

Fire Facility Site Selection Committee  
Minutes of October 28, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office. Present were committee members PJ Ryan, Diane Cushman, Liz Herrmann, Gerry Slager, Chris Griggs, Brett LaRose, Kevin LaRose, Shawn Oxford, and Alan Huizenga. Also present was Administrative Assistant Jen Stetson, Town Administrator Bill Bryant, Peter Morrow Meyer, Porter Knight, Randall Freeman, Neale Schuman, Joel Bouvier, and Mary Arbuckle with NEAT TV.

Brett LaRose called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

PJ Ryan moved to approve meeting minutes from September 30, 2013, Liz Herrmann seconded. All were in favor, so voted (8-0).

Brett LaRose updated the committee on the Bouvier property. The Bouvier's said that they would consider selling the lots separately, but the price would increase significantly. Diane Cushman suggested that it might be cost effective to buy both pieces.

Gerry Slager updated the group on the Recreation Club site, regarding the meeting they held on October 24<sup>th</sup> for West Street frontage for the fire station. Bill Bryant spoke regarding this site. He mentioned that Jim Lockridge, previous Hub Director, had done some deed research regarding trading the riding rink for the Hub and the West Street frontage even prior to the site being considered for a Fire Station. The committee discussed the hub location, and the potential of moving The Hub to the Fire Station.

Brett LaRose asked Town Administrator Bill Bryant to speak about the current status of the Nelson property on West Street because the committee is at the point where they need to make a decision about this property. Bill Bryant discussed the conversations they had had with the Nelson's in the past. He encouraged the committee to think about the two West Street sites (the Recreation Club and Nelson's property), if the committee realizes that the Recreation Club is a better option than they could set this property aside. Alan Huizenga discussed the lack of control with that property; they have more control with the Recreation Club property and the advantages of having some. The committee discussed the Nelson property and the options they have. Liz Herrmann wanted to review the list, and wanted to keep it on the list but perhaps lower the priority. The Committee discussed removing the Nelson site from further consideration. Alan Huizenga suggested that they pin it to the potential planning study that would happen, but for the time being they could state it will no longer be considered. Porter Knight thought it was clear that the committee clearly had a front runner and suggested that the committee compare the remaining sites on the list to this site. Diane Cushman argued that individual rankings amongst the committee members would prove differently. The committee discussed making decisions to eliminate sites. Neale Schuman is concerned about traffic flow on the West Street properties. The committee voted to remove the Nelson property with a vote of 9-0 to for further consideration. Bill Bryant suggested the committee still make a list about the Nelson property and say what was attractive about that site and made it hard to eliminate it.

Alan Huizenga thought that the committee was struggling with the lack of information for each property and not being able to rank one higher than another. The committee reviewed both of the North Street properties that remained with the current location of the Fire Department. The site with the Bilson property and the Fire Department was discussed regarding size of the lot, and that it had already been voted down once. PJ Ryan discussed his concern for the old fire station; Brett LaRose was confident in the Selectboard to preserve that building. The committee voted to remove the Bilson property and the current Fire Station from further consideration, 9-0.

Alan Huizenga left to attend another meeting.

Brett LaRose asked Joel Bouvier for clarification about the Bouvier lot. Joel Bouvier had discussed this with his brothers and sisters and he said it would devalue the empty lot and making it harder to sell. He stated the asking price for just the house site is currently \$239,900. The committee discussed considering just the house site property, both properties or whether to still consider it. Brett LaRose wanted to the committee to consider whether the Bouvier property or the Recreation Club property would have a higher impact on the neighbors/neighborhood. The committee discussed the Bouvier property as a number 3 choice, and still giving pros and cons to the Selectboard. The group voted to remove the Bouvier site from further consideration by a vote of 5-3 vote (B. LaRose, K. LaRose, Oxford, Ryan, Slager in favor of removing, Herrmann, Cushman, Griggs).

Diane Cushman expressed concern regarding just giving one site to the Selectboard and what they had done with a previous list of 5 sites to house the Fire Station. Brett LaRose stated that the difference is the process, public input has allowed everyone to follow along. Randall Freeman expressed his desire to keep the current location of the Fire Station.

Kevin LaRose updated that group that there won't be an opportunity to get any GIS data collected through Middlebury College until January.

Brett LaRose discussed the next meeting would be used to create a presentation for the Planning Commission.

Chris Griggs moved to Adjourn the meeting at 8:50, Gerry Slager seconded. All were in favor, so voted.