

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

St. George Town Office

MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 2023

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Richard Bates (Chair), Steve Cartwright, Van Thompson, Wayne Sawyer, Randy Elwell, Richard Erb, Irene Ames, Mike Felton, Rob Kelley, Trish Ohler, Jane Conrad and Patricia St. Clair.

Via Zoom: Present were Ken Oelberger, Bob Oliveri, Loreen Meyer and Greg Soutiea.

REGULAR SESSION

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjustments to the Agenda

Veteran Property Tax Exemptions and County Tax Payments were added to New Business Action Items.

Town Property on Kinney Woods Road was moved to the first item on the agenda.

Letter of Interest to Northern Border Regional Commission for CTE/Makerspace Building Funding was moved to the second item on the agenda.

Town Property on Kinney Woods Road

Bates

Let me give a recap of where we are and then I will hand it over to Rob and Trish. On November 14th of last year, the Select Board met and voted unanimously to allow the CDC Housing Committee to look at the 78-acre town owned property that is north of Kenney Woods Rd. The intent was to assess its potential for workforce housing. Winter intervened, and it wasn't until March 31st, when the snow had cleared, that the committee got around to having a good look at the property before meeting with Steve, Rick and myself to tell us about what they learned, which I think you will find is very encouraging.

Rob Kelley

Thank you. Unfortunately, we had this string of bad luck, where every time we wanted to get the surveyor on the property it snowed, so it took us much longer to get that done than we had hoped. I'll tell you what we found, and then I'll talk about what we see as the next steps. The property has far more wetland than is shown on the plot, which is not a surprise. St George is wetlands and ledge. A pleasant surprise was that there is what appears to be an existing logging road that was fairly well planned. It follows the highest ridge on the piece of property. The advantage is there is already a road which gave us easy access to look at what was essentially dry property and theoretically buildable land on the property and there is a significant amount. I can't tell you how many acres because I am not good at estimating that sort of thing. One of our first steps is going to be mapping the wetlands so that we understand what the setbacks are going to be. Essentially, that plus a topo survey will give us the ability to map a buildable plot. It's not insignificant. I would say that if we did this, not as cluster housing, but under the current land use ranks which have an acre per plot, and the fact that some of that could be on down slopes, there are probably ten or fifteen possible units.

Trish Ohler

That is a conservative estimate on what we call dry land, depending on water and sewage disposal.

Rob Kelley

There will probably also be plots off of Kenney Woods Rd. The advantage of the existing logging road is that it actually will be a very attractive place to have a home. It's back from Kenney Woods Rd and beautifully wooded. It was logged a while back because there's fairly significant softwood.

Elwell

The Kenneys had that cut before it was given to the town.

Rob Kelley

Do you know how long ago that was?

Bates

2002.

Rob Kelley

It is very promising. Obviously, we don't have the technical expertise to map it yet. That's the next step. We will engage with a wetland delineator who will flag and geotag the edges of the wetland so that we can actually get that into a plot, and then they'll do a lidar survey to give us a topo. That's going to run about \$5,000 per our surveyor. I'm going to go to my board after tonight and ask that we cover it. I am hoping that at some point we can partner with the Town to cover some of these development costs, but I also recognize the financial situation that we're in right now. I'm cognizant that we want to move this forward and don't want to force anyone's financial hand. We think the logical next steps would be after the survey is complete. We will have a partner build a pro forma subdivision plan. We wouldn't be going through everything because we don't own the property, but it would give the public a taste of what that might look like. We're assuming building would be done in phases because of funding. It's a fair amount of funding, although having the land helps because you have an asset to borrow against in doing construction funding. The informal discussion that we had, was that potentially, the Select Board would bring that to the voters in November, giving us time to be able to share with the community what this project would potentially look like and to answer any questions or address any concerns, so that people felt like they have enough information to make an informed decision about whether or not this town asset is appropriate to be put to use for developing affordable housing. There'll be a lot of questions like, "What does affordable mean"? Those answers are harder to give straightforwardly than you might think. Some of it depends on the funding we get. If we get HUD funding, that has a certain definition. If we get FAME (Finance Authority of Maine) funding, that has certain definitions. If we get Housing Authority funding, that has slightly different definitions. We'll basically build the best plan we can against the funding sources we have access to, that meet the greatest need. We are committed to seeing this through. We have already probed funding sources and are quite certain that we can get this going. We will likely partner with organizations in doing this. Habitat for Humanity has been a spectacular partner for our community in the development of 40 Long Cove Rd. If any of you haven't seen it yet, take a drive by. It looks great and there is a family of six in there. I'm really excited about this. Habitat has a lot of resources that will be beneficial for us in terms of experience, affordability and also potentially partnering with the brand-new Mid Coast Regional Housing Trust. I think I mentioned them the last time I came to talk to you. They have now received their 501c3, and they would be a partner to us and would hold the ground lease. As you may or may not be aware, the way these programs are usually done is the land is owned by an entity that enforces covenants that are inserted into the deed and that ensures that the house is resold at an affordable rate. In other words, you couldn't flip the house and sell it for full market at double value and it keeps that house affordable at whatever the level of inflation is.

Bates

When we talked on Wednesday, it sounded like that was something you did already.

Rob Kelley

It is not done yet.

Bates

It sounded positive because there was some concern about whether the land would be transferred from the Town.

Rob Kelley

That's still to be determined. I'm speaking with them over the next couple of days about their ability to take land in the future. The fact that we're potentially pushing this back to November allays that fear for me. If it were sooner, I think they might not be ready.

Rob Kelley

The land would be owned by that entity. We would be responsible for building the project. We would probably spin off an LLC that would be a development entity. There is an advantage in having them hold the land lease. Essentially when you buy a house, you also acquire the ground lease, the land the house is sitting on. This is how Monhegan's affordable housing initiatives work and how many others do statewide. The advantage to us in them holding the lease is that you need somebody there, for example, when the House turns hands, to explain and enforce the deed covenants. We don't want it to be a volunteer on one of our committees who did all that work and then isn't around for the future and that's why this housing trust was created. Towns all through Knox County have seen this need and essentially the idea is whenever we do a development project, we can then have the deed held by the entity. They'll enforce the ground lease covenants. We would still be accountable to the community in whatever contractual way is most appropriate. I don't know exactly what that looks like. That land would only be developed in affordable housing and would be used for no other purpose. The houses are not necessarily going to be built this year. It is probably going to be phased, but the idea would be that after the survey, we would come back and request this portion of that plot be essentially transferred for affordable housing, not the whole plot but enough for cluster housing. We would figure out the best configuration for that in terms of the maximum number of houses that we could construct on the lot within the land use regulations.

Bates

There are a lot of things to work through and postponing the public vote to November gives us a lot more time.

Rob Kelley

There is a lot we have to do. It is in our best interest and frankly to our collective interest to address community concerns. If somebody wants to drill deep and really get into the housing weeds, we have time for that, and also to address concerns that might come up that we didn't anticipate, and can formulate intelligent responses.

Trish Ohler

I think the important piece is funding across multiple funders with the same goal of workforce affordability, accessibility, and attainability. Everyone is using a variety of words to try and convey. Our hope is these will be houses that people who want to live in St. George and work in St. George and need housing to accommodate themselves would be interested in, and I think it gives us an opportunity to take a parcel of land not currently in the tax rolls and return that to the town so that taxes get paid on it and we continue to ensure the viability of a town like St. George for people and families.

Van Thompson

And teachers.

Trish Ohler

And firemen and EMTs, and people we all need around us in the town. I think our goal is to explore the funding, and to be open to doing it in a way that makes sense, given the constraints of development and land use in town. I was a big voice for taking the time and sort of moving us to the Fall so that we can be sure information goes out and we're all in a mode to listen to people's concerns and see how we can address them in a way that works for everyone and makes it attractive for people to come to town and be part of what's great here.

Van Thompson

Are we looking at how we're going to coordinate with the Planning Board in terms of ordinances?

Trish Ohler

Obtaining our wetlands delineation and the topo maps will inform us of what we need to bring to the Planning Board to have that discussion.

Rob Kelley

I would say it's twofold. It's that. Also, obviously with the vote that's coming up with the alignment of the land use rules, we're expecting to sit down with the Planning Board and begin talking about best practices in terms of some of the things that are allowed in the comprehensive plan.

Van Thompson

Should we recommend somebody from the Planning Board be involved right from the beginning?

Rob Kelley

If they have the bandwidth, absolutely.

Trish Ohler

We are open to that certainly.

Rob Kelley

I discussed this with them maybe two years ago when they were just starting the process of the alignment and they were overwhelmed. Now might be the right time. That's what I'm saying and frankly we will accommodate that, because we don't want their dissipation

Bates

I would think if Michael Jordan had time, he would be a great addition. It is a transition for the Board with Wayne and I stepping away, and some of these decisions we could leave for a couple of weeks, and I would feel more comfortable with the new Board making them. Maybe Michael would find time to be involved and I was also thinking from the Select Board point of view for Steve to be the connection with the Board but that is something you could leave for May 10th. I think it would be useful to have somebody from the Select Board stay closely in touch with this because as Trish and Rob mentioned, there are going to be all kinds of questions and it's important that we stay abreast of them so that we make sure we get something the town needs which is an increase in the stock of housing that will allow for a diverse community. I think it's really important.

Rob Kelley

We obviously welcome that connection. For this to go smoothly, all of us need to be working together and we need to have our ear to the ground in terms of what the constituency is thinking.

Elwell

Does the 78 acres include the town forest, the piece of land the town took many years ago for back taxes?

Bates

On this drawing is the Kenney property.

Cartwright

The public certainly needs to know that it is not the town forest.

Rob Kelley

We can definitely look into that. Rick, can we find out what parcel that is?

Erb

I think we need to because I've been asked that a few times.

Rob Kelley

Ideally, we will find the most buildable, flat land and if it has any soil on it, that's even better.

Jane Conrad

The only piece of the land use ordinances that has not been addressed, that's been set aside for later, was the subdivision ordinance, so if you're contemplating a subdivision, that is another reason that it would be useful to have Michael paying attention. If the Planning Board is going to hear your application, he couldn't be a voting member, but if he's paying attention to what you're doing, and providing resources about current land use, as they contemplate the subdivision ordinance, whenever that's going to be.

Rob Kelley

We would love to do this in concert with appropriate but more permissive density, because it would allow us to build more cheaply with shared engineered septic and other things that will bring the cost down rather than having that full acre lot with leach fields. One final thing that I didn't mention, that I think is going to be an important thing for the whole community to understand, is that the town is about to make a big commitment here. How do we know it's going to work? That's part of our partnering strategy. Habitat is an important partner for this because they've done this before. The other partner will be Genesis, who has increased the amount of development work they do and their technical assistance early in a project has already been committed to this. We've had a preliminary conversation with John Egan there. They will be an important partner. They know the funding. They know the funders well and they work with them all the time. They know how to construct a project so that it can be funded and help work out the parameters on pricing and income levels. They will be a super important partner for us as technical expertise.

Trish Ohler

Genesis, in the last year to eighteen months has really come to understand that sometimes the predevelopment and the early work on a project is what is hard to do in a small community because funding is so tight. Towns don't have money just sitting around to invest in a risk and a home, but Genesis has the most experience and is willing to devote more of their resources to help their small groups in small towns explore what's effective and move forward in those processes in a very cost-effective way. For our group, which is really a small group here in a small town, it will be key to be able to get all the technical information, and to get the engineering connections, prior to investing or borrowing a huge amount of money. Their role in this along with gathering town voices will be crucial to success.

Bates

On the meeting we had on Wednesday, I went home very excited that we may at last begin to tackle this problem we have had in town for the last several years of getting affordable housing and to increase the diversity, so while I'm not going to be on the Select Board, I'm still going to be very supportive of this and try to do what I can.

Cartwright

I am just echoing what you said. We have people that work here, and they can't live here. That's typical of coastal communities. Some of the worst problems are in places like Bar Harbor where you couldn't possibly live on MDI

Rob Kelley

Coastal and island communities are actually having to solve this themselves because we all face the same problem. The Island Housing Trust on MDI is a shining star in terms of building community supported affordable housing initiatives. We're absolutely going to copy parts of their model. It's been very successful.

Trish Ohler

It is decades of work. Bringing partners in early, understanding that there is expertise in our own community and in neighboring communities, and listening closely to that, we can move forward at a little bit of an accelerated rate so we're not having to learn everything from scratch ourselves, but really tapping into what's out there. I really appreciate the comments here, showing your understanding that having the Planning Board and the Select Board keeping people informed and working together is really important. You hate to get through a step in your process and start hearing the "Why didn't you" questions. That frequently happens not by intent, but by a lack of design in identifying a partner. I think it really promotes success and it allows for a smoother process, getting to what I think could be a wonderful community on that Kenney Woods property. It's great up there.

Bates

Thank you, Trish, for coming in.

Van Thompson

I still like the term obtainable housing.

Rob Kelley

There was an interesting piece in the Portland paper last year. If you look at the housing market, there's a housing shortage at every income level. The housing shortage is so tight, that people aren't upgrading their homes because they can't afford to. They could sell it for a fortune, but they would have to pay a bigger fortune to get that next home.

Bates

It's hard to be sympathetic about some of them.

Rob Kelley

True, but the point is that it is essentially trickling down. That means that other housing is not opening up and is causing other challenges.

Trish Ohler

The number of sales is down substantially this year, not because people don't want property in Maine and not because people aren't ready buyers or cash buyers. It's because the amount of inventory is so constrained, it has really slowed the marketplace. That is true from entry level to the highest level. It has really compressed the market which isn't good for towns, and it isn't good for the economy. It isn't good for people. We'll do our part.

Bates

Thank you, Trish. Thank you, Rob, for coming in. There's going to be a lot of work to do between now and November but it's a great program.

Rob Kelley

We will update as frequently as you want. Obviously having a direct connection helps but I want to make sure that you know, as you're fielding questions from the community, etc., that we're here to collaborate.

Letter of Interest to Northern Border Regional Commission for CTE/Makerspace Building Funding

Bates

Mike would like the Select Board, on behalf of the town, to send a letter of interest to the Northern Border Regional Commission in order to help fund the CTE Makerspace building. Reading the mission statement on the Northern Border Regional Commission, it seems like this is well within the remit of what they're set up to do, and so I forwarded the four-page summary to the Board earlier this afternoon. It seems well within their mission statement to fund something like this. It is to fund economic development infrastructure projects through designated counties in the four states service area, provide investments and job creating projects that help reduce poverty, unemployment and outmigration. It seems perfect. I think we are all familiar with CTE Makerspace and what they are trying to do.

Mike Felton

The Northern Border Regional Commission, I think, is federally funded. They do economic development in northern states, and they also fund infrastructure, which is big for us because a lot of

organizations don't. They fund big numbers, millions of dollars. We would like a letter of interest to submit to them but that needs to be submitted from the Town; it can't be submitted from the school. We'd like to have Rick or Richard sign off on it and when it was done it would go to the Northern Border Regional Commission, and then if they accept it, and like the letter, then they'll invite us to apply for formal funding.

Bates

Does it need to be in by the end of April?

Mike Felton

April 21st. The grant writer sent me that draft that you see today.

Van Thompson

Is this a draft of the letter?

Mike Felton

This is the draft of the letter of interest.

Van Thompson

It looks like a proposal.

Mike Felton

We have a much longer one.

Van Thompson

I was impressed with it. However, I get a kick out of the fact that when we get down to the bottom of page three, the number of students field, you've left it blank.

Mike Felton

It was the grant writer. I think he was trying to figure out the number of students for a metric.

Bates

It seems like something that the Town should be ready to support. As soon as you have it ready, we can send it in.

Mike Felton

I really appreciate that. Kristin Falla and I will come back later because there have been some developments. We've done a redesign of the building to push the cost down and we'll share that design with you and we're going to be going back to the Planning Board for a new location, closer to the

school. We're really excited that we've had some recent fundraising success with some matching gifts. We are right around a total of about \$1.7 million.

Cartwright

What's your new goal to reach?

Mike Felton

It's probably going to be over \$3 million. We brought in \$1.5 million in a year.

Cartwright

That's really impressive.

Mike Felton

We haven't really leaned on grants yet. A donor is paying for us to have a grant writer. That's who is helping us with this. We're really committed to getting this done. We just had someone from the Department of Education visiting today who does extended learning opportunities, which are CTE apprenticeships, and that kind of hands-on work. He said there is no one doing anything like this anywhere. The teachers have developed a draft curriculum and there is no other pre-K through 8th grade CT curriculum.

Van Thompson

I want to congratulate you on your writing here.

Mike Felton

A lot of different people helped, including Margo Kelly,

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Cartwright, to approve the Letter of Interest which will be sent to the Northern Border Regional Commission for the CTE/Makerspace Building Funding, based on the draft submitted by the St. George Municipal School Unit, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mike Felton

Thanks so much. I really appreciate it.

Bates

I noticed on the new design that the building has solar panels on the roof. The Planning Board will really like that.

Mike Felton

One of our supporters really wanted to see solar panels. It's not included in the total cost. We'll have to raise that separately. We want to get that done. I just had a student email me today about it and she wants to figure out how to install the solar panels.

Cartwright

That's educational. How about heat pumps? Do you have those in the plans?

Mike Felton

I think that's on the list. I think they talked about that.

Bates

Thank you, Mike.

Minutes

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Thompson, to approve the March 27, 2023 Public Hearing for the Establishment of the EMS Ordinance Minutes, as modified, and by a 4-0 vote, the motion carried (Sawyer abstained).

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Thompson, to approve the March 27, Select Board Meeting Minutes, as modified, and by a 4-0 vote, the motion carried (Sawyer abstained).

Communications

A communication was received regarding Flavored Tobacco.

Warrant**Irene Ames**

I added two more items to this warrant, than what I had emailed earlier. One is the quarterly unemployment tax. I didn't think I would have time to get that done today. I did. I had to add Ben Vail's senior lunch in there. I did both of those. The grants that you see, George's River Regional Shellfish Management Grant (GRISMO), one for \$5000 and one for \$4500 for the DNA grants, came as checks issued to the Town. We had to deposit the checks into our bank account and then transfer that money to GRISMO's bank accounts. You'll see the expense there, but the money actually came in from a grant. The train trip is for Ben's group going by train from Brunswick down to Boston, and then coming back three and a half hours later. Everybody just gets off in Boston and does what they want and

then comes home. That is actually already funded by the people that are going. They paid the Town for the tickets and then the Town purchased one large allotment of tickets, so that's not really an expense. The money came in for that. That is about it. I did not see anything else that was unusual or out of the ordinary.

Bates

Okay, thank you.

Town Manager Report

Erb

Today, Nat Lyon contacted me. Remember he was here to speak about parking at Marshall Point, and he has provided me with language for signage to advise people of the limited turnaround capacity and keeping RVs out. I believe we're going to be able to work that out. Those will be posted so that people have the opportunity before it's too late for them, and so they'll know the limitations there. I would say right now the expansion of the parking lot is basically on hold until further notice but I'm glad to see them doing something. There is a need; the situation is not ideal as it is.

You'll notice these reports I handed out show what the building permits of various types of work were for the first quarter of 2023. The reason we were able to do this is the iWorQ software that we have. We are finding it much faster to get information. I asked about a particular permit and was able to pull that right up where it would take a fair amount of research earlier. You can see what the permits for the last three months have been.

CPMs contract has been signed and the Harbor Committee is meeting Thursday, April 20th. They will have their own meeting with CPM, and I know one of the things they're discussing is what type of public meetings do we want to have evolve from that? So far so good. CPM seems to be good to work with. They have their office trailer on site down there now.

Cartwright

Somebody was asking me if they'd started work yet and I said I didn't think so.

Erb

We just had the contract signed. You'll notice on the Town's website we have information on the ambulance vote that's coming up. It also went in the newsletter that Ben Vail puts out.

Bates

Thank you, Jane.

Erb

Good suggestions. You recall we are looking for a moderator to take Michael Mayo's place and I had not heard from John Spear. He was going to check on his availability. There is someone else who has done town meetings in the area. His name is David Kenny, and I've had some contact with him. I don't think I've met him in person; I might have seen him at one of our meetings. He is the Town Manager in Lincolnville and he's done the town meetings for the Town of Rockport. I hear he is a great guy. We emailed back and forth about his philosophy on town meetings, inclusiveness, and not becoming overly hung up on Robert's Rules, but basically running a very open town meeting. He's double checking with his own employers to make certain he is available but as of right now, I think we have a moderator.

Erb

You may have noticed we have float construction underway again. It's pretty much Ryan on his own this time around. Stevie is tied up with other offspring duties that he's taking care of right now. These are smaller ones. It's the second time around and it's going faster.

Cartwright

They look great. Are they going to Port Clyde?

Erb

I think they are going to Tenant's Harbor.

Cartwright

There is still a big stack of them down on the town landing, so I didn't know if they needed even more floats.

Erb

I'm not sure to be honest. They are smaller by quite a bit. I put out the RFP for a real estate agent for the tax acquired property and there is definitely interest. These are the requests for proposals. Tim Polky and I have had some e mails back and forth to work out the agreement on transfer of the ambulance. We are really close.

Bates

There are a lot of things going on right now. Things like the transfer of the ambulance. Thank you for pursuing that one. Do we have any questions for Rick about what's been going on with these items or anything else that needs to be discussed? Thank you, Rick. Things are moving along nicely.

Committee Reports

Bates

The Harbor Committee is meeting next week, and I was discussing with Rick about when we took possession of 10 Cold Storage Road and had an open house back in 2014, where we invited the public to come down on a Saturday morning to listen to the Select Board, the Town Manager, the Harbor Master, and the Harbor Committee. A repeat of that would handle one side of what might happen. We have to make sure that everyone knows that there will be some disturbances to Port Clyde in the summer. The question really is for the Harbor Committee to decide how best to address this and whether we have to have a public meeting.

Elwell

I think there should be one here. The Harbor Committee has been making sure the public is happy and helping to deal with whatever issues they come up with. They are very thoughtful.

Cartwright

I did attend the Conservation Commission meeting. What sticks out in my mind was the big project to make the accessible trail down to Fort Point. They talked about working with the State to get permission to make the trail go overland to the to the fort site itself without disturbing any artifacts that might be underground. They think they'll get the approval for that. They might as well have the trail go all the way and not stop at the edge of the field. The other thing was building that bridge over the gully where there's a stream, and finding access from Spring Lane, because if they can't, it's going to be a nightmare trying to haul stuff down the trail. It would be a temporary access to bring in the dirt, fill and materials.

Bates

Spring Lane is a private road.

Cartwright

Right, so they need permission from somebody on that road and they discussed that. There was the question of who would allow that and who might not. I don't think that's resolved, but that's something they're working on. That's my report.

Planning Board 7:00pm March 28 Meeting

Bates

- The application to replace an existing shed with an enlarged one at 38 Wahebe Road was considered and an onsite visit arranged for Monday April 10 at 5:00pm.
- The application to build three staff cabins at 75 Marina Road (Hurricane Island Outward Bound School) was accepted as complete; meeting the standards of the Site Plan Review, it was approved.

- The application to install a 5'x154' granite cribbing supported pier, a seasonal 3'x50' ramp and 16'x26' wood float at 165 Howards Head Road was accepted as complete. An onsite visit arranged for Monday April 10 at 6:00pm.

Erb

The Solid Waste Committee will hold their annual roadside cleanup on May 6th at 7:30.

Van Thompson

The Community Resiliency Committee redid the roundtable discussion that we were having because there was only audio, but no video at that meeting. We redid a video that is going to be posted of the Conservation Committee, with references to the LIDAR surveys that are going to be occurring, and it was submitted to Ben Vail to post, as well as on the Conservation Committee newsletter.

Bates

Thank you. Is it on the website now?

Van Thompson

It should be posted.

Accept New Rules for Wilson Scholarship Fund

Bates

At the last meeting, I described how Irene and I were reviewing the four scholarship funds to make sure that they were being managed by the wishes of the grantees. Irene has already reviewed one of the issues with the Wilson Scholarship Fund. Irene, do you want to explain what you've done with Alison Wilson and his daughter and where we now stand?

Irene Ames

I met Alison and his daughter, Terry. As far as what was originally set up, he's changed very little. Section Five states that the money could only be used for tuition, room and board. Alison wanted the students to be able to use it for anything they needed to attend class, so we have added that it may be used for supplies required to attend class, but first they must provide a syllabus and receipts. The other thing that has changed is that I'm going to be sending him quarterly reports instead of semiannual reports. I get the reports quarterly. It's easier to remember to send it every quarter than it is to remember which quarter I'm supposed to send it. Terry would like to play a role in deciding the amount of the award, so we've added that they shall be allowed to play a role in deciding the total award amount for the year. They still like having a minimum of 5% of the earnings, or the income, to be applied to principal, but no more than 10%, so that piece is still a parameter. It's just that she'd like to sit in and play a role in deciding the amount. There was a letter of agreement that I could not find, a signed copy that was drafted in 2006. I've essentially changed the date to today's date. I have added a line item for

Alison Wilson to sign as well, and I've updated four of the names as far as the Select Board because Wayne was actually on the board in 2006 when we signed.

Bates

Irene, I think it's really terrific that you've resolved this one because I know there are still three others out there that we need to deal with. This one now will be legal.

Wayne Sawyer

I ended up being on the committee to distribute this money and I think I still am.

Bates

It's you and Mike Felton.

Bates

Thank you, Irene. We should be very thankful for people like Alison Wilson, giving so generously to the town for this scholarship.

Appoint Dick Pelletier to Conservation Commission

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Thompson, to appoint Dick Pelletier as a full member of the Conservation Committee, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Veteran Property Tax Exemptions

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Thompson, to approve the application, checked by our assessor's agent, for a property tax exemption of \$6,000 for Irene Rizkala and Brenda Falla, surviving spouses of a deceased post Great War veteran, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

County Tax Payments

A motion was made by Sawyer, seconded by Thompson, to remit payment for the County property taxes, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Support for LD 665

Bates

We have two discussion items. Rick is going to discuss the first one, support for LD 665: an act to extend the date by which compliance is required for affordable housing development, increased numbers of dwelling units and accessory dwelling units. This is the MMA bill to postpone implementation of LD 2003 which you will remember is the bill from last year to increase housing opportunities in the State, and it was due to come into effect in July of this year.

Erb

There are other bills filed to amend the Affordable Housing Law. One of them I believe will be to exclude communities under 20,000. This is the bill that has MMA's full support at this time. Basically, they did not provide guidance on this until April for our town meeting in May. Others are having the same problem. It will go to a public hearing tomorrow. They'll be taking comments for at least a week, probably two weeks, before they come back to the work session. Besides discussing it with Richard, I have also had some contact with Cox and Jordan. All agree we need more time for this to go into effect. I can provide written comments tomorrow and they will have it in plenty of time before going in and testifying on it. I think we're all thinking along the same lines. We just need more time for this. This is too much, too fast. I'm not sure we need a vote.

Van Thompson

I want to make one comment after we finish.

Bates

Trish was saying regarding the housing issue that we do need to make sure we're addressing the shortages across the whole price spectrum, but certainly for a balanced economy we need to have more affordable housing, and while we don't want to rush and make any precipitous decisions, at the same time, we do need to do something. I think this MMA proposal recognizes that we have to do something but let's try and have a bit more discussion first.

Cartwright

It's not a ridiculous delay. It's not saying we want to wait five years.

Erb

I do not want to speak for MMA, but frankly, if we had a year, we could work with that. There is this idea that we will be coming into the first six months while they're still working on how they're going to change it, and to expect us to amend our ordinances is unreasonable.

Van Thompson

I looked up Maine Legislature 665 online and the latest one I see is for dental care for cancer survivors.

Bates

It must be an earlier year.

Cartwright

They do reuse numbers so you could have a bill from another year, a previous session of the legislature.

LD 1215

Bates

We have another bill which is LD 1215: an act to handle the sale of flavored tobacco products. I mentioned this in an email a couple days ago, I was approached by Teresa Gillis, an organizer for an organization called Flavors Hook Kids Maine, and she wanted our support. Rick tells me that we're actually pushing through an open door.

Erb

There was an all-star cast of bill sponsors and they're fighting against big tobacco.

Bates

It is the flavored ones and the menthol ones. Massachusetts, California, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey have all banned these e flavored cigarettes.

Elwell

Some towns and cities have also. Even Portland.

Bates

South Portland, Brunswick, Bar Harbor, and Bangor have already done it, and the request from this lobbyist was that we should urge Ann Matlack to vote in favor of this bill.

Cartwright

I suggest that you contact Ann Matlack and see where she stands. I suspect she supports this. I don't think there's much to worry about.

Erb

One of the arguments in favor of this is that when you have a patchwork of towns that allow it or don't, all you do is hurt some businesses.

Miscellaneous

Bates

Do we have anything else we need to discuss tonight?

Elwell

I spoke to Keith Miller that has the kelp business. I want to see if Jim Bolano, and others that are doing aquaculture, would come speak to us and answer questions about what they do.

Bates

That would be great.

Wayne Sawyer

Where are they doing that.

Bates

Remember at the last meeting we heard about the fact that there's an effort by most of the fishing industry to put an emergency moratorium on the granting of agricultural licenses, and there's a group going around the State asking lots of coastal towns to pass this emergency moratorium. This group is making a presentation to GRISMO on April 13, 2023, at the Thomaston Town Office. Randy has been looking into trying to find one of the leading figures in aquaculture, Afton Hupper, to give a presentation to GRISMO at their next meeting to make sure that GRISMO knows that there is already in this area, very strong support for aquaculture, and it seems very short sighted not to not recognize that. Not to diminish the importance of lobstering and other things but to have an emergency moratorium seems...

Van Thompson

The emergency moratorium was to last for six months. What is that going to gain? We're waiting for things at the State level. Where did the five acres come from, anything over five acres?

Jane Conrad

I'm wondering if there's going to be a lawyer at this discussion in Thomaston because to demonstrate the need for a moratorium, you don't need a moratorium everywhere. You'd be arguing why you need it in this particular town or location.

Elwell

The organization that is fighting for this moratorium is working with the top, highest paid lobbyist in the State. We all know the lobster industry is never going to go away but it's it's hurting and it's going to get worse for the fishermen. If this is something they can fall back on to sustain their livelihood, putting a moratorium on it, I feel would be a push, especially with GRISMO.

Bates

If you are able to line her up, that would be great.

Bates

GRISMO is meeting later this week and that's when the moratorium group is presenting. My thought was that at the next meeting after that in May, they could hear the other side of things to try and make sure that whatever decision GRISMO recommends, there's a balance.

Cartwright

I wonder if this might be in reaction to the massive mega factory aquaculture farms, like Belfast is facing.

Elwell

One of them is Belfast. Keith Miller's advice is this is going to affect everybody because it's a moratorium on aquaculture. One of the things with GRISMO and that type of group on the Coast of Maine is the oyster industry affecting the clam industry, and that's why they're pushing for it. They want to get rid of the oysters. Damariscotta River has wild oysters now, after all these years of growing them, and they can't seed.

Bates

Ultimately, if GRISMO would make a recommendation to support the member towns and then it would be up to each of the towns to decide.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Sawyer, to adjourn the Select Board meeting, and by a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:22p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Taylor
Recording Secretary
Town of St. George