

Town of Charlemont
ALL BOARD MEETING
July 25, 2013
Mohawk Park Restaurant

In attendance: David Cunningham (Board of Selectmen), Beth Bandy (Board of Selectmen), Larry Mann (Finance Committee), Jerry Gosetti (250th Committee), Robert Lingle (Board of Health), Gisela Walker (Planning Board), Stephen Ferguson (Planning Board), Michael Kane (Planning Board), Sarah Reynolds (Assessors), Steven Reynolds (Park & Recreation, Tree Warden), Bill Harker (Park & Recreation), Eric Dean (Hawlemont School Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals), Alan Booth (Conservation Commission), Ruth Cannavo (Board of Health, Conservation Commission), Charlotte Dewey (Zoning Board of Appeals).

Select Board Chairman David Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:12pm. He noted that the Board of Selectmen are looking at municipal space this year. Ms. Bandy explained that the Town would be rolling out read-only access to FundWare, the town's accounting software, to make it easier for everyone to monitor their funds and expenses.

Ms. Walker made a presentation about three primary issues on which the Planning Board will be working this year: the creation of an Earth Removal and Gravel Pit Board; the creation of a Village District Plan; and medical marijuana.

Regarding the first issue, Ms. Walker said the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) has collected bylaws about Earth Removal and Gravel Pit Boards from other towns. She asked for volunteers to participate in an October 17 meeting to review what other towns of done and to determine what might or might not work in Charlemont. Feedback from that meeting will be used by FRCOG to draft a sample bylaw, with a public hearing to follow. Mr. Lingle, Ms. Cannavo, Ms. Bandy, and Mr. Dean agreed to volunteer for this role. Mr. Dean also suggested that Douglas Dean be contacted regarding this issue, with which he has personal experience.

Ms. Walker stated that the second issue on which the Planning Board is working is a Village District Plan, as suggested by Marguerite Willis at All Town Meeting in May. Ms. Walker shared maps of the village, noting that of 79 lots in the center of town, only 11 conform to a one-acre lot size zoning requirement. One option is to change the required lot sizes. She also noted that no one has enough space to start a business with a public water supply.

Ms. Walker, Ms. Cannavo, Mr. Kane, Mr. Mann, and Ms. Dewey discussed the relationship between a possible Village District and the current Historic District. Ms. Walker asked for suggestions about how best to address this issue in All Town Meeting (ATM), so that it can be given enough time for discussion. She, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Dean, Mr. Reynolds, and Ms. Dewey then discussed the options. Ms. Dewey suggested that the issue be placed at the end of the ATM, so that it could easily be continued to a Special Town Meeting, if necessary.

Mr. Lingle pointed out that, with thanks to Representative Paul Mark, Cold River Package had overcome the water-related challenge it faced in the expansion of its business in Charlemont. Mr. Lingle noted other businesses in town that have encountered other water issues with the DEP. He cited

the case of Country Aire Campground, which was asked by the DEP to abandon an artisanal well and drill a new one that cost \$50,000, although tests of the artisanal well did not indicate any problems. Mr. Lingle stated that Charlemont is the first to address the water issue at this level. He said there would be a meeting in September with Representatives Kulik and Mark regarding next steps and funding. There was a discussion of past attempts to create a town aquifer that “went down in flames,” according to Ms. Walker.

Mr. Cunningham encouraged everyone present to use two email forwarding addresses to share information. Sending an email to depts@charlemont-ma.us will distribute that message to all boards and department heads, while an email sent to finance@charlemont-ma.us reaches everyone involved with Town financial matters.

He then asked for reports of current projects from those boards with representatives present at the meeting. He said the goal was to increase communication between boards.

Mr. Dean stated that the primary issues he was addressing on the Hawlemont School Committee concerned safety. He explained that the school building plans did not accurately show the doors and egress routes in the basement – a potential problem for emergency personnel responding to a fire. He also discussed insulation, the school's well, and flood insurance. Regarding the latter, he said the school is not longer covered by flood insurance following Hurricane Irene. Ms. Cannavo noted that numerous “safe spaces” in Charlemont – including the school and Fire Department – are located below flood level. Ms. Bandy pointed out that this issue should be addressed while exploring municipal space needs.

Mr. Harker, representing Park & Recreation, stated that the tennis courts were being refurbished, and extensive work had been completed at the Fairgrounds. He said Park & Rec wanted to take on more projects in order to make the town look better. Park & Rec may request additional funding at ATM in order to do more. He said they wanted to show the town what they could do before requesting funds, however. He reported that Park & Rec members had been working effectively with the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Lingle noted that the town's business community will benefit from the efforts put in by Park & Rec. Mr. Harker said he would like to see increased communication in town. Mr. Cunningham mentioned the new Parks & Rec handbook as one example of better communication. Ms. Cannavo asked if John Glaze had been thanked for his \$15,000 gift to refurbish the tennis courts and baseball fields. Mr. Cunningham said that he had been thanked.

Ms. Reynolds made a report on behalf of the Assessors. She said they are restructuring their work with Charlemont's consultant to the Assessors. They have found some properties that have not been taxed in the past. This is a revaluation year, so tax bills may change. She discussed the creation of GIS versions of town maps. Use of GIS maps will allow the assessors to tell whether or not deeds are accurate without having to conduct a costly survey. Once the Assessors maps are in GIS, they may be useful to other Town boards, as well.

Mr. Lingle reported on behalf of the Board of Health that 122 Main Street was sold. He stated that the building repairs have been going well and that the new owner was “making progress.” He pointed out that newly-refurbished units must be inspected before they can be rented. Mr. Lingle said the owner was trying to improve the building's appearance. Mr. Harker noted that the back side of this building “looks good.”

Mr. Lingle also reported that the new Town Nurse, Lisa White, is in Charlemont on the second Tuesday

of each month from 10:00 am to noon. He said he had met with the head of Nursing at the University of Massachusetts Amherst to discuss health issues in western Massachusetts. These included increasing medical care access for the elderly; Lyme disease awareness; high rates of asthma here and regionally, especially among children; and hoarding, the topic of a conference to be held at Smith College on August 10.

Ms. Cannavo raised the topic of an aging population. She was concerned about how seniors could get into town without transportation.

Mr. Gosetti spoke about the 250th Committee. He reported that the committee was planning a parade on Sunday, June 21, 2015, which will be Father's Day. The committee also is looking at the possibility of holding a road race, having activities at Hawlemont, a river race, an agricultural day, and more. The committee hopes to have all events scheduled by the end of this year. He noted that the town is not providing funds for these events, but a fundraising letter for the 250th celebration was sent out with tax bills recently. Since July 1, the letter had raised \$2,000.

Ms. Dewey reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals has been involved with two issues recently: expansion plans for Cold River Package and a garage that was built too close to a road.

Mr. Harker asked about the funds donated by Berkshire East for town beautification. Mr. Cunningham explained that the gift was made two years ago. The Board of Selectmen met with the Schaefers at that time to determine how to distribute the funds, which are now available for reimbursement of painting and exterior renovations. Approximately \$5,000 has been distributed so far. Grants are limited to \$1,000 each, but an exception was made for Avery's General Store, which received \$3,000.

Ms. Walker asked who in Town government has the authority to make grants. Mr. Cunningham reported that this responsibility lies with the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Gosetti encouraged everyone to look at parking when discussing municipal space issues in the coming months.

Mr. Cunningham raised the possibility of an informal town meeting, hosted by the Board of Selectmen, at the Fairgrounds in September.

He also said the role of the BoS includes supporting other Boards. To that end, he asked if anyone had suggestions about things the Board should do. Ms. Walker stated that the Town should hire a Town Administrator. There was general agreement that the Town would benefit from better communication among boards and departments, as well as with residents. The BoS was encouraged to find ways to address these issues.

The next meeting date was set for October 10, 2013 at 7pm, with a venue to be announced.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by Beth Bandy.

Document reviewed: All Board Meeting Agenda