

**Town of Boscawen
Circle Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, July 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM**

Members Present: John Keegan, Chairman, Jeff Abbe, Julie Fournier, Beverly Drouin
Others Present: Kellee Jo Easler-Planning & Community Development Director, Paul Dickey,
Kearsten O'Brien

Chair John Keegan opened the public meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Chair Keegan read off the Covid-19 Public Meeting Notice of Telephonic Meetings, which reads as follows: In light of the state of emergency declared by the Governor on March 13, 2020, and to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the chair has determined that an emergency exists and that accordingly, until further notice, (a) members of the board may attend all board meetings telephonically, without the physical presence of a quorum; and (b) members of the public who wish to participate in hearings may, on request, participate telephonically or submit comments in writing to be included in the record of the hearing.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Election of Officers: Jeff Abbe nominates John Keegan as chair and Julie Fournier seconds the nomination. All in favor; none opposed. John Keegan nominates Julie Fournier as Vice- Chair and seconded by Jeff Abbe. All in favor; none opposed.

Proposal Reviews: Chair Keegan asked for questions and/or comments on the Franklin Savings Bank (FSB) and Pete & Gerry's proposals. Ms. Drouin asked when the FSB decision would be made. Chair responded at least four months. Moving to the Pete & Gerry's proposal there were questions from Ms. Fournier and Ms. Drouin about who the organization is and why they might be interested in supporting this proposal. Chair Keegan explained they are organic egg producers based in New Hampshire who contract with Tom Giovagnoli, who runs an egg farm on Route 4. The farm is here because town officials and volunteers encouraged Pete & Gerry's to support Mr. Giovagnoli enterprise in Boscawen after unsuccessful attempts in Dunbarton and Weare. In the process of working with Mr. Giovagnoli the owners and staff of Pete & Gerry's we have developed relationships that, hopefully, will lead to additional investment in Boscawen. At this point, the plan is for the Select Board to approve submission this Thursday, the 9th.

Brainstorming Additional Funding Ideas: Chair Keegan asked members for other funding and donation ideas. Ms. Fournier asked about approaching individuals. Chair Keegan reported he and Lorrie Carey had discussed using the Newsletters' here and in surrounding town's to solicit donations. Earlier this year the Agricultural Commission Circle Committee had raised the idea of a "Go Fund Me" campaign where donors could use their credit/debit cards to donate. This raised bookkeeping challenges for the Town and was backburnered. At this point, the

question was directed to Select Person Paul Dickey. He explained the context of the finance discussions unfolding among the Select Board as the pandemic was emerging. It became a serious challenge in the public sector. At the same time the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) informed the Select Board of their plans to repair two Boscawen bridges this summer. Anticipating serious negative impacts on both public and private income, unprecedented health challenges as well as falling tax revenue the Select Board did not want to ask local businesses to receive multiple solicitations for this project, Old Home Day (OHD) or similar initiatives. The outcome was to ask Chair Keegan to only solicit businesses that had not traditionally supported OHD activities; to consult with Mr. Hardy and Mrs. Phelps, the town's Financial Director, about the 'Go Fund Me' process. In conclusion, Select Person Dickey asked Mrs. Easler to comment on his recounting. She concurred with his explanation and suggested Chair Keegan, Mr. Hardy and she meet with Mrs. Phelps before the Select Boards next meeting to clarify the "Go Fund Me" process as well as the management of business and individual solicitations. Mr. Dickey agreed to the plan as did the Committee Members. Mr. Dickey supports the circle project and is optimistic that at least one of the funding proposals will be funded, which, hopefully, will provide an incentive for other funders to step forward. The Select Board, he noted, will be carefully examining the budget for 2021 and there may be opportunities for additional town support. Ms. Drouin suggested contacting the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF) as she was successful with a small grant application she and Adele Sanborn had submitted. Mr. Dickey supported the idea and identified Deborah Shackter at NHCF as a knowledgeable contact in the Charitable Foundation's Concord office. Chair Keegan asked for a volunteer to do the leg work. Ms. Drouin agreed to look into it. Chair Keegan reported that GMI has agreed to provide the top soil for the circle and suggested that donated materials might be another way to meet our needs. Chair Keegan has also contacted Stacy Luke, Program Director, at the Merrimack Count Conservation District (MCCD). The MCCD works frequently with farmers financing irrigation and drainage projects. They might be able to assist with discounts or funding. He will follow-up.

Placement of a flag Pole in the Circle: Ms. Fournier asked where the funding would originate for the flag and who would maintain it. Ms. Drouin asked if it would be in the middle of the circle, in addition to the trees that are now part of the plan or if the flag would replace the trees. Mr. Dickey explained this is a recent addition and, if approved by NHDOT, the flag would replace the trees. At this point, Mr. Hardy is in discussions with NHDOT about the flag's placement. Here again, the issue is driver distraction. Mr. Abbe added there may be Federal Rules constraining NHDOT's decision making. Returning to Ms. Fournier's questions, the town would provide funding for the pole and flag as well as be responsible for its care and maintenance. Mr. Abbe noted solar powered lights could be used for illumination. Mr. Dorsey explained that the Select Board had contacted Unitil about replacing the flags that used to line King Street but received a negative response. Not wanting to abandon the idea, the circle seemed like a logical option. However, NHDOT concurrence is needed to move forward.

Update water related issues: Chair Keegan referred attendees to Attachment #3, which was sent to committee members and Mr. Dorsey as part of the meeting packet. The attachment

outlines in detail the Penacook Boscawen Water Precinct's (PBWP) donations and a 'hold harmless' agreement related to excavation for the water connection but does not confirm, in writing, PBWP's water donation for irrigation at the circle. This confirmation is needed as part of the NHDOT permitting process for the installation of the irrigation line. Chair Keegan has contacted Mr. Crawford, one of the PBWP's Commissioners, who reported the Commissioners had agreed to this. It is a reporting error he will have corrected.

NHDOT sign agreement (Attachment #4): The letter enables the town to move the 'Welcome to Boscawen' sign and the seasonal crop sub-sign to the circle as long as the town conforms to the 'breakaway design requirements. The letter also reaffirms the 'no advertising' prohibition. Hence, the conversations with NHDOT about other sign options related to Pete & Gerry's. Ms. Fournier asked about placement of the three stone walls and their height. Chair Keegan responded the walls will be offset from the points where vehicles enter the circle and set back seven feet from the granite perimeter with the perennial plantings in front to minimize their distraction for drivers. Current plan is for 12 foot walls 22 inches high. This negotiation is with Mr. Radwanski, the District Engineer. There followed a discussion about the height of the walls.

Other Pending items (Attachment #5): Chair Keegan provided an overview. The principle items are the walls, see above, and the irrigation line from the corner of Fisher Avenue and Harris Hill Road to the circle. From that point the water line will be 'property' of the Town and be in the NHDOT right of way. The following are pending: NHDOT acceptance of our detailed routing plan; a completed and NHDOT approved excavation permit. With these approvals in hand installation of the line can proceed. The line must be at least two feet down and followed by a tracer wire which Dig Safe will use for tracking purposes.

Work Plan for 2021: Several Committee Members along with Mr. Dickey asked for a summary of the budget. The total is \$39,800 of that, we need to raise \$29,800. Currently there is \$2,000 cash on hand consisting of \$1,000 in the Woodbury Memorial Fund and \$500 dollars each from the Agricultural Commission and Town beautification funds bring the amount to be raised to \$27,800. There are two grant applications in process for \$10,000 each leaving \$7,800 to be raised from other sources.

The work plan is to complete all or the permitting with NHDOT and others this year. That done we can, 'hit the ground running' in April 2021. This would give us access to our landscaping partners before their schedules fill in May and beyond.

The sequence would be:

- Install irrigation line
- Build walls
- Spread new top soil
- Install irrigation on the circle
- Spread mulch
- Install flag pole or trees in the center
- Install the Welcome to Boscawen sign

- Do plantings
- Loose ends and maintain plantings, etc.

In the course of this discussion safety and planning work sessions came from many quarters. Mr. Dickey noted coordination with police, public works and others would be key. All agreed.

Next Meeting: August 10.2020 @ 7:00pm

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Ms. Drouin; seconded by Mr. Abbe. All in favor. None opposed.