

West Windsor Selectboard
Draft Minutes
September 28, 2020

Present at Town Hall: Win Johnson, Brett Myers, Matt Kantola, Mike Spackman, Tom Kenyon, Aaron Gonthier (Windsor on Air)

Present via zoom/phone: Martha Harrison, Deb Shearer, Glenn & Shelley Seward, Craig Gardner, Ken Parrot, Christine Rovinski-Wagner, Claudia Sacuk, Christine Erickson, Wendy Bodley, Ted Siegler, Jennifer Knight

- 1) Call to Order – Selectboard Chair Win Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM and noted that the Selectboard had just completed a site visit to the Sheddsville Cemetery with Tom Kenyon and the Cemetery Sexton. Tom is developing a new less expensive plan that we'll probably have to vote on at Town Meeting. Win said they also talked with Randy Perry regarding his concerns about the lower part of the land; Randy suggested removing some trees to open up the view. Tom noted that there won't be any more fill added to the cemetery.
- 2) Changes or additions to the agenda – Election planning, Tree Warden report, Letter from Ray Shannis, Letter of Intent for MRGP Grants-in-Aid program
- 3) Announcements/Public Comment – None
- 4) Coronavirus Updates – Mike had nothing to report. Win noted the new entry protocol for the Town Hall; the door is unlocked and there are precise instructions about masks and distancing. Martha asked Mike if the free masks he received have been distributed. Mike said no; he's probably going to distribute them Sunday at the Fire Station. Martha asked him to let her know if he wants an announcement on the website.
- 5) Ascutney Outdoors (AO) preliminary operations plan (addressing Covid-19 concerns) – Shelley said AO is going to do everything they can to try to operate this winter. They are encouraging people to buy supporter passes and will give priority to pass holders. Day use tickets may be limited depending on how many pass holders are skiing that day. People who are not from the same family (or other cohort) may not ride the T-bar together. Lodge capacity is limited to 50, so people won't be able to hang out there; it will be reserved for those who need to use the facilities or get warm. AO may also add a second or third fire pit so people can get warm without going into the lodge. Tickets will be sold downstairs, with ticket sellers inside and ticket purchasers outside. People using the tubing lift will have to be masked. The mask of choice will probably be neck warmers since many people use them in the winter anyway. Volunteers will not be able to give tubers a push and tubers will not be able to go down as a group unless they're in the same family or cohort. Shelley said if people are supportive of the rules, then AO will be able to operate as planned; if it's a constant battle, then they won't. Shelley said they will also need additional volunteers. Win said he has some old spring tiles that could be used as fire pits if AO wants them. Win asked about T-bar loaders. Shelley said lift loaders are going to have to be masked so they'll have to rotate more often. Shelley said all of AO's plans are dependent on state directives. Win asked Shelley to review the plans with Health Officer Nancy Gaynor. Matt asked about the rope tow. Shelley said they would run the rope tow for the Thursday night races but they're going to limit the number of racers and people will have to sign up and pay in advance. They're also not going to have potluck dinners. The school program will use the rope tow also but the ABS students and the Windsor students won't be able to be there at the same time. Win asked about cleaning the restroom. Shelley said everything will be cleaned every morning

and again at 2:00 PM. They will also wipe the T-bar bases and the tube handles every morning. Matt suggested changing the faucets to touchless. Shelley said they haven't considered that yet, primarily for budget reasons. Shelley agreed to update the Selectboard again in a couple of months. Matt asked if people can self-load on the T-bar. Shelley said no; that's against state tramway policy.

- 6) Transfer Station permits – Ted asked if we have a count of how many West Windsor residents have purchased permits. Win said he will find out tomorrow.
- 7) Discuss Library Air Filtration Unit – Win said he noticed this in the minutes of the most recent Library Trustees meeting; Tom brought it up last winter during budget discussions but the Selectboard hasn't heard about it since then. Tom said the Library Board investigated the installation of a Mitsubishi air conditioning unit for \$4,700. Matt said an air conditioner would just cool the air; it wouldn't filter it. Christine Rovinski-Wagner said we need something that will filter the air in order to move to Phase III of the re-opening plan. Win asked about the Library's heating system. Tom said it's a hot air furnace. Win suggested MERV-13 filters for the heating system. There are also small, portable, air filtration units, but they're hard to come by. Christine said "adequate ventilation" is the big stumbling block with regard to Phase III. Matt said air exchange would drive up energy bills because outside air has to be heated before it comes into the building. Matt suggested talking to ARC Mechanical or New England Air about air exchange and filtration. Matt asked if the Library has been busy. Christine said they're getting about half the traffic using the curb-side service. Matt said if the occupancy limit under Covid restrictions is three people, it may not be worth spending money on air exchange. Win said it's definitely worth spending money on better air return filters. Matt agreed. Brett suggested weighing the costs and benefits of the various options; it may make more sense to put in an air conditioner for the summer. Matt offered to look at the Library's existing system. Christine asked Matt to coordinate that with Peter. Christine said she will look into a filter for the heating system and a portable filtration unit, and will ask the State to clarify what "adequate ventilation" means. Win said the Library has only spent \$8,500 through the end of September so they're going to add to their reserves and can consider purchasing an air conditioner next year but he doesn't think the Selectboard should vote on it tonight. Win said he will send Christine an article on air filtration.
- 8) Forestry grant/Ash Tree Management Strategy – Ken said he and Craig would like to get a sense from the Selectboard if they support applying for a grant to remove less than a dozen ash trees that were identified as high priority for removal, primarily due to their size, condition and proximity to the road. Ken said they've also revisited the idea of doing an ash tree inventory along the trails in the Town Forest. Matt said when a tree falls on the trails, the ATA just cuts it up and removes it, so he thinks the work in the road right-of-way is more important. Ken said he was just suggesting an inventory along the trails, not removal. Win said the Conservation Commission (CC) has primary responsibility for the Town Forest, but it might be worthwhile to remove some trees from the road ROW. Win asked Mike for his opinion. Mike said he needs more information. Win suggested that Ken and Craig meet with Mike; if this grant provides us with an opportunity to remove some dangerous trees from the ROW, then let's apply for it. Ken said one of the grant requirements is that the Town has to have a plan or strategy for dealing with Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The grant also requires that trees be planted, not necessarily in the same place where they were removed. Craig said EAB is coming in from the north, east and south; although it hasn't been identified in Windsor County, it's most likely here. Craig said he thinks the State is trying to encourage

people to come up with a management plan for their town. Craig encouraged the Selectboard to review the materials that Martha sent out. Right now, we don't know a lot about the management options, but there are other states that have more experience with EAB so maybe we could use grant funds to set up a "brain trust" to help small towns come up with EAB management plans. Craig urged the Selectboard to think about using the grant for the management of EAB because it could get really expensive. Win said when we did the ash tree inventory, he thought the focus was going to be on removing dangerous trees from the town ROW; if the grant can help us with that, then it would be worthwhile. Win said let's put this on the next agenda; if Mike, Craig and Ken look at the trees and agree they should come down, then we can apply for the grant. Ken said he and Craig attended a CC meeting and they were supportive of an inventory along the trails in the town forest but were not responsive when Craig tried to initiate the inventory; since then they've decided against doing the inventory. Ken asked who has ultimate responsibility for the Town Forest. Win said the Selectboard is responsible but they delegate that responsibility to the CC so he would be reluctant to go around them. Martha said last fall Ted said the CC was going to work with Tii McLane on ash trees in the Town Forest so she asked him for an update and he said they had decided not to do that. Win said he's happy to talk with the CC to see if we can renew their interest. Brett asked about the consequences of not addressing EAB. Ken said small tree removal projects will not control EAB; he's just suggesting that we gather data on concentrations of ash trees along the trails. Martha said, given that we have a 1,500-acre town forest and EAB coming in from all sides, she would be interested in hearing Tii McLane's thoughts on the situation. Tree Warden report: Craig said he hasn't spent any of the tree removal funds yet; he has been talking with Tom and the highway crew and they agreed to keep him apprised of any dangerous trees that they can't deal with. Win mentioned the large pine tree by the maintenance building on the mountain. Craig said he looked at it with Tom and, in his opinion, the tree is healthy so he doesn't think taking it down would be the best use of funds. Craig assured Win that if a tree needs to come down, it will. Tom complemented Craig on getting GMP to take down a cracked tree on Brook Road.

- 9) Review West Windsor's Noise Ordinance & Discuss recent disturbances – Win said since we talked about this issue at the last meeting, there was an incident at the school; someone heard shooting and the school went into lockdown. The police came out and spoke with neighbors, which led to some bad feelings. Then there was a complaint from Brook Road about extensive shooting nearby. Win said he was asked to look into an ordinance banning the discharge of firearms within a certain area. Win said it hasn't been done a lot, but towns are authorized to do it and Killington has such an ordinance. Another option, Win said, is to modify the noise ordinance to add a decibel level. Tom said there was shooting in the vicinity of Coon Club Road on Friday that went on for quite a while, so it's a problem throughout the town. Matt said he thinks people are on edge because there's been a lot of gun violence in this country; people are scared in general, with Covid and everything else. Win said there are a lot of hot button issues: property rights, gun rights, rural tradition, child safety, school safety, and the rights of people to feel comfortable and safe on their own property. Win said it started with one incident, and since then there's been a cascade, but it's also the start of hunting season. Claudia said she thinks something should be done; it's a safety concern, but it's also very annoying. If people want to shoot, there are places they can go. Claudia suggested that shooting not be allowed in the village residential district. Matt agreed that the village is not an appropriate place to fire a rifle. Wendy agreed with Claudia and said she is

concerned about the safety of shooting in a residential area; you hear it and you don't know where the bullets are going, so it's scary. Jennifer said she was unnerved by the shooting in August; you hear about people getting hit by stray bullets and she couldn't tell where the sound was coming from. Jennifer said she needed to mow her lawn but she didn't feel safe; her dog was cowering for four hours and she's deaf. Christine Erickson said she thinks state law prohibits firing a gun within 500 feet of a dwelling. Win said the Selectboard would need to look into that. Matt suggested inviting a Fish & Game officer to the next meeting. Win said he was expecting to get more information from the school on the shooting that led to the lockdown, but he hasn't received it yet. Win said he would like to get eight or ten people with different perspectives together to discuss this issue. Jennifer said, with regard to the incident that went on for four hours, she was trying to work and could not get any work done. Win said we've agreed to send the family that sponsors that annual event a notice that it's disruptive, people have petitioned against it and, if it happens again, it will be subject to penalties under the Town's noise ordinance. However, subsequent to that event, there was another event and the school lockdown. Win asked for feedback on the group discussion idea. Christine said she likes the idea of having a Fish & Game officer come to a meeting and she also likes the idea of prohibiting the discharge of firearms in the village. Claudia said when you pass an ordinance, don't you have to have hearings about it and wouldn't that be when the other side could come and say their piece. Win said he would like to hear from them ahead of time. Claudia said she would be more comfortable with a public forum than a small group discussion. Win said he would do that but it's difficult under the current restrictions. Claudia said it's a very politically-charged time and she doesn't feel comfortable directly addressing the people who are shooting. Win said he understands that. Matt wondered how Woodstock addresses this issue. Win said he'll give them a call.

- 10) Town Clerk's report – Sign orders: Win said there is one additional order in addition to the ones he signed earlier today and it's the highway fund MRGP operating fee for \$1,350. Year-to-date financial information: Win said there's a \$94,000 expense in the highway budget for one of the culvert projects, but we have grants to cover most of those costs. Win asked about "other aggregate." Mike said that's ditch stone that will get reimbursed through the grant.
- 11) Highway – Foreman's report: Mike said the second Harrington Road project is complete; the band rail was put up this past weekend. Mike said Rush Meadow should be open on Thursday, but the band rail won't be done. Mike said they're almost done with the second mowing and then they'll have to blow the leaves out of the road so they can grade. Mike said the Kimball Farm Road ditching is in progress. Win asked about the caution signs for Rush Meadow Road. Mike said they've been ordered. Sign Municipal Invoicing Spreadsheet for Sheddsville Better Roads project: **Brett moved to authorize Martha to sign the spreadsheet. Matt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 12) Sign Local Match Commitment Letter for Local Hazard Mitigation Plan grant – Win asked if we need to do this. Martha said we have to update our Plan every five years; the grants won't be awarded until next summer so that will give us two years to do the work, which is roughly how long it took last time. Mike agreed. **Brett moved to authorize Martha to sign the match commitment letter. Matt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- 13) Ratify signing of Mt. Ascutney Stormwater Discharge Permit MOU – Win said he signed the MOU, and all the other parties signed it, but we can't find anywhere in the minutes where the Selectboard authorized him to sign it so he's hoping they will pass a motion. **Brett moved to authorize Win to sign the MOU. Matt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

- Win said Evan Fitzgerald was on site Friday and identified some issues; we should be getting a report. Win said he and Martha met with Evan and clarified which roads are town roads.
- 14) Approve revised Town Hall Use Guidance – Win said the guidance was revised to allow exercise class participants to exercise without masks, to specify that forehead temperature readings should be below 99.5, and to clarify the entry protocol.
 - 15) Sewer and Water updates – Sewer: Martha sent in the reimbursement request for Avery’s final payment and a few A+E invoices today. Martha also noted the RFP that A+E put out for the remaining manhole work, with bids due on October 7th. Jason is going to try to get someone to look at the sag. Water: Martha said there was a leak last week when the mower hit a curb stop that was sticking up. The leak has been fixed and A+E has suggested replacing the curb stop without the rod, and with the box below grade; if we diagram the location and note the gps coordinates, we can find it again with a metal detector if we need to. The surge arrestors were installed last Wednesday and the cleaning of tanks 2 & 3 will happen this Wednesday; we don’t need to shut off the water for that. Win asked about a bill for an “added voltage multiplier” from Champlin, which has something to do with strengthening the signal for Mission. Martha said she will look into it. Martha said P2 wants to get a brush hog to clear around the new valves near the Windsor building. Matt said he wouldn’t mind donating his time to do that. Martha said the hydrants are going to be flushed, probably on October 8th; she’ll put a notice on the website. Tom asked when the next Utility Committee meeting is. Martha said Monday, October 19th at 4:00 PM, primarily via zoom or phone.
 - 16) Other Business – Letter of Intent for MRGP Grants-in-Aid program: Win said the Selectboard needs to sign a Letter of Intent to participate in the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program again. **Brett moved to sign the Letter of Intent. Matt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** Martha said the work has to be done by June 30, 2021. Mike said he’ll meet with the Regional Planning Commission this fall so we’re ready to go in the spring. Ray Shannis email: Win noted an email from Ray Shannis wanting to honor several West Windsor residents for their service to the community. The Selectboard agreed that there are many residents who deserve recognition but they were concerned about recognizing some and not others. Mike suggested a “Citizen of the Year” award, and Win suggested an Honor Roll, with names added every year, but no action was taken. Election Planning: Win said, according to Cathy, we can’t open the mail-in ballots until election day. During the election, they can be opened, verified and dropped in the box to be counted; there will have to be a group at the Town Hall on election day doing that. Cathy is going to do a training for ballot counters. Matt asked if mail-in ballots have to be received by election day, or the day before. Martha said every state is different but in Vermont they have to be received by election day. Win said if you want to vote in person, you have to bring the ballot you received in the mail with you. Matt said he thinks people are going to need some education on the process. Mike said just follow the directions that are mailed to you.
 - 17) Next meeting – The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, October 13th at 6:30 PM.
 - 18) Approve Minutes – **Brett moved to approve the minutes of September 14th as written. Matt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
 - 19) Adjourn – **Brett moved to adjourn at 8:35 PM. Matt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Harrison