



Village of Manchester, Vermont

PO Box 482
Manchester, Vermont 05254-0482
(802) 362-1515
villageofmanchester.com

Regular Meeting

Village of Manchester Board of Trustees

Monday, January 6, 2020

4:30 p.m., at the Village of Manchester Office, 45 Union Street

In Attendance: President, Brian Knight; Trustees: Richard Moore, Jim Lewis, Bill Mariano and Nina Mooney; Clerk/Treasurer and Tax Collector, Julia Arvin; Road Foreman, Alan Mowrey; Assistant Clerk/Treasurer and Secretary, Missy Bell-Johnson

Public: Donald Brodie, Marian Haines, Lu French, Audrey Kolloff

President Knight brought the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Trustee Moore presented a two page recommendation for two edits to the modification of the November 4, 2019 minutes (attached). All voted in favor of both changes. A short discussion on the approval of the 3-way stop on Prospect Street ensued.

- Donald Brodie provided an overview of the Planning Commission's and Energy Subcommittee's work on the Village Energy Plan. He included information on Act 174 and provided a briefing on the assistance provided by Catheryn Byers of the BCRC with the development of the Plan. He also spoke about the chain of approval for the Plan and the need to establish a budget. Lu French then provided more detail on the Plan development, the reason for the Plan and how the subcommittee is preparing to proceed in obtaining its objectives. She listed the community members who have been, and will continue to be involved in the development of the Plan. Questions were posed and answered and comments made about the helpfulness of the update on this project. Mr. Brodie and Trustee Mooney mentioned that all are welcome to attend any of the meetings. President Knight confirmed that an Energy Survey would be going out shortly to local businesses. The importance of Thursday's subcommittee meeting was stressed.
- Nina Mooney's written request to have the Village of Manchester Board of Trustees request that the Planning Commission review the Bylaws and Village Plan of Development in regard to Burr & Burton Academy's purchase and conversion of homes into dormitories and office space, and the resulting loss in tax revenue, was presented. Trustee Mooney motioned to approve the request and Trustee Moore seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Trustee Moore commented on the timing and indicated that providing information or findings on this matter by March may be difficult as the Commission was busy with the Energy Plan. Donald Brodie recommend the trustees review the Bylaws instead or refer the matter to the Development Review Board and mentioned that the Village may need legal advice on this

matter. Trustee Mooney expressed that she lacked confidence that the DRB was the proper entity to review the Bylaws. President Knight mentioned that the path for this request is from the trustees to the Planning Commission; therefore, it should not be handled by the trustees. It was mentioned that estimating a timeline for this project would be premature. Trustee Mooney mentioned that this analysis pertains to other areas in the Village and not just BBA and said that it went to the character of the village. She elaborated that the trustees should not be telling the Planning Commission how this matter should be reviewed. Donald Brodie mentioned that he would discuss this request at a Subcommittee work Session scheduled for this coming Thursday. The date of the next Planning Commission meeting was provided as the second Wednesday in February.

The Board then reviewed, approved and signed State of Vermont Liquor Licenses for Benchmark Manchester Village, LLC, d.b.a. Equinox Resort.

Update on Outstanding Issues:

- **Seminary Avenue, West Road and Route 7A Intersection and Traffic Study;** Trustee Mooney expressed that she would like to see signs placed at Franklin and Dillingham that would prevent turning onto these roads at certain times of day. Road Foreman Mowrey explained possible challenges and he and Trustee Mooney discussed possible options. It was mentioned that any signs would need to comply with state rules. It was also mentioned that this plan could have a negative effect on traffic moving from Seminary Avenue. Foreman Mowrey recommended that Franklin could be made a one-way street from Seminary to West Road and that he felt it would be the safer way to address the excess traffic. Speed bumps were discussed and dismissed. Trustee Moore motioned to have the Franklin and Dillingham Roads made one-way streets from Seminary to West Road. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion. A majority of trustees voted to approve. Trustee Lewis abstained from voting and mentioned that he would like to see the matter reviewed again at the February meeting. Foreman Mowrey discussed work that would need to take place and challenges with getting sign posts in the ground at this time of the year. Julia Arvin mentioned that some sort of public education would be appropriate and mentioned a similar decision in the Town of Manchester that created safety issues. A warning notice in the Journal was mentioned and discussed. Trustee Lewis would like to see the idea reviewed by the Village Attorney.
- **Bennington County Courthouse (B. Knight & N. Mooney):** There was no update available.
- **President's Update (B. Knight);**
 - A walker was injured recently while walking on Union Street and the matter was reported to the Village's liability insurance company.
 - Thank you again to Marian Haines for her efforts on the holiday decoration project. The lights look great.
 - The Development Review Board and the Planning Commission will be discussing the demolition of the Opera House. Questions are being raised about closing down Union Street which is not feasible. This project is in a preliminary phase with Zoning/Planning and the Equinox's attorney. It is going to be a big project.

- **Reports:**
 - **Roads and Trees (J. Lewis):**
 - i. Trustee Lewis opened the tree bids prior to the meeting to compare them. The Village received two bids. Five requests to bid were mailed out. The lower of the two bids is Trees, Inc. Total costs are within the budgeted amount. Trustee Lewis motioned to approve Trees, Inc. for this years' projects. Trustee Mooney seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Foreman Mowrey explained the procedure from this point forward and estimated that the work would be completed in a timely manner.
 - **Treasurer/Tax Collector (J. Arvin):**
 - i. Tax collection: Currently 12 properties are outstanding. Three payments came in today. The old library property is still pending. Vermont Mountaintop was 7 years in arrears but that bill was paid today. The trustees should be seeing a much shorter tax collection report going forward. Those properties still on the list may be outstanding for some time.
 - ii. The Heavy Equipment Fund transfer was done twice. It will be corrected immediately.
 - iii. The project of transferring checking to Bank of Bennington is still in the works. It was temporarily side tracked due to scheduling and the holidays.
 - iv. Software for the office was discussed. Two options were provided including their features and costs. Questions were posed and answered and options proposed. The cost of one of the programs was determined to be out of line with budget constraints. All approved to move ahead with the purchase and transfer to QuickBooks.
 - **Administrative Officer (E. Scott) – review of written Zoning Report: Written report submitted and on file.**
- **Other/New Business:**
 - Trustee Moore asked that the trustees be polled if it appeared that a Regular Meeting needed to be canceled in the future. President Knight responded “so noted.”
 - Trustee Mariano motioned to go into Executive Session to discuss Ways Lane. Forman Mowrey expressed his interest in talking about Ways Lane as well. Trustee Lewis mentioned that discussing a Village road was not a reason to go into Executive Session and there was general agreement. Forman Mowrey then briefed the trustees on a proposed upcoming water project being handled by the Town of Manchester on Prospect Street and Taconic. He explained the possibly of having the project slightly altered to prevent possible damage to the newly paved Taconic Road. Trustee Lewis was asked to look into the project and to report back to the trustees.
 - Forman Mowrey then provided background into Ways Lane and the Town of Manchester’s plan to have the intersection with Route 7A modified. It was clarified that the Town of Manchester was, at one time, intent on presenting a plan to modify this intersection. Forman Mowrey had a preliminary discussion about the plan with the Town engineer and it was determined some changes needed to be made to the plan prior to approval. Curbing work, at the expense of the Village of Manchester was going to be necessary if the plan went through. The plan was never presented to the

trustees for consideration. Forman Mowrey continued by confirming that there have been no accidents at this intersection since he started working for the Village 35 years ago. He mentioned that he did see some close calls when the road was blocked off for recent work on the water/sewer vault in that area. He also confirmed that the State of Vermont was not involved in the Town of Manchester's plan nor is it currently concerned with this intersection. Trustee Mariano was asked if he had further concerns. General concern was voiced that larger projects need to be provided to the trustees for vote. It was also agreed that communication with the Town of Manchester could improve.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:54 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Missy Johnson, Secretary