

WEST WINDSOR SELECTBOARD

Draft Minutes
September 12, 2013

Present: Glenn Seward, Tom Kenyon, Bruce Boedtke, Dennis Conley, Kathy Geagan, Dianne Connors, Arthur Steinberg, Martha Harrison

- 1) Call to Order – Selectboard Chair Glenn Seward called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.
- 2) Public Comment – Regarding the public forums on ATV use in the Town Forest that the Selectboard asked the Town Forest Committee (TFC) to schedule, Bruce said he doesn't think it's appropriate for the TFC to schedule those meetings by phone. Bruce suggested that the Selectboard consider conducting the meetings. Glenn said he asked the TFC to organize and advertise forums for October and November, and has suggested that they schedule a meeting next week to discuss dates. Glenn said he has no interest in the Selectboard being involved. Bruce said he just wants to be sure that the TFC is conducting business appropriately.
- 3) Discuss proposed Town Forest trail – Glenn noted difficulties with the intersection of Kimball Farm Road and the existing snowmobile trail, which crosses private property via a right-of-way before entering the Town Forest. Glenn said these difficulties prompted the Selectboard to consider an alternative trail around the south end of Dianne Connors' property to the Class 4 portion of Kimball Farm Road. Glenn said the Selectboard has also considered incorporating some timber harvesting in the project. Tom said harvesting would help pay for the trail. Kathy asked if the trail would be used for snowmobiles and ATVs. Tom said the idea is to connect the Town Forest parking area and Kimball Farm Road. Kathy and Dianne both asked why the town would want to do that. Kathy said there is not enough sustainable snowpack for regular snowmobile use. Kathy was also worried about the environmental impact of ATVs and how trail use is going to be controlled. Kathy said her quality of life has changed even with the mountain bike trails because she can hear them talking. Kathy said she hears the snowmobiles on the trails behind her house on nights and weekends but they're off in the distance; if the town constructs this new trail and allows motorized vehicles on it, she's going to be surrounded by noise. Kathy said she thinks the area should be managed for wildlife and asked if the harvesting would be done by someone who understands the difference between managing for timber and managing for wildlife. Kathy said local people can access the existing snowmobile trails in other ways. Glenn said ATVs are not currently allowed in the Town Forest although that discussion is evolving. Glenn said the Town Forest Management Plan was done with a forest ecologist. Kathy said once there's an access, you can't get rid of it. Kathy said the best part about the existing trails is that you can walk or ride a bike on them without hearing motorized vehicles. Dianne asked if Act 250 is involved. Glenn said District 2 has not been formally notified but they would be if the town decided to go ahead with the trail. Dianne asked if the people on Coaching Lane have been notified. Glenn said no; they have not been officially notified. Dianne said they should be. Dianne said she has noise, air quality, privacy, and safety concerns. Dianne said she is also concerned about her horses and her property value. Dianne said she will hire an attorney to fight this if she has to. Kathy said access for motorized vehicles will just increase the volume and the problems without a lot of benefit for the town. Arthur said he doesn't think it will impact him and Freddy as much but he respects his neighbors' concerns. Dennis said he's the only one who uses the existing snowmobile trail; he grooms and maintains it and, if there's no snow, he doesn't use it. Kathy and Dianne appreciated Dennis's efforts and don't have a problem with him using the trail but they don't think it should be open to everyone. Kathy said allowing motorized vehicles will ruin the non-motorized use. Dianne asked the Selectboard to notify the people who live on Coaching Lane if there are going to be any other meetings on this issue. Tom said he thinks Dianne and Kathy should be given a copy of the leash law. Kathy said her dog doesn't need to be on a leash on her own property.
- 4) Discuss employee health insurance benefits – Glenn said in 2011, our health insurance premiums were \$78,288. Last year, they dropped to \$60,313 so, even if we go with the best plan, we'd still be

spending less than we did in 2011. Glenn said we have to remember that the town would not operate as well as it does without the dedicated employees that we have. Bruce agreed that the town should keep the employees' liability to a minimum but it's difficult to accomplish given the annual increases in health insurance costs. Bruce said he'd like to be able to give compensation increases as well and he's not sure the town can afford to do both. Glenn said he thinks the employees' reactions will depend on the combination of health insurance benefits and compensation increases that the town is offering. Tom noted that people on fixed incomes haven't gotten any cost of living increase and he's not prepared to promise compensation increases at this point. Glenn said it's the Selectboard's responsibility to provide the voters with a budget that will keep the town functioning well; if they reject it, that's their choice. Tom said the Selectboard should be proactive in making the Grand List go up. Bruce said he thinks the Selectboard should inform the employees that the increase in health insurance exposure will be offset somewhat with compensation increases, without being specific about amounts or percentages. Tom said there's a difference between "exposure" and actual costs. Glenn asked Martha what she thinks. Martha asked for clarification on the out-of-pocket (OOP) maximums and said she doesn't think the employees will be happy if their OOP goes from \$1,000 to \$3,750. Martha noted that the OOP only applies to covered medical expenses so the employees are also paying for 100% of uncovered expenses such as dental and vision. Martha noted that both her kids had their wisdom teeth out this year, which was not covered by insurance and didn't count toward her OOP. Martha said the town will be asking the employees to embrace a lower standard of living. Bruce asked if it's better to have the decrease come from health insurance or salary because it's not sustainable to keep increasing both. There was discussion about the percentage increases under the various scenarios. Bruce suggested considering an "option 2.5" midway between "option 2" (no cost increase to the town) and "option 3" (no cost increase to the employee). Glenn said increasing the HRA contribution decreases the exposure for the employee. Martha noted that if the HRA contributions don't get used, they stay with the town. Tom said with HRA funding, if the employees don't use it, they lose it; with salary increases, they keep it. Bruce said there's no easy answer because it's going to affect each employee differently. Glenn suggested getting together with the employees to discuss the options and then making a decision. Bruce suggested giving the employees a copy of "option 2" and "option 2.5" so they have time to consider them. The Selectboard agreed to meet with the employees on Tuesday, October 1st at 8:00 AM.

- 5) Other Business – Grant opportunity: Glenn said he was approached by Ted Siegler about a grant opportunity to fund the expansion of town forest property. Glenn said Ted suggested that the town consider purchasing 290 acres of ski area property - trails only, no infrastructure - and leasing it to an operator. Glenn said, in theory, this concept would increase the likelihood of a successful ski operation. There was brief discussion about the effect on the Grand List and property taxes. Bruce asked if any of the land is being used to fulfill density requirements. Glenn said he doesn't think so. The Selectboard agreed to look into it further.
- 6) Sign Town Clerk's orders – **Glenn moved to sign orders. Tom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 7) Adjourn – **Glenn moved to adjourn at 9:47 AM. Bruce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison