

MINUTES

Cumberland Town Council Meeting

Town Council Chambers

MONDAY, July 12, 2021

6:00 – 7:30 P.M. Workshop re: Town Council Goal Setting FY22

7:30 P.M. Call to Order

Present: Councilors Copp, Edes, Foster, Segrist, Storey-King and Vail

Excused: Councilor Gruber

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Copp, seconded by Councilor Storey-King, to accept the June 28, 2021 meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

II. MANAGER'S REPORT

Work on the railroad crossings is scheduled to begin in a few weeks. The work is weather dependent and will hopefully be completed by Labor Day.

Blanchard Oaks subdivision was approved by the Planning Board. We have a pre-construction meeting with the developer this week.

We have received a request for a Mass Gathering Permit from a company in Florida who wants to hold a monster truck show at the fairgrounds. We have denied their request because of the number of police and EMS employees that they require at the event. We don't have the public safety resources that they require and an event like this would be a lot to ask that neighborhood to put up with.

III. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Ron Greco requested that the Town Council consider moving the election date for Town Council and School Board members from June to November. It feels like a failure of democracy and most of our citizens are not having their voices heard in these elections. The June election averages a 20% turnout versus a 70% turnout at the November election.

Bruce Sherwin of Blanchard Road said that he has been studying the Town's financial reports that are posted online. He discovered that between the years of 2011 and 2020, we lost \$1,630,479.00 at Val Halla. That is an average of \$163,048.00 per year. He does not think that the Town Council should be comfortable with that. Val Halla does not pay taxes and he sees no reason to be losing money at Val Halla. Between 2011 and 2020, the capital assets in this Town have increased 91.6%. That's a lot of money spent on capital assets that did not show up on the profit and loss report for people to see. 91.6% is big money. He also looked at school attendance numbers for each year and is not buying the attendance issue that keeps coming up from the School Board. In 2011 the attendance number was 1,500 and in 2020 it was 1,400. These numbers are based on the 2000 census. It's time to do a new one.

IV. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

21 – 075 To set a Public Hearing date of July 26th to consider and act on a moratorium ordinance re: Medical Marijuana Caregiver Uses.

Councilor Storey-King explained that the Ordinance Committee met last week with the Town Attorney to discuss the various issues related to marijuana growing. With marijuana, we have learned that the target has been moving since it has been approved by the voters. We are going to ask for a 6-month moratorium to get a better grip on what we can and cannot do. We have had 3 dispensaries open on Route 100 in close proximity to each other. It is not fair to the people in West Cumberland to keep allowing this use. The moratorium will give us more time to do a more thorough examination of our ordinance.

Councilor Segrist asked if the moratorium would affect existing dispensaries from operating.

Councilor Storey-King said that it would not, but could in the future if the ordinance changes.

Chairman Vail reminded the public that the purpose of a moratorium is to give the Town Council time to develop ordinances and take under consideration concerns that a community may have. He is concerned with indoor growing because it uses a tremendous amount of electricity.

Chairman Vail asked for any public comment.

No public comment.

Motion by Councilor Foster, seconded by Councilor Copp, to set a Public Hearing date of July 26th to consider and act on a moratorium ordinance re: medical marijuana caregiver uses.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

V. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Segrist – The Council met in workshop earlier this evening to talk about future priorities. He encouraged people to reach out and share their ideas with the Council as we are formulating these plans and priorities for the next year.

Mr. Greco brought up an interesting point about moving the election, but he was under the impression that there may be some additional requirements on the State level that may have to happen in order to make it work.

Town Manager Shane said that we would have to inform North Yarmouth if we decide to make the change because they also have School Board members on their ballot.

Councilor Storey-King – She reminded everyone to get your bicentennial gear now. The bicentennial celebration is fast approaching. Every Saturday morning, you can get your gear at the Farmer's Market, there is some on display at the library, or you can contact any of your Bicentennial Committee members to help you purchase some.

Condolences to the Casey family. Nancy Casey passed away recently. Nancy lived 74 of her 94 years on Middle Road. She raised her 5 children who all went to Greely schools, and she has great grandchildren who go to Greely now.

Senior property tax relief applications are now available on the Town website. If you are a senior who lives in our community, you can apply for a rebate on some of your property taxes.

She requested that the Town Manager add a visit from the Casco Bay Trail Alliance to our next meeting agenda to talk about the Casco Bay Trail system that would connect 13 municipalities between Portland, Lewison-Auburn and Brunswick. This sounds very much like the GPCOG plan from a couple of years. She met with Martha Laggat, who is on the committee, and learned that they are simply looking for support for the project. It will not cost the Town any money, they have federal funding.

Work at the Historical Society building is moving forward. Interior walls have been constructed.

Chairman Vail – Democracy is not a spectator sport. He cannot remember the last time that he missed an election. He made it his job to show up and vote. It didn't matter if it was in June or November. There is a responsibility for people to vote, no excuses.

Condolences to the Casey family on the passing of Nancy.

He thanked the Council for their input during the workshop this evening. It was very productive, and we have some good goals going forward.

Councilor Foster – On Friday at 6:00 p.m., our monthly community mental wellness event is going to be hosted by Trust Your Gut in North Yarmouth (at the intersection of Route 9 and 115). There will be a food truck, yoga, and activities for the kids. It really is an event for the whole family.

As a member of the Finance Committee, in response to Mr. Sherwin's comment about Val Halla, the Finance Committee is very much aware and have discussed Val Halla many times over the last year. We have taken the approach of not looking at it as a business, but rather open space. If you think about the amount of money that we spend on other open space (Twin Brook, Town Forest, Knight's Pond), the use of Val Halla isn't only as a golf course. While we are very conscious of minimizing the loss over the long-term, a lot of changes have been made over the last 12 months on how it's operated and to increase efficiency. The past is not a predictive of what we are expecting in the future.

In regard to moving the election, the school budget vote would still be in June and that is a concern for her. While she very much agrees that the turnout is disappointing in June, when you consider how important and impactful those elections are, to separate even more from the budget vote would be a concern for her. That piece is 70% of the entire Town budget.

Councilor Edes – Condolences to the Casey family. He spent a lot of time at their house when he was growing up. The only political sign that they ever allowed on their lawn was his. He was very blessed to know them and sent condolences to the family.

Councilor Copp – He continues to support the 4-H fund that provides the food pantry with meat and urged everyone to do the same. It is a very worthy cause.

He agreed with Mr. Greco that 20% of the population should not steer the ship. People need to get out and vote. It's very important and everyone has a responsibility to vote on important issues in our Town.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Storey-King, seconded by Councilor Copp, to adjourn.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

TIME: 8:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Moore
Council Secretary