

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday April 18th, 2022

Present: Selectman Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault, NH State Representative Dennis Malloy, Newington PDA Representative Margaret Lamson, Newington/Greenland PDA Representative Susan Parker, many Newington residents and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

B. Blonigen called the meeting to order at 5:35pm. Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Blonigen welcomed everyone to the meeting. This meeting is to answer any questions that Newington residents have in reference to the potential leasing of land in two locations on the PDA property. One location, the North 40 Apron, is in Newington. The other location, referred to as Hanger 227, is in Portsmouth. Newington has one and a half members of the Board of Directors of the Pease Development Authority. Margaret Lamson represents Newington and Susan Parker represents Newington and Greenland.

M. Lamson said that she doesn't want Pease to become "Logan North". Any development on the North Apron would have a huge impact on Newington residents, the noise, the traffic and pollution. At the January 20th, 2022 PDA meeting, the Board authorized entry into Option Agreements regarding the leasing of land for two potential air cargo developments. This first option agreement is for six months and can be renewed two more times for a total of eighteen months. There will be public hearings each time the six-month options are up for renewal.

Several residents spoke about hearing problems they are having now which they believe were caused by all the plane noise from Pease when they were kids and beyond.

Discussion ensued about how to get together with other towns so that we become one group with a bigger voice. The Town of Rye sent a letter to the PDA board expressing their concern with the option agreements that have been granted. Durham is organizing to fight the development, Paul Brean, the Executive Director of Pease, is speaking before the Portsmouth City Council this week to answer questions that Portsmouth has about the project. These Towns need to all be working together.

M. Lamson said that there is a PDA Board meeting this Thursday, April 21st at 8:30 and encouraged residents to go to the meeting and voice their concerns.

J. Lamson asked about the PDA board members. M. Lamson said there were three members that were appointed by the Governor, there was one representative from Newington, one from Portsmouth, one from Greenland/Newington and one from Strafford County. J. Lamson pointed out that if the four representatives from the neighboring towns all voted against this development, then they could be stopped. The four could vote "no" when the six-month option is up for renewal and then it would be over.

B. Arsenault asked why M. Lamson and S. Parker had voted in favor of the first option. M. Lamson said that she had spoken against the project but voted for it because it was just a lease option, they weren't approving anything, it is a very complex issue. This can all be shot down after the first six-month option is over. Many residents thought that this left the door open for the developers to come in and go forward.

A Durham resident pointed out that Paul Brean has spoken in favor of air cargo at Pease several times in 2019 and 2020. Brean stated that air cargo was a perfect fit for Pease. This project has been in the works for a long time.

Residents expressed concern that this was voted on in January, but the Newington residents didn't know about it until March. M. Lamson said that she had given the meeting packet to the Selectmen.

There was some concern because there was another company at the January 20th meeting that wasn't allowed to speak. It was explained that they had not spoken during the time that comments were allowed and wanted to speak later and that is why they were turned down.

Caleb Savinelli said that he has a hard time focusing in school when there are planes going over.

State Representative Dennis Malloy is concerned about the environmental impact this development would have on the bay.

The PDA received \$40,000 for the lease option.

Discussion ensued about the privatization of Pease.

B. Blonigen expressed his frustration with the fact that Newington is the largest land owner at Pease and we don't receive any financial benefit from it. B. Blonigen is not for privatization of Pease until it benefits Newington.

Ann Hyland Hebert asked if Newington could count on two "no" votes when the first six-month option is up for renewal. M. Lamson and S. Parker said that they will both vote "no" the next time the six-month option agreement is up for a vote.

John Lamson asked for a "straw poll" to see how the crowd felt about this issue. One person was in favor, all others were opposed.

Emily Savinelli asked how Susan Parker would vote if the Greenland Selectmen were in favor of the project and the Newington Selectmen were against. S. Parker said that the two boards would have to get together and work out a solution.

Many residents expressed concerns about property values and quality of life in Newington if air cargo goes into Pease.

It is important to convince four members of the board to vote against the renewal of the option in July 2022.

M. Lamson said that it is important for residents to come to the PDA meetings and express their concerns. B. Arsenault said that the PDA meetings are during the work day so many people are unable to attend.

Denis Hebert expressed his concern about the impact to the housing shortage, traffic, water usage and all of the resources that will be consumed. The seacoast's resources are already being stretched to the limit.

Residents would like the Board of Selectmen to do something proactively. There are seven towns that can get together and really make an impact on the PDA Board of Directors for the welfare of the community and the environment.

J. Kent Weiner said that the town had to fight to get McIntyre Road done to connect Newington and we need to have the same mindset to fight this.

B. Blonigen and B. Arsenault thanked everyone for coming.

B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 7:24pm. B. Blonigen seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recorder

