

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
AUGUST 4, 2020  
MINUTES

**PRESENT:** David Lage, Chairman; John Veaser, Shawn Talbot  
Town Administrator Scott Butcher

Chairman Lage called the special meeting to order at 6:00 pm at the Town Office.

**TLR BIG TENT REVIVAL EVENT**

Lars Somero and Marcus Rautiola are the local hosts of the TLR event. Chairman Lage stated he wanted to hear what the plans of the hosts and organizers were and how they intended to adhere to the Governor's guidelines regarding COVID-19.

Lars Somero stated they would be using an open-sided tent so that concerns about masks and social distancing would be minimal. He stated that masks would be optional if people choose to wear them and that they had spoken with the State of NH and mask wearing wasn't mandatory (yet.- Governor Sununu issued Emergency Order #63 on August 6, 2020 that mandated mask wearing in groups of 100 people or more). Chairman Lage asked if they had read the Places of Worship Guidance issued by the State of NH and if they're going to abide by them in the interests of protecting the community. His concern are the TLR attendees that will be leaving the property each afternoon to "share the gospel" in New Ipswich and surrounding communities in Southern New Hampshire.

Selectman Veaser asked if the people traveling with TLR from out of state going to quarantine for 14 days per the Governor's guidance. Lars said no, they will not be quarantining. They believe they are all healthy. Selectman Veaser said they are selling tickets to people they don't know so how do they know they're healthy when they arrive? Selectman Talbot said the concerns he is hearing the risk of expanding exposure while these people are moving around the community. Chairman Lage said he has never received so many e-mails express concern on an issue as this one.

Marcus Rautiola asked if the gathering was legal. Chairman Lage said that while legal, there are a lot of people in the community that are very concerned about the spread of COVID-19 and want to know what they are planning to do to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. What steps are they going to take in a dangerous pandemic? Selectman Veaser wants clarification on how they plan to protect the community. Chairman Lage stated that there are town residents that won't want to be approached by members for the TLR group. Lars stated that anyone can tell them they don't want to be approached. They will be respectful of their wishes.

Chairman Lage asked how many people would be going out into the communities to preach. Lars estimated 100-200 people per day. The total event is estimated to be 200-300 people and two large tents plus a children's tent are to be used. No one will be sitting close together, and sanitizer will be available. People could bring their own masks. An audience member asked if the TLR people would be willing to wear masks when they go out each afternoon into the community. Lars said no. Other members of the audience voiced their concerns about the spread of COVID-19 since many members of the group are traveling from their last stop in Illinois without quarantining. What about public safety?

Chairman Lage stated that the Selectmen and the Town Administrator have been in communication with the NH Dept. of Public Health and the Attorney General's office regarding the enforcement of the Governor's orders. The town does not have the ability to stop this event. Chief Carpenter added that he has been in discussion with other agencies for support and resources if required. The TLR group only needs a permit for the tents and they will be inspected by the Fire Chief.

#### **SUBDIVIDING/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Chairman Lage opened the discussion to potentially subdivide the landfill/transfer station land to create a commercially zoned parcel for development. He estimated there is about 140 acres. He asked whether the Board should be considering a warrant article next Spring for the voters to consider. Selectman Veaser said there would be some benefit in turning the land into something that would generate tax revenue rather than remaining town owned. Chairman Lage also said the are of the capped landfill may be suitable for a solar farm to generate electricity for town facilities.

The Town Administrator suggested contacting the Southwest Regional Planning Commission to help identify what parcels of land are most appropriate for commercial development. He also encouraged utilizing the information in the Master Plan and the PlanNH Design Charette that the town completed several years ago. Chairman Lage said there have been attempts to define a commercial district in the past. The landfill/transfer station property is at least away from mot residential areas to prevent conflict.

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

The Selectmen discussed the tax deeded properties and the need to dispose of the. There was some discussion on whether selling via sealed bid or using an auctioneer should be pursued. There would also have to be evictions that take place before some of the properties could be sold.

Chairman Lage asked the Town Administrator for an update on the Smithville Cemetery and NH DES dam issue. There has been no response form the NH DES regarding our request for another meeting to address the most recent issues raised.

Selectman Veaser stated he was approached by John Poltrak regarding the Boston Post Cane which towns ceremoniously give to their oldest resident. He wondered whether the Town Clerk might be able to identify who the oldest person in town is.

#### **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

At 7:26 pm Selectmen Veaser MOTIONED to enter a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II(a). Selectman Talbot SECONDED the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

At 8:19 pm Selectmen Veaser MOTIONED to leave the non-public session and return to public session. Selectman Talbot SECONDED the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. Selectman Veaser MOTIONED to seal the minutes. Selectman Talbot SECONDED the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.


At 8:20 pm, Chairman Lage entertained a motion to adjourn. Selectman Veaser MOTIONED to adjourn. The motion was SECONDED by Selectmen Talbot and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott Butcher, Town Administrator

Minutes approved by:  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

  
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David S. Lage, Chairman

  
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John Veaser

  
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Shawn Talbot