

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
December 6, 2022

In attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant - AA)

Absent: Ron Madan

John called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Budget Items

- Sara mentioned that each department has approached her with concerns about pay. There has been talks that we haven't done anything since the last wage study and it stated in the wage study that it should be revisited in a few years. That was done in 2015. The cost of insurance, fuel, heating oil, electricity and everything has gone up well over the 3% increases that we give and they feel this should be revisited before the budget is finalized. Norm thinks this is why they cannot find anyone for the Transfer Station. Other Transfer Stations are paying \$18 or more. McDonalds and Dunkin Donuts are starting pay at \$16/hr. which is more than our Transfer Station employees are making. The Select Board asked that Sara put together a list of what everyone is making so they can look at the wages. Sara will have this ready for when they sign checks next week so that we can discuss this at the next meeting.
- The Bridge House is asking for money again this year. We have never donated to them and it was agreed to hold off the last few years. This is a program serving veterans from housing through hospice. They are asking for \$2,000.00. The Select Board agreed to hold off again this year.

Transfer Station Items

- Ron will not be able to assist at the Transfer Station as much. We still have the position posted online and on the bulletin boards. Sara asked if we should post this again in the paper. The Select Board agreed that we should and can discuss the pay later, after they review it.
- The Transfer Station will be closed Sunday December 25th and Sunday January 1st due to the Holidays. Sara has posted this online, on the calendar and on the bulletin boards. The reminder is also on the agendas. Norm should be posting a sign at the Transfer Station if he hasn't already. The Select Board said they do not think many people will go to the Transfer Station on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve after 3:00pm so he could close early if he wants to. Sara will talk to Norm about Christmas Eve and New Years eve to see if the hours need to change. If so, she will post the changes.

Emergency Management Meeting

The meeting that was supposed to take place on December 3, 2022 had to be cancelled. We need to set a date to reschedule this for. Sara will see if Saturday December 17, 2022 at 9:00am works.

Driveway Permits on Class VI roads

Pam Hamel sent Sara a message that there it looks like someone is putting in a road or driveway off of Old Rumney Road, the Class VI section. She asked if driveway permits were required for Class VI roads. Sara and Bubba believe it should be because even though a class VI road is not maintained by the Town it is still considered a Town road. We emailed NHMA to see if they had any guidance and even NHMA's email didn't really answer the question. Sara's thoughts are that if we require them to send a letter yearly stating any work or maintenance being done on a class VI road then they should inform the town

of driveways or new roads being constructed off of them. The Select Board agreed that since it is a Town road then they would be required to submit a Town driveway permit. Tony said that the Town should be made aware and be able to provide feedback to protect the Town Road. Sara will ask Bubba to go out to Old Rumney Road to take a look at this concern.

923 North Groton Road

It was brought to the Towns attention that 923 North Groton Road put a tiny house at their location and never submitted a building permit for it. It is definitely larger than 100 square feet. Deb Johnson emailed that without a permit, a tiny House was installed by the owner of map 2 lot 100, 923 North Groton. If this is allowed, we must allow others to do the same, and should amend our Zoning for clarity. Also, Deb added that this is in contravention of the building guidelines and Zoning.

Deb supplied the following information:

Groton Guidelines say - No permit shall be issued

- for **the erection of any structure** or for the use of land unless the proposal complies with the provisions of Groton Ordinances, and meets all other requirements (including required State or Federal permits) **or**
- for **the installation of any detached structure** more than 100 sq ft.

Therefore, Deb added the owner should have applied for a building permit from the selectmen. The Select Board agree that a building permit is required. Sara will draft a letter stating a building permit is required. The Select Board agreed the letter can come from Sara on behalf of the Select Board.

Planning Board items

The Planning Board asked the Select Board to be made aware and provide their feedback on a few items:

- *Tiny House:* Deb sent the following information on tiny houses for the Select Board to review:

Groton “permissive” Zoning says –

- Groton is a single-family town and definition of Building, Dwelling Unit, and Residential Dwelling all control. Therefore,
 1. A Tiny House may be considered a single-family residential dwelling only if it is built on a fixed foundation and intended as a permanent dwelling unit rather than a portable recreational vehicle/tiny house.
 2. the tiny house must be constructed without wheels, or if already constructed with wheels on a trailer, they must be removed with a proper sill plate constructed and a permanent foundation
 3. The applicant must submit a building permit to the Select board and that application must have a DES approved wastewater treatment system, PUC approval along with Residential Energy Code Application approval. These applications and approvals will insure proper construction of your septic and water well.

The Planning Board lawyer wrote, our Ordinance does not speak specifically to tiny houses, but they are likely already captured by the Ordinance’s broad dwelling-related definitions.

If we want to allow them as “camps” or “transient dwellings” we can amend our Zoning Ordinance.

Considerations for the selectman –

1. Taxation of Tiny Houses: Our assessor email that the same tiny house built on a foundation/basement would have the most value. The one on piers/tires would have a small negative adjustment, the one on a concrete slab would have no adjustment, the one on a crawl space would have a small positive adjustment, and the one on a full foundation/basement would have a little greater adjustment.
2. Transient nature if we allow them on wheels or mounted to a trailer.
3. Any allowance of a tiny house with its wheels on or mounted to a trailer most likely will encourage more tiny houses in Groton.
4. If treated as a single family dwelling the owner will be allowed to have a 2nd one placed on the lot as an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).

John thinks we should leave the tiny house label out and say any house not on a permanent foundation cannot remain permanently on the property and put a definition on how long it can stay there. This could be a camper, tiny house, camp, etc. Tony agrees. Sara will send this to Deb. They don't think we should dictate what size house you can live in. Tony added that mobile homes still have wheels and are on blocks and the intention is to be permanent.

- *DES Subdivisions:* Sara received a DES approved subdivision and sent it to the Planning Board because she had never seen one and wanted to see if the Planning Board was aware of this one. The Planning Board was not aware and did not approve the subdivision. Deb called DES and they said they have the authority. She then talked to NHMA and after discussions with the lawyers at NHMA, it has been confirmed that DES does not have the authority to subdivide and force Towns to sign their prepared Plots. She was advised to have our lawyer write the surveyor and land owner informing them that they must proceed through subdivision with the Town. She wants to know if the Select Board wants the Planning Board to handle this. Of course, they will work with Sara and keep the Select Board advised. The Select Board agreed that the Planning Board should handle this.

Building Permit

Sara was asked if a building permit is required for a rhino shelter, garage in boxes, etc. that are not permanent structures. Sara answered yes if it is over 100 square feet because the permit states anything over 100 square feet requires a permit and not necessarily something that is built. The guidelines state erection not necessarily building and also says installation of any detached structure including sheds, barns, decks, docks etc. so Sara believes this would fall under that. There seems to be confusion on that so Sara wanted to double check with the Select Board on this. She did check with Deb Johnson as well and she said that a building permit is required. The Select Board agreed a building permit is required on anything over 100 square feet so it would be required on these shelters that are over 100 square feet, whether a permanent structure or not. There was a question about storage containers as well. The Select Board agreed if they are just there to fill and move then there is no need for a permit and it wouldn't be assessed but if it is there to be used a shed and stay on the property then yes it does need a permit.

The owner of Map 6 Lot 38 dropped off a building permit for a 12x8x24 rhino shelter/portable canvas garage in a box along with the release form. He lives on a private road so the Planning Board will have to review. The Select Board asked Sara to send to the Planning Board for review. **John motioned to table the building permit for Map 6 Lot 38 until the Planning Board reviews it, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Junkyard properties

We still have not received any payment from two of the junkyard properties that were supposed to pay towards legal fees, etc. Sara has sent multiple letters. The Select Board agreed that we should reach out to the attorney and explain that these payments still haven't been made and ask what the next steps should be and since we have sent multiple letters if a letter should be sent from the attorney.

Meeting with Bubba

Bubba met with the Select Board to go over the following:

- Bubba said he is still waiting on the backhoe. **John motioned to encumber the funds for the backhoe if we do not get it in 2022, Tony 2nd, so voted.**
- They are just waiting for snow.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 6:58pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant