

Newington Board of Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 17, 2009
Town Hall - 6:00pm

Chr. Jack O'Reilly called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

Present: Chr. Jack O'Reilly, Selectman Jan Stuart, Admin Asst Beatrice Marconi, Fox Point Erosion Project Engineer Duncan Mellor, and Dick Spinney.

Selectman Stuart moved to approve Nov 2 minutes. Chr. O'Reilly seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

Facility Use Requests: All 4 requests granted

At 6:30pm, Chr. O'Reilly declared the public hearing open on the Fox Point Rental House Demo and Fox Point Pavilion construction.

Present: Chr. O'Reilly, Selectmen Jan Stuart and Selectman Iocovozzi, AA Beatrice Marconi, Denis Hebert, Mike Marconi, Josiah and Jan (and Wyeth) Towne, Peg Lamson, Tom Bobotas, Dick Spinney, Len Thomas, Brian Haberstroh, Code Enf. Officer Charlie Smart, Rick & Doreen Stern, Cliff Abbott, Dave Sweeney, Ruth and George Fletcher, Pete MacDonald, John Frink, Edna Mosher, Matt Morton, Darryl Brown, Gail and Jack Pare and Chris Cross.

Chr. O'Reilly gave a brief history on the Fox Point Pavilion Capital Reserve which contains approx \$ 150,000 currently.

At this point, Brian Haberstroh was given the floor. He hoped the Selectmen would consider the survey results of Fox Point users which showed 48% were in favor of the pavilion being constructed at the site of the rental unit.

Selectman Stuart mentioned the problems with surveys like monitoring the box, who responded, was it all residents? Brian answered that 2 were non residents.

Brian spoke of the committee appointed to analyze the pavilion, determine if there was a need and recommend a design and price. He, Matt Morton, Rick Stern, Gail Pare and Luanne O'Reilly were part of the group. In July 2008, the committee was formed. They went to the Selectmen with 5 ideas, one of which was renovation of the Carriage House (\$700,000+). The committee felt that was rather costly to consider to be part of the top 3. He went on to state that 4 pavilion styles were looked at. The majority of the committee felt an arch shaped 44 x 60 at \$ 76,800 was favored, which is the same size of the tent rented at Sept Fest. The committee also conducted multiple site walks to determine the preferred spot. Just north of the carriage house was ideal, however the shoreline protection act did not make that area feasible. The Mott House foot print is 40 X 60. The Gothic Arch was recommended. The Selectmen asked the committee to seek out costs (A-Z) including site work, for 44 x 60 and 28 x 40. Brian noted that at this time, they have a price of \$229,500 for the pad, sitework, construction, conduits...this did not include bathroom or a kitchen facility – thus, septic is not in that price either.

Chr. O'Reilly asked Charlie Smart, our Code Enforcement Officer about septic. Charlie suggested we get an engineer to analyze and recommend size as there will be days that it is used heavily, and days on end with zero usage.

Selectman Stuart asked if they had any rough price on a 28 x 52 size. The bld would be \$48,000 but that too doesn't include installation, site work, etc or septic. It would be about another \$17,000 for installation.

Brian felt the 40 x 60 size would be an easier transition for functions and with rental at \$2,000 per event.

Edna Mosher asked why we needed to build and what the purpose was. Mr. Haberstroh suggested she ask the motion maker as back in 2003. Edna added that when her daughter got married, she had to pay the \$2,000 for the tent.

Selectman Stuart asked if this recommendation was a unified recommendation. Brian stated that not everyone agreed. Rick Stern added that it was the committee's mission to recommend something.

D. Hebert asked about the respondents to both surveys. Dick Spinney questioned Hartmann's bid and also asked about the roof. Matt Morton spoke of the 100 mile per hour shingles.

Selectman Stuart then stated that she would like to hear the thoughts of the audience and noted that most of them were in attendance to discuss the rental house demo. She stated that a few meetings ago she made the motion to demo the house, however after thinking about this and considering the input she received, she would like to change her mind and rescind the vote. She goes on to say that there is a need for 24/7 presence to protect the buildings.

Selectman Iocovozzi stated that the bldg should come down as in time the maintenance will get costly. He went on to say that our police department is the second set of eyes needed there.

Chr. O'Reilly pointed out that the board is not united on this issue and the reasons vary.

Peg Lamson in the past felt it should come down but now is against demolition.

Ruth Fletcher absolutely agrees that a presence is a deterrent to problems and asks if, while vacant, did the town have problems.

Selectman Stuart answered by stating a boat motor was stolen, had a few fires, nefarious activity went on and, she added, the Police Department should not be expected to be there at Fox Point a great deal. She said the more money we put into the point, the more it should be protected.

Tom Bobotas asked the Charlie Smart how the house was. Charlie said the windows need replacement, it is an old heating system, there may be a ventilation problem in the attic, electrical was updated as far as alarms, but no overhaul has been done.

Selectman Stuart stated that Maldini did a lot of updating.

Tom Bobotas agrees that the bldg should not come down and that this house could be considered workforce housing. He stated that the Carriage House is a covered structure – why build yet another. He then added that the Police Department's time would be better spent patrolling the commercial/industrial areas rather than Fox Pt.

Chr. O'Reilly noted that the town is not requiring the tenants to be available 24/7. Their presence is important, but not a mandate. He spoke of the \$500 reduction in rent since the former tenants left – who were required to mow to earn that reduction.

Jack Pare concurs on the value of keeping the house and went on to talk about the FAA noise abatement. He added that a watchman is the best route to take for protection.

Charlie Smart addressed Mr. Pare and stated that the house does not fall under the FAA plan for noise abatement.

Josiah Towne (Fox Pt Tenant) said he would like to do more to fix up the house but has been very hesitant with the demo in sight. Chr. O'Reilly said the town generally will purchase the materials if the tenant has the know how.

John Frink would like to see the house stay – no house is perfect he added.

Doreen Stern agrees with keeping the house and is for a lower rent and suggests if a pavilion was shown to have a need, build it up at the Old Town Hall area.

Gail Pare gave a brief history on Woodbury Langdon mansion fire and felt the house had historical value. She'd like to see the rent dedicated directly to the upkeep. Chr. O'Reilly stated that the rent goes into the general fund to off set the maintenance costs.

George Fletcher asked if the boiler had been serviced (yes, it was serviced) and added that the rent should yet be reduced.

Dave Sweeney is in favor of keeping tenants there and regarding mowing costs, why not reduce the costs by reducing the area.

Pete MacDonald mentioned getting sheep both for trimming and fertilizations factors.

Mike Marconi did not disagree with reducing the mowing area and agrees with Mrs. Pare on setting rent aside from rent.

Edna Mosher states that although wonderful to have tenants, if they stay, the rent could be reduced with Ruth Fletcher echoing her thoughts – between the heating costs and bad windows.

Denis Hebert feels with the house where it is and with the amount of people just outside their windows, \$1,100 is reasonable. They provide a great service and agrees about their presence adding a safety factor

Selectman Stuart said that Josiah helps the Police on many occasions and a tremendous asset.

Brian Habsrstroh felt the house should come down. It is located on the best area at Fox Point and if the Town wanted to utilize this land to its fullest, the house should be demoed.

Doreen Stern enjoys Fox Point often. She has that inner confidence of being safe knowing tenants are around.

Jack Pare cautioned the Selectmen stating that the decision made about the house will effect lives 300 years from now.

Selectman Stuart said it is imperative to decide the fate of the house and hopes for a decision as soon as possible as she plans to rescind her motion to demo after the public hearing closes.

Chr. O'Reilly mentioned that the Cap Reserve has about \$150,000. The Town's people voted annually to add to it. Only a Warrant Article could dissolve it. The money would then go into the general fund. If people don't want the pavilion, this is what must happen.

Selectman Stuart added that action taken 2 years ago may not necessarily have the same appeal today.

Chr. O'Reilly said we could let it set a bit, dissolve the cap. res or add to it.

Brian stated that the majority of the survey participants voted yes to proceed.

Selectman Stuart says that this issue will go back to the floor at Town Meeting. If the people have changed their minds, surely it's the blame of the economy.

Darryl Brown asked if the pavilion, if built could raise revenue. Chr. O'Reilly stated that not at this time. Currently there is no charge to use Fox Point.

Pete MacDonald stated that this is the most beautiful piece of shoreline. Why not open it up to all, put the pavilion up, it's a good place for family gatherings.

Selectman Stuart said that no one disputes its beauty.

Dick Spinney added that at Town Meeting, we'll hear from all sides of the issue.

G Pare mentioned a hollow 3 sided bldg for porta potties, as in York would be beneficial.

R. Fletcher said, regarding the survey that no way does 91% of the 33 participants represents the voice of the town.

T. Bobotas feels that users must feel comforted with a presence there and regarding window replacement, we are only talking \$125 a piece. HUD says the average rent for a 2 bed room house is \$1,140 and concludes that a 3 bedroom house at \$1,100 is reasonable – especially if the owner is providing heat. Screening and affordability are the 2 factors in filling units. He finds it unusual for a town to vote to build a structure to fund a party yet vote to reduce maintenance for our equipment. The point was bought as conservation. If we build, maintenance costs will mount...as you are adding another structure. The view could be improved with tree grooming, if someday that got to be a problem.

Chr. O'Reilly stated that for years the Board neglected the buildings...Just last year and the year before the Board started a building preservation maintenance plan. Next year, building maintenance hopefully will be reduced.

D Hebert strongly urged for all of us to focus on what the town voted on and until the town votes differently, we have to stay on track.

Chr. O'Reilly spoke of the options ie: continue adding to the cap res or vote to dissolve.

Gail Pare added or we could build now what we can afford.

Peg Lamson cautioned the attendees of the threat of the state property tax returning. She is against construction of a pavilion at this time.

John Frink asked Brian about bathroom facilities, kitchen and location of such facilities and Dick Spinney spoke of the sides necessary.

Regarding comments 'why not just use Old Town Hall for family gatherings', Brian indicated that many comments came in via the survey.

D Hebert stated that the Cap Res for the pavilion was written before the renovation of OTH.

Chr. O'Reilly added that this pavilion Cap Res was presented years ago, and was the will of the people. If things have changed over time, then the change will be reflected at the Town Meeting. He continued by saying that the will of the people drives the Board of Selectmen. If the majority change their minds, he won't lose sleep over it.

Selectman Iocovozzi said that initially, there was a gazebo concept dreamed with the Cap Res. As a recreation area for the residents.

J. Frink spoke of the renovation of the Carriage House – Build an open deck. Selectman O'Reilly reminded the audience of the renovation proposal of the Carriage House.

At 8:11 pm, Chr. O'Reilly felt the Selectmen had a good idea of where those in attendance stood.

He declared the public hearing closed.

A show of hands of those in attendance revealed 3 felt the bldg should be demoed. Approx 23 voted for it to remain.

Chr. O'Reilly stated that a vote will take place at the first Selectmen's meeting in December however he wanted it known for the record that given what was said this evening, he too was considering rescinding the vote to demo. Selectman Iocovozzi wanted to think about the dialog this evening – some excellent points were made, he said. Selectman Stuart truly wanted it to go to vote after the public hearing. *In the end, a motion was made by Selectman Stuart but did not receive a second.*

Chr. O'Reilly stated that this topic would come up again at the Board's December 7th meeting as he needed time to digest all that transpired this evening. There were many options available. One or two warrant articles, a petition warrant article – several options that should not be rushed.

Selectman Stuart moved to adjourn at 8:17. Selectman Iocovozzi seconded. Motion passed 3-0

Respectively Submitted,



Beatrice Marconi
Administrative Assistant