Town of Dunstable Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 06, 2024

In attendance: Chairman Ron Mikol, Vice Chair Leah Basbanes, Selectman Kieran Meehan, Town Administrator Jason Silva, Chief of Police Erik Hoar, Chief of Fire & Rescue Bill Farrell, Exec. Assistant Sue Fayne

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Chairman Mikol.

National Grid Pole Hearings: Mill St and Westford St.*

Chairman Mikol called the hearing to order at 5:01pm. Present from National Grid was Connor Reynolds as well as some abutters.

Connor began by talking about the Pole work on Mill St., explaining that the new pole is in the public way to support a new house at 75 Mill Street. The pole will not have any electricity on it, it's for structural support only and it's to support the line going up their driveway. National Grid has already attained the easement needed.

Vice Chair Basbanes asked why there are so many poles in such a small area? Connor stated that the corner is tricky, so they are closer in space, 150 feet, than normal.

A resident inquired about installing underground services and National Grid said that would be at the cost of the builder/owner, and they did not want extra construction cost for underground utilities with the distance of the road to the house.

Connor then briefly discussed the pole work at Westford Street. The pole was flagged by a resident at 265 Westford Street. It was reported to Verizon that the line keeps getting caught on 18-Wheeler traffic. Connor explained that the work will bring the line up to a safer height.

Carol Bacon, from 39 Westford Street, said there is a pole leaning on the corner that has been reported to National Grid twice before tonight. Connor informed Mrs. Bacon that he will look at it on his way home and will generate a work order to have the pole straightened and to keep it straight.

Mike Martin, Chair of the Road Commission, provided the suggestion that all poles should be required to be 4 feet from the edge of the pavement. Connor replied that it's handled on a case-by-case basis but they like to be at least 3 off of the pavement, but there are locations/situations where that's not possible. He stated that the Westford St. pole is 3 feet off the road, and the Mill Street pole will be 4 or 5 feet off the road.

Vice Chair Basbanes requested more detail on the sketches that we receive from National Grid. Connor explained that he's a little restrained due to the software they use to make the sketches, but he will attempt to provide more information in the future.

An abutter from 82 Mill Street inquired about the new pole. Connor explained the plan and the resident asked if any poles were being removed, which there are not.

An abutter asked why there's 1 pole for one house. Connor explained that the new house will have 5 poles going down their driveway to the house.

An abutter asked when the work would start. There isn't a date yet, but according to Connor it's expected to begin in April or May.

An abutter asked how the poles will be laid out down the driveway, as their property directly abuts the property. Connor answered that the first 2 poles will be on the east side of the driveway, and the last 3 will be on the right side.

Chairman Mikol asked if anyone had any other questions, and inquired if everything was answered to the abutters' satisfaction, of which they answered in the affirmative.

On a **motion** made by Selectman Meehan and **seconded** by Vice Chair Basbanes, it was **VOTED** to **approve** 2 National Grid projects: Westford Street – Dunstable – Massachusetts, No. 30891724, Dated: December 14, 2023: National Grid to install 1 JO Pole on Westford Street beginning at a point approximately 5450 feet south of the centerline of the intersection of Main Street and continuing approximately 12 feet in an east direction. Install 1 midspan pole to raise conductors over Westford Street.

Mill Street – Dunstable – Massachusetts, No. 30741280, Dated: January 22, 2024: National Grid to install 1 SO Pole on Mill Street beginning at a point approximately 1200 feet east of the centerline of the intersection of Main Street and continuing approximately 15 feet in a south direction. Install Stub Pole 9-84 across the street from Pole 9.
The vote was unanimous.

Approve Meeting Minutes from 12/20/23, 1/29/24*

The meeting minutes have been accepted as submitted. On a **motion** made by Selectman Meehan and **seconded** by Vice Chair Basbanes, it was **VOTED** to **approve** Meeting Minutes from December 20, 2023 and January 29, 2024 Select Board Meetings. **The vote was unanimous.**

Fire Station Temporary Repairs*

The Board has had previous discussions about the condition of the current Fire Station. Josh Kelly has provided a scope of work and estimate of $9,800 for temporary repairs to the Fire Station. If we decide to agree to a contract in that amount, we will use the same funding source as the initial envelope study - the $50,000 Public Safety Improvements earmark the Town received.

The scope of work for more permanent repairs that are needed moving forward came in at approximately $270,000. These repairs would make the building structurally sound, but no other improvements to the building. Anything beyond the building repairs as identified by the study would be an additional cost.

Chief Farrell stated that the temporary stabilization is expected to last for a year, at which time they would have it reinspected to determine its status. He said that in 2019 they tried to have the walls fixed when the truck hit the station, but it wasn't approved. Josh Kelly feels optimistic with the short-term plan that it would not cause any further issues.

Joan Simmons asked if this would prevent vehicles from driving around the Fire Station. Chief Farrell said that all the work will be happening in the attic so there will not be any disruption to how vehicles are able to pull around.

On a **motion** by Selectman Meehan and **seconded** by Vice Chair Basbanes, it **voted to approve** a contract with Building Recon Services in the amount of $9,800 for temporary repairs to the Fire Station and authorize the Chair to sign the contract on behalf of the board. **The vote was unanimous.**

Selectman Meehan mentioned that Carlisle was working with a local architect on a simple fire station for the town, and he would reach out to the Town Administrator to get more information.

Vice Chair Basbanes suggested that the public safety committee be resurrected since we need to have a long-term solution within the next year.

Joan Simmons asked if the proposed DPW Garage at 41 Lowell St. would just be for highway, or would you put firetrucks in there, at least temporarily? Chairman Mikol said it's an option, as after the fire the building is very repairable. There is plenty of room and great opportunity in that building.

Housing Production Plan Review and Consideration for Adoption*

The Housing Production Plan was presented to the Planning Board on 2/5/24, at which time it was approved. Jon Hughes, Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee, stated that it's updated from the one that we had 3 years ago. It was done in collaboration with NMCOG and our Local AHC. The Affordable Housing Committee recommends approval.

Vice Chair Basbanes had one question from the plan. The recommendation is that we build 11 units a year, which is a concerning thought. How, and where could that happen? Jon Hughes stated that we have 44 units coming from MCO, 1 at River St. and potentially 39 from 41 Lowell St., so that brings us 2/3 of the way to our goal.

Selectman Meehan suggested we bind a few copies to have available for folks at Town Hall.

In accordance with 760 CMR 56.03, Methods to Measure Progress Toward Local Affordable Housing Goals, part of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC, formerly the Department of Housing and Community Development, DHCD) regulations implementing the Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 40B, Sections 20 through 23, Selectman Meehan made a **motion**, **seconded** by Vice Chair Basbanes, to **adopt** the Town's updated Housing Production Plan (HPP) dated December 8, 2023, and authorize the Chair to sign a letter addressed to EOHLC notifying them of the Board's vote and requesting their approval of the updated HPP. **The vote was unanimous.**

Joan Simmons requested to make a comment. She said that the Affordable Housing Committee did a great job and worked hard on this plan, but the problem is that the goals of this plan, pushed by the state, goes against everything we're trying to do in this town as far as zoning and open space.

Chairman Mikol stated that there are still a lot of unknowns. The culture of the town is open space, and worked hard to get to where we are.

Alan Chaney shared his opinion that all applications for grants want to know, what does your master plan say? Some of it may be self-contradictory, but the MPC made sure that the Master Plan and the Open Space Plan care for each other in their respective plans. He also feels that the master plan generally reflects what the town wants.

Regional Economic Development Group

Vice Chair Basbanes is part of a group that was pulled together by State Rep. Margaret Scarsdale for her district. They are trying to work as a group to enhance economic development for all towns to make the North Middlesex region a destination. The group is looking for someone from the town to sign a non-binding MOU for Dunstable. They are working toward creating a website, a schedule of events to connect all of the towns, etc. The group is in the early stages, still working on figuring out their mission. The next meeting is scheduled for this Friday, 9am at Townsend Town Hall.

Items not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

Chairman Mikol wanted to acknowledge that the Fire Department was awarded $13,000 for rescue equipment.

On a **motion** by Selectman Meehan and **seconded** by Vice Chair Basbanes, at 6pm is was **voted to ente**r into Executive Session: Pursuant to M.G.L. Chap. 30A, Sec. 21(a), Clause 7, to comply with or act under the authority of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. Sec. 22(f), (g), to review executive session minutes for possible release or continued withholding for Select Board meetings held on February 9, 2023, March 23, 2023, and July 25, 2023* and Executive Session: Pursuant to M.G.L. Chap. 30A, Sec. 21(a), Clause 2, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. (Agreement with Dunstable Police Union, NEPBA, Local 7) Votes may be taken, and if they are, votes will be released at a time deemed appropriate by the Board of Selectmen. The Board will not reconvene in regular session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

Chairman Mikol - Aye, Vice Chair Basbanes - Aye, Selectman Meehan - Aye. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue Fayne
Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator
and Board of Selectmen

Approved 2/20/2024