

SELECTBOARD MEETING
October 16, 2023
7PM - MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING - HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Selectboard was called to order at 7p.m. by Chair Athos Rassias. Also present were: Joanna Whitcomb, Vice Chair, Nancy Carter, Selectboard Member, Carey Callaghan, Secretary, Jennie Chamberlain, Selectboard Member, Alex Torpey, Town Manager

Absent: None

1. Opening of Meeting

a. Call to Order

A. Rassias called the meeting to order.

2. Public Hearing

None

3. Agenda Review

a. Agenda Review

A. Rassias reviewed the order of the meeting agenda.

4. Announcements/recognition

a. Employee Proclamation

None

5. Public Comment

a. Public may address the Board

A. Rassias reviewed the procedure for public comment.

Petra McGillan, Dunster Dr neighborhood commented on the crosswalk at Dunster Dr and South Main St. She reviewed the timeline of events regarding the progress of this project and inquired about the timeline for the next steps and final installation.

Rob Houseman, Planning Director explained the next steps involve the NHDOT. Staff will contact the point person for the neighborhood with updates.

Ian Sipp, North neighborhood inquired on the progress of installing high speed internet in the parts of town which are not served.

A. Torpey gave a brief update noting the IT Director is working on grant funding to build out the coverage in that area.

David Vincelette, 93 Lebanon St acknowledged the suffering of the people of Israel. He noted he has been trying to contact the Town Manager with no results.

A. Rassias informed Mr. Vincelette that he has asked A. Torpey to set up a meeting with the three of them so they can discuss the questions Mr. Vincelette has.

He asked the Town to apologize for topics he has raised before such as asphalt waste pollution and Town action on his property in the past. He expressed his displeasure with the lack of response from the Selectboards- past and present.

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6. Business Requiring Discussion

a. Mink Brook Community Workforce Housing Project

A. Rassias outlined the plan for this agenda item and noted the Town is still in closed-door negotiations with the parties involved and therefore not at liberty to conduct a back-and-forth discussion.

i. Project History and Overview Presentation

ii. Summary of Conservation Commission's Mink Brook Forest Management Plan

Rob Houseman, Planning Director presented the Mink Brook Community Forest Management Plan that was developed by the Conservation Commission through an intensive public process in 2020-2021.

- 1) Planning Director Rob Houseman gave a 15 minute history and summary presentation of the Mink Brook Community Forest development project. He addressed:
 - Management Responsibilities of the property
 - Funding
 - Timeline for proposed project and stakeholder involvement
 - Management Plan overview
 - Timber
 - Recreation/ Trails
 - Wildlife

Public comment

Richard Greger, Hanover Finance Committee asked where the revenue goes if there is a timber harvest.

R. Houseman stated by statute, the funds go to the Conservation Commission to be reinvested in conservation lands.

Planning Director Rob Houseman gave a 15 minute presentation on the workforce housing component of the project. He addressed:

- Division of the parcel into separate parts
- Description of the parcel location, uses and utilities
- Workforce housing information and timelines in Hanover
- Definition of workforce housing
 - "Housing affordable for rent or purchase solely by households whose incomes are less than 120% of the Area Median Household for Grafton County. May include single family dwellings, duplex dwellings, and multifamily dwellings."
 - Area median income for Grafton County family of four is \$115,000
- Development Regulations for this property
 - With current ZBA regulations, not more than 29 units could be built
- Statistics for Hanover Median income
- Potential housing options and past concept plans
- Next steps/ process following public comments tonight (12-16 months projected timeline before build)
 - Sign options agreement
 - Twin Pines does research, seeks funding, hires design team
 - Public workshops to receive feedback on Twin Pines designs
 - Final design/ site plan approvals from ZBA and Planning Board
 - Twin Pines closes on the parcel after town approvals

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C. Callaghan asked why the ZBA needs to approve a special exception for the project.

R. Houseman explained there are criteria to be met within the Workforce Housing Overlay District.

iii. Listening Session to Solicit any Additional Public Priorities for Selectboard's Consideration of Negotiated Terms with Twin Pines

As part of Town Meeting's authorization for the Selectboard to sell the five acre lot to Twin Pines, terms will be set by the Selectboard. These terms may include architectural style and scale, ecological conservation, community amenities, and more. Although the Selectboard cannot engage in a back and forth discussion of these topics with the public as they part of an active negotiation with Twin Pines currently, the Selectboard did feel it was important to provide an additional opportunity for the public to provide feedback, opinions, and ideas about what should be considered.

If someone cannot make the meeting but would like to provide input in the process, there is a survey form available online at hanovernh.org that can be filled out and which will be provided to the Selectboard for consideration.

Public Comment:

Whit Spaulding, Chair of the Conservation Commission noted there is some important information missing from the presentation so far. He has a summary of information he can share with staff and Selectboard.

Some issues he highlighted:

- Zoning constraints/ dimensional requirements- effects maximization of units and types of units
- Forest management equipment and access needed
- Conservation constraints- effects two sensitive ecological areas
- Hanover website and FAQ inconsistencies
- Asked questions relating to the immediate urgency of workforce housing in Hanover and whether this plan will help since it won't get started for over a year and why discussions are held in non-public sessions.

Town Attorney Joe Driscoll addressed the reason for the non-public sessions under RSA 91A which includes negotiations. He reviewed the restrictions included as part of Town Meeting votes.

Discussion and explanations ensued regarding the need for workforce housing within the region, town and for potential town employees.

Allen Reetz, Hanover Coop Food Store spoke on behalf of the employees. They are in support of safe, decent, affordable places to live. The shortage of employees is directly related to the shortage of places to live. Approving the work force housing complies with RSA 674.

David Clem, 6 Ruddsboro Rd Etna is concerned about the paralysis of progress. He is in favor of moving this project forward to satisfy this pressing need for the entire community. He expressed some concerns with the limitations set by restricting the partnership to Twin Pines and noted the more meetings and forums that are held will elongate the process and drive up the costs.

Jim Larrick, CFO Mascoma Bank and Twin Pines board member expressed his support for the project as housing is much needed in the area.

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Rich Greger, Gile Hill noted the Gile Hill project was conceived with the goal of providing an enhanced level of affordable housing to the Town of Hanover. The Town granted the land to the project which stipulated that ultimately 50% of the housing would be affordable. Twin Pines was one of the original developers.

The Hanover website has FAQ for the Mink Brook Development was on an external website which required registration prior to downloading the documents.

Mr. Torpey explained how to access the information.

Mr. Greger noted he was asked to be here by others and shared his viewpoint as someone who lives in one of these mixed-community housing developments. He highlighted the economic conditions affecting the community and how that affects housing. There were some hard lessons learned when the Gile Hill project was created. You must have a performance bond in place and be flexible on project scope and implementation. Pay attention to future expenditure and infrastructure costs. (insurance/ capital improvements) He outlined his reasons for this advice. Profit margins for developers of mixed-use (affordable and regular) are very slim which can lead to bankruptcy. He commented on rising HOA fees.

Some good lessons were learned showing this type of diverse community can succeed in Hanover.

Some questions he has about the proposed development include:

- Is 29 the confirmed maximum unit count, or could potential zoning changes cause that number to be altered?
- Number 7 on FAQ mentions Twin Pines or other. Have other parties been considered? If not, why?
 - R. Houseman addressed this
- Number 13 on FAQ what is work force housing: Is the project expected to be all affordable, or mixed with percentages?
 - R. Houseman noted in order to meet the density, all units must be occupied by individuals who qualify at no more than 120% of the median. 50% of the units will be reserved for individuals who qualify at not more than 80% of the median.
- Once the project is moving forward, will there be full transparency about the environmental impact studies and funding sources?
 - A. Rassias noted the terms will be public.

Eileen Clauson, Greensboro Rd knows there is a need for work force housing and is not opposed to this project. Her concerns are what kind and how many are proposed. She wondered about the order of the process. She asked about the resale process and how it maintains as workforce housing in the future.

N. Carter and R. Houseman addressed this.

Jeff Acker, 27 Greensboro Rd expressed that everyone in the room probably understands the need for the housing, thinks well of Twin Pines and is in favor of the concept.

The information presented in 2020 is very different than the information being presented in 2023. He asked the Selectboard to honor the spirit of the information presented in 2020 as negotiations take place.

He asked about the process of the parcel originally described as 4 ac and now as 5 ac which correlates with the size needed for the density proposed. The deed does not specify a particular land size to be transferred. It mentions Article 23 from 2020 which specifies 4 acres. He read language from the deed "a small cluster of cottage homes for work force housing". This is what people donated money towards and he urged the board to respect the original intent.

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He made some comments expressing the Greensboro neighborhood has been disrespected by the town in relation to this project and a past proposal of a care facility.

He questioned the need for negotiations in non-public session. There is a right to do it, but it is not required and he supports the negotiations to be in public session.

He commented on storm water run-off issues on that road due to the water that comes from above. He asked that a condition of the negotiations be that a third-party engineer review and oversee the engineering plans and construction.

R. Houseman addressed the acreage question and explained the timeline and process to arrive at 5 acres.

Town attorney Joe Driscoll addressed the deed references to acreage.

Lisa Cloitre, 17 Berrill Farms noted a perceived lack of process, transparency and community dialogue in relation to this housing component which has changed over time. She expressed concerns about the timing of the sale of the property, and the need for non-public negotiations if there is only one bidder. Mink Brook was a project with a conservation priority which seems to be taking a backseat to the housing priority.

She noted the FAQs were difficult to access on the website as was contact information for the Selectboard members.

Will Carding, new Hanover renter on Berrill Farms understands the concerns the homeowners have raised and the board should take them seriously, but they should also understand the housing crisis that is going on. He wants to speak for the folks who can't be here because they commute from so far away. The rental market is so high, it is impossible for some and unsustainable for his family which includes two working professionals. The Town has a moral and ethical responsibility to everyone, not just those who are able to attend a meeting on a Monday night.

He asked the board to weigh all of the concerns and use the feedback to create the best plans and options possible, so the plan does not fail. This project is a unique opportunity for Hanover to get work force housing moving forward in the region.

Mark Hiller noted 30 units of the 800+ needed is less than 4%. We can't be conservative every time a site becomes available if we are working towards this goal. No site is perfect. If the site meets many of the requirements, we need to proceed.

Len Cadwallader, Hanover resident commented on his positive personal experience creating an ADU in his home and using it as a rental. He asks the board to resolve to increase the supply of housing in Hanover for folks who work here to live here and be part of the community. We need and want economic diversity in the community and he hopes the units will be permanently restricted as affordable.

Ryan Clauson, Greensboro Rd commented that work force housing is still expensive and those who can afford it have significant means. He inquired about creative ideas such as tiny home villages to help solve the issue.

Sean Clauson, 104 Greensboro Rd is very familiar with the Mink Brook Forest and is very pleased with all that has become of that area. Eight to nine cottages seemed like the best plan and would match the neighborhood. There is a very dangerous curve there and there is a traffic concern for the additional cars due to the proposed development. He is also concerned for the Brook and keeping the water clean.

John Hafner, Hartford works at Vital Communities on housing and commented about the housing in the region. Rents in Grafton County have become the highest in the state. He is pleased with the conversation Hanover is having and the affirmative vision for added housing. Some positive steps include using municipal land to emphasize housing and figuring out how housing and conservation can complement each other.

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Cheryl Abbot, 86 Greensboro Rd spoke about transit and the hope that it would be supplied to the area a few times a day.

Jeff Acker, 27 Greensboro Rd wondered what happens if the ZBA turns this down? Please think about that during negotiations and have a back up plan so the land doesn't end up in limbo.

Sandra Hoeh, Kendall- formerly of Willow Spring Cir- commented there is a huge need for housing. We need a lot more than 29, but 29 is better than zero. She is in support of the project.

John Donovan, Conservation Commission asked the board to develop a vision plan for creating additional housing. This seems to be the only project on the forecast and it has been kicked down the road for years because no plan is in place to support it.

J. Chamberlain noted the Sustainability Committee will have the master plan on display for review and feedback at the Howe Library on Oct 18 and 19 and encouraged all to attend and participate.

Rob Houseman, 3 Great Hollow Rd commented that he enjoys all of the recreational amenities of the neighborhood. As an employee of the town, four of his five employees would qualify for this housing. There are currently five employees of the Town of Hanover who live in the Town of Hanover out of about 140. We have to move the needle. The master plan lays out the groundwork and the zoning amendments will hopefully come soon after. There is a commitment by Dartmouth of 1000 beds which won't all be student beds. The additional student beds will help us move housing stock into the rental market.

At 9:35pm, A. Rassias noted the board has received and reviewed about 15 comments that were submitted by folks who could not be here tonight. He appreciates the attendance and comments made by all.

The meeting paused for about ten minutes while folks left the room.

7. Business Requiring Action

a. Reclassification of Sustainability Director Job Position

This position is currently a grade 25 at 20 hours/week. We are recommending reclassifying the position as Grade 19 and fulltime. This is part of many short-term changes we've been making to several departments, including DPW, Administrative Services, IT, and several others to better meet our current needs while we continue to work on medium/longer term updates to our organizational structure and staffing.

A. Torpey gave some background information relating to this topic.

C. Callaghan inquired, since this job is substantially different than the current position, whether it should be discussed along with the budget priorities. A. Torpey noted the money budgeted for the position pays for the position. J.

Whitcomb gave some background on when and how the position was created and how it was funded.

Discussion ensued.

At 10pm J. Whitcomb MOVED to reclassify the Sustainability Director Job Position. C. Callaghan SECONDED.

All in favor

b. Approval of October 9, 2023 (tabled until November 6th meeting)

Tabled

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c. Review and Selectboard Signature of MS-535 – Financial Report of the Budget

Action Requested: After review, sign the MS-535 – Financial Report of the Budget.

A. Torpey noted this is a new process to bring these documents to the Selectboard.

Finance Director E. Bullion explained the document and what it represents and answered some follow-up budgetary questions from the board members.

At 10:15pm C. Callaghan MOVED to accept the MS535 as presented. N. Carter SECONDED. All in favor

d. Review and Selectboard Signature of MS-424R – Revised Estimated Revenues

Action Requested: Review and sign the MS-424R – Revised Estimated Revenues

Finance Director E. Bullion explained the document and what it represents and answered some follow-up budgetary questions from the board members.

No action was taken, but the board supported E. Bullion submitting the document to the DRA as presented.

Discussion occurred about the updated position of Sustainability Director and why that position would be called a director when they will report to the Planning and Zoning Director and there is no increase in pay from a part time position.

Board members requested an organizational chart be posted.

e. Approval of Items i to ii by Consent

i. Donations – Etna Library

Etna Library – Etna Library has received a donation from Lynne Howard in the amount of \$25.00 for general use.

Action Requested: Accept the donation in the amount of \$25.00 from Lynne Howard on behalf of the Etna Library.

ii. Recommendation to Set Public Hearing on Monday, November 6, 2023 to Correct the current Rates and Fees Schedule Town Parking Garage Short Term Rates 4th Hour from \$3.00 to \$1.00.

A correction is needed in the current Rates and Fees Schedule in the Town Parking Garage – Short Term Rates – 4th hour from \$3.00 to \$1.00.

Action Requested: Schedule a Public Hearing on Monday, November 6th to correct the Rates and Fees Schedule.

At 10:34pm A. Rassias MOVED to approve consent agenda items i and ii. C. Callaghan SECONDED. All in favor

A. Rassias read the donation to the Etna Library into the record.

The board discussed their opinions of whether the new Sustainability Director job should be posted with the term “Director” in the job title. After discussion and with the majority of board members in favor of the position title being a coordinator rather than a director, the Town Manager agreed to post the position with the coordinator title.

8. Reports and Communications

a. Town Manager Report

- Updates
 - Instagram

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- Upcoming Events
- Human Resources/ Staffing
- Budget/Finance
- Downtown Hanover

b. Selectboard and Committee Reports

- J. Whitcomb
 - Nothing to report
- A. Rassias
 - Conservation Commission update
- N. Carter
 - Sustainability Hanover has a retreat on Oct 18th
- C. Callaghan
 - Capital Improvement Program
 - Held the first meeting and elected officers
 - Will meet weekly initially to create a draft recommendation to the Selectboard for January 8th
- J. Chamberlain
 - Bike Walk
 - Dresden Walk and Roll event October 29th
 - Want to pursue the Verona path

9. Non public Session

a. Move into Nonpublic Session

Per NH RSA 91-A:3:II A, B, D E, I and L, the Selectboard needed to attend a non-public session. The board took a roll call vote to enter the non-public session.

Roll call vote: Whitcomb- yes, Rassias- yes, Carter- yes, Callaghan- yes, Chamberlain- yes

The board entered non-public session at 10:58pm.

b. Discussion pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (A)(B)(D)(E)(I)(L)

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica Marchant

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SUMMARY

Item 7a

At 10pm J. Whitcomb MOVED to reclassify the Sustainability Director Job Position. C. Callaghan SECONDED.

All in favor

Item 7c

At 10:15pm C. Callaghan MOVED to accept the MS535 as presented. N. Carter SECONDED. All in favor

Item 7e

At 10:34pm A. Rassias MOVED to approve consent agenda items i and ii. C. Callaghan SECONDED. All in favor

Item 9a

Per NH RSA 91-A:3:II A, B, D E, I and L, the Selectboard needed to attend a non-public session. The board took a roll call vote to enter the non-public session.

Roll call vote: Whitcomb- yes, Rassias- yes, Carter- yes, Callaghan- yes, Chamberlain- yes

The board entered non-public session at 10:58pm.