

MINUTES

Cumberland Town Council Meeting

Town Council Chambers

MONDAY, March 14, 2022

6:00 P.M. Budget Workshop

7:00 P.M. Call to Order

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

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Gruber, seconded by Councilor Foster, to accept the February 28, 2022 meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE: 6-0-1 (Segrist abstained) MOTION PASSES

II. MANAGER'S REPORT

Property taxes are due tomorrow. If anyone is concerned that we may not receive their mailed tax payment by the due date, we will accept the postmark date and your taxes will not be considered late.

Paving costs have increased 10 – 15% due to an increase in asphalt and fuel costs. We hope to be able to continue our paving schedule. More to come on this as the summer progresses, but now would be a good time to plan and work on the engineering of projects.

Councilor Edes asked the Manager for an update on the railroad quiet zones.

Town Manager Shane said that we are still not having any success with the Falmouth Country Club crossing. The railroad is insisting that we make a public crossing there, meaning that would have to be some type of public road. As previously discussed, there is approximately 2,000 feet of private road (Murfield Road) from Winn Road down to the railroad crossing, then another 1,000 feet down to the next private road. As of now, that is the only crossing in Town where whistles are blown.

III. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

None

IV. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

22 – 025 To discuss a request from the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) to find housing for 700 refugee families in the Greater Portland area.

Chairman Vail said that he received an email from the Executive Director of the Greater Portland Council of Governments, Kristina Egan, looking for temporary housing for refugees. He thought that this would be a great opportunity for the Town of Cumberland to do some good. He discussed this with the Town Manager and some other members of our community and discovered that they are looking for the type of housing that really does not exist in our community. They are looking for housing with multiple units on public transportation routes. He and the Town Manager are meeting this week with Kristina Egan to discuss other alternatives that we may offer. He will bring this back at our next meeting.

22 – 026 To consider and act on a Wharfing Out Permit for 301 Foreside Road, as recommended by the Coastal Waters Commission.

Dave Witherill, Chairman of the Coastal Waters Commission, explained that this is a standard application. The commission conducted a site walk and studied the engineering report, and no issues were found. The Commission is recommending approval. There is ample room under the pier for colonial rights that allow fishing and fouling.

Chairman Vail asked for any public comment.

No public comment.

Motion by Councilor Gruber, seconded by Councilor Storey-King, to approve the Wharfing Out Permit for 301 Foreside Road, as recommended by the Coastal Waters Commission.

VOTE: 7-0 UNANIMOUS

22 – 027 To endorse a solar field for the MSAD 51 present and future campuses.

Chairman Vail explained that Councilor Segrist and Denny Gallaudet drafted a letter to encourage the school to consider solar power for their campuses. He asked Councilor Segrist to give more details.

Councilor Segrist said that a few weeks ago, MSAD 51 gave a presentation to the Town Council regarding a proposal for a new school. For the most part, he feels that everyone is excited and supportive about the project. One of the first items that he voted on as a new Town Councilor was our Climate Action Plan. One of the items in the plan is making sure that new public buildings in the Town of Cumberland are built to zero net carbon standards. When the School Board presented on the new school, he was very happy to hear geothermal referenced, but one of the things missing from the plan was solar for electricity. He and Denny Gallaudet, who is on the Lands & Conservation Town's Climate Action subcommittee, put together a draft letter and passed it around to the other Town Councilors to review. The purpose of the letter is to let the School Board know that we as a Council are in support of them moving forward with solar, if they are able to do that. We (the Town) have the experience with solar. We have a solar farm that provides electricity for all the Town buildings and the goal would be that if the school could also implement solar, this wouldn't necessarily need to be part of the bond amount. It could be separately financed through a company like ReVision Energy who could get the investors lined up, get the property lined up and build the solar farm. Electricity would eventually be free, but there is an upfront cost.

Councilor Foster added that in the letter, we offered the school our help and want to support them in this endeavor.

Chairman Vail asked for any public comment.

Mike Williams, MSAD 51 School Board member, voiced his appreciation and said that he looks forward to working with the Town. He is a huge proponent of solar being part of the project.

Dotty Spaulding of Greely Road asked for some clarification. We haven't even voted on a new school yet.

Chairman Vail said that this really doesn't have to do with the new school by itself, it is to encourage the school to consider solar for all the campuses in order to offset the cost of electricity for all the school buildings.

Motion by Councilor Segrist, seconded by Councilor Gruber, to endorse a solar field for the MSAD 51 present and future campuses.

VOTE: 7-0 UNANIMOUS

22 – 028 To authorize the Town Manager to execute an Agreement for Services with the Town of Gray.

Town Manager Shane explained that the Town of Gray reached out to ask if we would be willing to share our front counter and code enforcement services. This would be in the event that either of us got into trouble with staffing. Over the holidays last year, the Town of Falmouth needed our assistance due to their front counter employees having to quarantine because of Covid. Falmouth has helped us in the past when we need code enforcement services because our code officer was out on a medical leave. No money is exchanged with these agreements, we simply help our neighbors out when needed.

Chairman Vail asked for any public comment.

No public comment.

Motion by Councilor Copp, seconded by Councilor Gruber, to authorize the Town Manager to execute an Agreement for Services with the Town of Gray.

VOTE: 7-0 UNANIMOUS

22 – 029 To hear a presentation from the Town Manager re: Route 100 Redevelopment Plan.

Town Manager Shane presented the following redevelopment plan for the intersection of Route 100, Skillin Road and Blackstrap Road:



This will only be possible primarily because of what the Federal Government is offering for assistance with infrastructure improvements. He met with the TIF Committee several weeks ago and asked them if we should pursue some federal dollars and should we try to work with the Department of Transportation on a plan for Route 100? A few years ago, we tried to get a traffic signal at the intersection of Route 100 and Skillin/Blackstrap Roads. That attempt was unsuccessful and MDOT recommended a 4-way stop sign instead. Nobody thought that was a good idea because a 4-way stop had the potential to make that intersection even more unsafe.

This roundabout is only a concept of what is possible for that intersection. We want to present a vision to potential businesses that we want them to come to West Cumberland. We will hold a neighborhood meeting next Tuesday at West Cumberland Hall to get input from residents and answer any questions.



Current View



Same area with proposed updates



Roundabout concept

Chairman Vail asked for any public comment.

Cathy MacDonald of 17 Tammy Lane said that she has seen so many accidents over the years on Route 100. She is pleased to see this plan. It is wonderful.

Gerald Croce of 20 Skillin Road said this would be a great asset for the community of West Cumberland. Being a member of the Fire Department, he has been to several accidents at that intersection. This will help to slow traffic down while keeping it moving.

Raymond Mixer of 9 Dragonfly Lane said that he likes the addition of commercial business there. The speed on Skillin Road concerns him. The speed limit is 35 mph and people drive 45+. That is a very high-density area, and some residents have to cross the road to get their mail. Something needs to be done about this.

Sandra Gorsuch-Plummer of 56 Forest Lake Road said that her concern is with the scale of commercial development and how that is going to impact the neighborhood. She hopes that it will be small, locally owned businesses, not large box stores.

Town Manager Shane said that we simply do not have the acreage available for large businesses in that area. We are talking about small café type business or small markets.

Chairman Vail urged everyone to fill out the Town-wide survey that is now available online. These types of concerns and ideas can be addressed in the survey.

Councilor Copp urged everyone to come to the neighborhood meeting next Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at the West Cumberland Hall. There will be tables with large drawings of the plan for everyone to look at and ask questions.

He owns 3 corners of that intersection, but this is not his plan. He thinks that it is a good idea, but he is not the guy who is steering this. He would like to see more business in West Cumberland.

George Turner of Carriage Road said that he drives through that intersection almost every day to go to work. A roundabout is a good idea, and the Town Council deserves a lot of credit for considering it. He thinks back to when the Town Council approved the two subdivisions at the bottom of Morrison's Hill. He tried to sell that property as commercial for at least a few years. There was some interest, but it ultimately didn't sell. Out of frustration, the Town Council decided that it would be appropriate to sell it for affordable housing. If there had been a roundabout there, he wondered if that property would have sold for commercial development.

Cathy Wright of Skillin Road said that her concern with roundabouts is that some of them are too small. She thinks that this is a good idea, and she is delighted that there are sidewalks going down Morrison Hill. She would like to see sidewalks on Orchard Road. There is a new development on Blanchard Road Extension that will have sidewalks, but there is no sidewalk connection. This makes no sense to her.

Motion by Councilor Segrist seconded by Councilor Edes, to authorize the TIF Committee to work with MDOT to determine the feasibility of a new development plan for Route 100.

VOTE: 7-0 UNANIMOUS

V. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Segrist – He will be meeting with the Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Town Staff to fine tune the draft language for the Senior Property Tax Deferral Program. More to come on this in a couple of weeks.

He is very happy and honored that his grandfather, Bob Watts from Des Moines, Iowa, has made his way out to visit him and is here this evening.

Councilor Storey-King – The Town Manager has been invited to join the Rails to Trails Committee. She was hoping to also be invited to join the committee but was not. She will plan on attending the meetings because they should be public meetings, just like the Public Utilities Commission meetings are.

Last Thursday, she had the pleasure of meeting with other elected officials from the School Board and North Yarmouth for the Coffee Chat at the Library. There were only a couple of people in attendance, but it was a lot of fun. For those who missed the Coffee Chats, they can be viewed on the Town's website.

Tomorrow is her mother's 89th birthday. Happy birthday, Mom!

Councilor Gruber – The Planning Board meets tomorrow night.

Thank you to all the Food Pantry volunteers.

Chairman Vail – He came across the goals list that the Council developed a few months ago. Upon a quick review, he said that we have completed a lot of the things on the list, and some are a work in progress.

We are all concerned about things happening in our world. Hopefully, the pandemic is behind us but when you look at the global landscape, things are tenuous and can change in a moment. We will make sure that we have plans in place to address the changing landscape. We have asked the Town Manager to make sure that there are contingencies in place to deal with any challenges that this community may face.

Councilor Foster – We have wrapped up the four sessions of Coffee Chat’s. There has been talk about maybe doing something monthly, so keep a lookout for this. It is a great way to connect and chat about the different pieces of each of the government bodies and how we work together. It was a great opportunity for folks to see the interaction of all three bodies and realize how we really do have to work collaboratively.

A reminder to everyone that the Town survey is still open and can be found on the Town website. We are currently at 40% of our target response. If you haven’t taken it yet, please do so.

Next Monday, we will not be holding a Town Council budget meeting, as previously scheduled. Instead, the Town Council decided that it would be a good use of our time to attend the School Board meeting where the Superintendent will present his preliminary school budget. The North Yarmouth Select Board will also attend.

Councilor Edes – Earlier this evening, we had our third budget meeting. He realizes that he asks a lot of questions and challenges why we’re spending money in certain areas. He has always felt that we have plenty of tax money and we don’t need any more tax money from the people of Cumberland. We have to decide what our priorities are in spending.

Councilor Copp – He made his donation to the 4-H Fund. This is a worthy cause that benefits the Food Pantry and the 4-H kids. He hopes that other people will donate as well.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Copp, seconded by Councilor Edes, to adjourn.

VOTE: 7-0 UNANIMOUS

TIME: 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Brenda L. Moore
Council Secretary