter Knight asked if the maps Liz made would be posted on the website. Alan Huizenga said they would once they were complete, as right now they were in draft form.

Shawn Oxford began speaking about the compiled spreadsheet. There are 77 possible points that a site could score. They began discussing percentages and what they thought was a percentage that they felt was acceptable. Liz Herrmann suggested that the group go back through and change from either a yes or no to a point value in hopes of spreading the field farther apart. The committee thought that would be a good idea to keep the spreadsheet the way it was and to use a percentage to choose the top sites. Alan Huizenga moved to narrow the work that the committee does based on if a site achieved 75% of the points, or 60 points or higher, Gerry Slager seconded, all were in favor (9-0), so voted.

The committee began going through the sites and reviewing any of the highlighted numbers that indicated the criteria was either voted yes 5-4 or no 4-5. The committee discussed site #22 the Nelson property on West Street, and where this property actually was. Bill Bryant spoke about the municipal planning grant using the Town property and the Nelson property. The grant they are in the process of applying for is to help with the professional services to help develop the parcels for the community's

best interest and the Town's best interest. He said there are some opportunities to develop there, but the committee would need to identify what they would need there. Chris Griggs suggested not putting any vested time into the property until they got a definite answer from the property owner about them agreeing with what the Town would like to do.

The committee began discussing the Fire Station with both the Vince property and the Bilson property. They discussed zoning issues that these properties might have. Bill Bryant suggested that a new building would have to adhere to the 25 foot buffer but the old building wouldn't due to its grandfathered status. They discussed front yard setbacks along with parking spaces on that site. They discussed the impact on neighbors. Chris Griggs justified it being a minimal impact because the Fire Station was already there. PJ Ryan also suggested that when you move a Fire Station to a location that has never had a fire station it would have more of an impact on the neighbors. Liz Herrmann suggested that some neighborhoods might be more affected due to the density of the surrounding neighbors. Kevin LaRose said that no matter where the location will be all surrounding neighbors will be impacted.

The group continued to discuss each of the sites that remained in the top 75% of the sites that they would further consider based on the compiled information from the spreadsheet. The committee agreed to change the vote for site number 1, the Mount Abe Bus Barn, criteria number 19, Safe Sidewalks, from a 3 to a 0 based on the lack of sidewalks there.

Jen Stetson mentioned with the change they made to site number 1 it would lower the points to 57 which in turn would drop this site out of the 75th percentile. She asked if the committee would keep this site on the list, or if they would remove the site. The committee agreed to remove this site from the list.

Shawn Oxford posed the question about further eliminating the sites in the future. Liz Herrmann would make sure that she would have diagrams for each of the remaining sites in the top 75% which would include setbacks, parking and a potential building size on the lot. Diane said that she would be able to get approximate appraised values for these properties so the committee could get an idea about cost. Kevin suggested that the committee give the Recreation Club a sense of how much of their frontage they would like or need so they would have the opportunity to discuss that proposal. The committee also discussed considering the building square footage on sites that already have buildings on them.

Liz Herrmann contacted someone in the Middlebury College Geology department. A geology professor Bill Amidon would get college students to help compile GIS data from the Fire Department. Liz Herrmann has a meeting scheduled Thursday morning at 8:30 and he would tell them the process and the information he would need. Kevin LaRose said that he would take on this project and would meeting with Bill on Thursday morning.

Brett LaRose said he would contact the school to let them know they were removed from the list. Brett LaRose also thought that once many of these pieces were completed by the committee and large maps were created there was a chance that the committee could eliminate some more sites.

Brett LaRose handed out information that Peter Coffey had completed regarding geographical response the Fire Department had for the last six years.

Porter Knight thanked the committee for their time they put into the spreadsheets and weighting the sites. She discussed the Nelson property ranking and suggested the committee shouldn't put it on the

back burner they should pursue the site further. Porter Knight disagreed with points made regarding the existing fire station locations; she expressed concern about parking, and a building that would allow growth. Porter Knight was appreciative of the removal of the Mount Abraham Bus Barn due to traffic, and she thought the Post Office was equally as dangerous. Naomi Drummond expressed her support for keeping the Fire Station at its current sight.

Brett LaRose informed the group that their next meeting would fall on Labor Day and he recommended the group meet Tuesday night September 3rd. The committee agreed the next meeting would be Tuesday September 3rd.

Brett LaRose moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm, Alan Huizenga seconded, all approved (9-0). So voted.