



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN SEPTEMBER 15, 2008

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Selectman
Larry Ballin, Selectman
Brian Prescott, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator
Chet Reynolds, Energy Committee
Jack Harrod, Energy Committee
Chris Lizotte, Sheerr McCrystal Palson
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Debbie Cross, *InterTown Record*
Michelle Isner, Colby Sawyer College Student

The Selectmen met at 7:45 a.m. to sign the following items:

Applications for Building Permits:

- Daniel & Judith Ferreira, 153 S. Pleasant St. (Map & Lot 095-014-000) build entry way & pantry addition – Permit #08-111 – Approved
- Peter & Robin Gunn, 16 Ice House Road (Map & Lot 020-010-000) repair/replace garage foundation wall & pour a new concrete floor – Permit #08-112 – Approved.
- Ed Gerwig, 489 Bunker Road (Map & Lot 063-005-000) construct retaining wall along Pleasant Lake DES Permit 2007-02367 – Permit #08-113 – Approved.
- Susan Nye Trust, 1084 Lake Shore Drive (Map & Lot 065-007-000) replace sun porch with 16x16 foot screen porch – Permit #08-114 – Approved.
- David & Kim (Whitney) Sauerwein, 137 Pingree Road (Map & Lot 032-003-000) master suite addition, renovate a bedroom to become common space – Permit #08-115 – Approved.
- Alan & Jane Birk, 199 Barrett Road (Map & Lot 084-014-000) addition of master bedroom and four season room – Permit #08-116 – Approved.
- Colonial Plaza, William Faccone, 256 Newport Road (Map & Lot 059-008-000) build additional entrance/exit for egress of restaurant – Permit #08-117 – Approved.
- Albert X. Widmer, 482 Lakeshore Road (Map & Lot 037-013-000) update septic system – Permit #08-118 – Approved.
- William & Jane Hopwood, 706 Bunker Road (Map & Lot 076-022-000) demolish existing house and build new 3 bedroom home – Permit #08-119 – Approved.
- William Magner, Whitney Brook Road (Map & Lot 039-005-001) build new 4 bedroom home, attached 2 car garage and deck – Permit #08-120 – Approved.
- Dunn Family Trust, 319 Burpee Hill Road (Map & Lot 070-001-000) add dormer and new bathroom – Permit #08-121 – Approved.

Applications for use of Whipple Hall:

- New London Recreation – Creative Movement/Dance Program – September 23-Dec 16 – 10:00 am to 5:00 pm – Approved.

Applications for use of Archive Room:

- Kearsarge Valley Community Action Program, Warner – to use Archive room on second & fourth Tuesdays 9:00 am to 12:00 to meet with outreach people for assistance – Approved.

Application for use of Sydney Crook Room:

- Adventures in Learning, 4 programs –Jan. 20 - March 6, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Fridays – Approved.

Application for Sign Permits:

- PERMANENT: Nonni's Italian Eatery, Colonial Plaza, (Map & Lot 059-008-000) 15 SF sign - Approved.

Other:

- Disbursement & payroll voucher week of 9/15/08 - Approved.

Selectman Mark Kaplan opened the meeting for regular business at 8 a.m.

Energy Exemptions

Jessie Levine and Norm Bernaiche reported that for a number of years, the Town has granted two tax exemptions for energy conservation, but they can find no record of when or how that was established. It should have been approved by Town Meeting but does not appear on any warrant articles going back to the 1970s. Norm Bernaiche said these exemptions—one for \$44,000 and one for \$14,500 for solar hot water heating and solar heating respectively, first appeared on the MS-1 in 1988, but there is no reference to them in the Town reports or elsewhere. Jessie Levine said the Town must come up with a guideline for this. State law allows towns (after approval at Town Meeting) to give exemptions, which she believes could be done in two ways: (a) by reducing the assessed valuation of a property (in other words, a “credit” like the veterans’ credit), or (b) by simply not adding the cost of the installation to the value.

Larry Ballin asked what the difference is between installing an energy efficient heating system, and installing a new kitchen. Jessie Levine said it comes down to philosophy. The law allows a way to give an initiative to people who conserve energy. Larry Ballin said the problem is that it would reduce the revenue stream to the Town. He suggested a better use of the Town’s resources would be to protect people who can’t afford their wood or oil heat. He said he feels this kind of exemption would give the benefit to people who are already on the higher end of the income scale and can afford to install the new systems.

Also, he pointed out that exemptions for energy efficient systems are already market-place driven (they’ll see lower fuel expenditure). Mark Kaplan agreed, pointing out that someone who installs an energy efficient system will see a pay back at some point in the future. Norm Bernaiche said that for some, it is a philosophical decision to save energy. The financial benefit could be quite far off in the future depending on the type of system installed. Mark Kaplan said, but in speaking of giving a tax exemption for those, they are really talking about accelerating and increasing that pay back. Jessie Levine said this discussion is within the context of Town Meeting’s mandate that New London create an Energy Committee, and look into ways to conserve energy—all in response to global warming. She said they have had no guidelines in the past, but they are receiving more inquiries regarding this. She suggested they could look into the cost of installing the different types of systems, and develop a tiered system for the exemption.

Jack Harrod reported that his solar heating system cost \$27,000 to install, and since its installation, he has reduced his electricity consumption by 2/3. He pointed out that it will take 25 years for the savings to pay back his investment. Larry Ballin asked if he installed it with the expectation that he would receive a tax exemption. Jack Harrod said no, but the Town has indicated that it wants to support alternate energy systems. Larry Ballin agreed that it does, but he does not think this is the way to do that. Jessie Levine said the Town can only do what State law allows. New London does not risk losing a huge amount of revenue if it enacts an energy exemption, but they do need a guideline for this because there is no clear guidance at this time.

Mark Kaplan asked, in the two energy exemptions that the Town gives now, what is the ratio of the exemption to the cost of the equipment and its installation. Norm Bernaiche said that he believes that the two energy exemptions that the Town now gives are based on the total cost of the equipment and its installation; it is not a percentage. He said his first choice of how to approach this would be to simply not have the new systems assessed. That would obviate the need to calculate that at the time of sale, as well. But his primary objective in bringing this up now is to straighten this out, and develop a guideline. Jessie Levine said that if the Town decides now to have no energy exemption, the two who currently get the exemptions would lose them.

Brian Prescott agreed with Norm Bernaiche. The simplest solution would be to just not evaluate it. He said he also agrees with Larry Ballin's point that an energy exemption would go to people who are already on the high end of the scale, and the Town could better spend its resources helping people who have difficulty paying for heat at all.

Norm Bernaiche said the power company and the State already offer rebates for installation of energy efficient systems. Jack Harrod said there is a federal rebate of \$2000, and as of July 1, 2008, the State offers a rebate of up to \$6000 depending on the type of system installed. (That's not retroactive, so people like Jack Harrod did not benefit.) Both Jessie Levine and Norm Bernaiche agreed that if the Town gives an exemption, the language in the guideline would have to be very clear. The language in the State's law is not clear. Mark Kaplan pointed out that the two options: assessing the new equipment and giving an exemption, or not assessing it, would have the same net result to the Town.

Chet Reynolds suggested this be looked at in context of what's happening in the rest of the world, and throughout the State, where energy is now being addressed head on. He feels the State is doing its part in offering the rebate for installation of new systems, and perhaps the Town need not participate in that particular issue. He agreed with Larry Ballin's description that an exemption might be simply a redistribution of wealth, and that perhaps simply not assessing new equipment would be the best solution.

He went on to say that there are several bills in legislature now addressing both solar and wind energy systems, including legislation aimed at encouraging utilities to invest in small generating centers that would eliminate loss of energy through the long transmission lines. He suggested that is an area where the Town could have an impact as well.

Jessie Levine asked if this subject could be tabled until she prepares the Town Meeting warrant in January, at which time the Selectmen can decide on the language for a warrant article.

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Larry Ballin moved to accept. Brian Prescott seconded. No further discussion. Motion unanimously approved.

Budget Review

Jessie Levine reported that the Budget Committee will be meeting tonight. The personnel changes that may generate discussion during upcoming budget talks include: changing the zoning administrator position to full-time, adding a part-time dispatcher for weekend nights, hiring a full time custodian for town buildings, and hiring part-time summer office help for the Recreation Department.

The budget also includes proposed allocations for the Whipple basement, new sidewalks (covered by grant), and increase in asphalt costs. She noted that 2009 will be the first year in 20 that the cost of paving services will go up—from \$184,000 to \$220,000. The contractor has informed Richard Lee that it may go down in spring, so he (Richard Lee) will be asking to encumber the 2008 budgeted, put off the paving planned for this year (Quail Run), and do that, Rocky Ridge and Rowell Hill in 2009. (Note, at the moment, the 2009 proposed for bituminous products is level at \$11,500.)

Larry Ballin asked if the Planning Board's budget will reflect a decrease due to the change in zoning administrator position. Jessie Levine said they can reduce the line item for Planner from \$35,000 to \$25,000, and possibly more. Brian Prescott asked if the full time zoning administrator position would include benefits. Yes.

Mark Kaplan said his concern is that the Town not get overloaded with big projects in one year. He said that the Town may be bonding \$1.5 million for the community center, and it is committed to renovating Whipple basement this year. There will also be library expenses. He suggested some of these be spread out.

Whipple Basement

At 8:30 AM, the Selectmen were joined by architect Chris Lizotte of Sheerr McCrystal Palson of New London. Selectmen asked Chris Lizotte if the contracting costs come in lower for this project, will the architect's fees go down. Chris Lizotte said that the architect's fees are not percentages. He said he calculated his hours and those of the engineers at an hourly rate not to exceed \$80. He agreed that if construction costs are lower, he would expect his costs to be less than the estimated \$37,000.

Larry Ballin said the Selectmen realize that they are required to do certain things, such as the relocation of the generator and meeting ADA requirements. Jessie Levine said the contracting estimates came from Brian Carey (\$350,000) and Foremost (\$280,000, not including the sprinkler system). These estimates were based on a phased project, so she assumes that the cost savings of doing the project all at once would balance inflationary increases since these proposals were made last year. Chris Lizotte said that, though costs of labor may go down, costs of materials will not. Also, since this is an older building, he recommended carrying a contingency line item. He suggested that the bottom line can be controlled by asking during the bid process that certain items be made "add/alternates."

Brian Prescott reiterated his concern that they not make too much of a basement. Chris Lizotte said if it is to be used as a public space, they must improve the HVAC, meet ADA requirements, and if there will be more than 15 people using it, they will be required to have two separate bathrooms. If the space were to be used just as an evidence room, much less would be required.

Larry Ballin asked if a kitchen is really required. Jessie Levine said that could be made an "add/ alternate" but pointed out that the cost for a kitchen is really minimal, and they are thinking of using the space as a back up emergency shelter or a shelter for pets during emergencies. She is looking into grants for that.

Selectmen and Chris Lizotte made a site visit to the basement, where the architect pointed out the proposed relocation of the generator, the location of the ramp, proposed locations of bathrooms, kitchen, and training and meeting spaces. Asked about how often the space would be used for police training, David Seastrand said they (including police organizations) would use it for all kinds of training programs throughout the year. Chris Lizotte described the sprinkler system that is planned, as well as additional fire protection for the evidence room.

Considering that the costly relocation of the generator is due in part to the fact that the wall behind it now is leaking, Selectmen asked if the generator could be moved to the new community center instead. No, the police department must have a generator.

Brian Prescott asked about the proposal to raise the concrete floor by eight inches. Chris Lizotte said that would enable them to meet the level of the outside ramp more easily. (In a previous meeting, there was discussion of raising the floor so that the existing windows at their current height could qualify as emergency egresses.) Jessie Levine spoke about installation of insulation and heating systems for both floor and ceiling—that would aid in heating of the court room above as well. It was agreed that the amount the floor to be raised could be reduced.

Mark Kaplan asked if there are any numbers to support the statement that the Town needs more meeting space. Jessie Levine said she does not have such numbers, but pointed out that use of the space for public meetings is secondary to the Town's promise to the police department that it would fix this space up. Mark Kaplan asked if they could receive estimates for two separate projects: one that would be for a space with combined utilization: police and public, and the other for a space that would be just for the police. Jessie Levine said that could be done by delineating which items in the total bid would be "add/alternates." (In an email subsequent to this meeting, she said that Chris Lizotte has agreed to provide that data.)

National Incident Management System Resolution

Jessie Levine explained that this resolution adopting the National Incident Management System as the Town's emergency operating procedure is just formalizing what the Town already does. Larry Ballin moved that Selectmen sign the resolution adopting NIMS. Brian Prescott seconded. No further discussion. Motion unanimously approved.

National Scenic Byways Program

Jessie Levine informed Selectmen that when the National Scenic Byways Program came before the Town in the 1990's, the Selectmen and/or Planning Board at that time chose to not have New London be a part of it. Now, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission is applying for another grant, and is inviting New London to join, and have its section of Route 103a be a part of this. Brian Prescott asked what the benefits would be. Jessie Levine said the road would be included in lists for tourist destinations, signage would be provided, and there may be some opportunities for scene enhancing grants. She said she does not see a downside in joining. Brian Prescott moved to join. Larry Ballin seconded. No further discussion. Motion unanimously approved.

PSNH Transformer Poles

Selectmen received a schematic showing PSNH's most recent proposal for locating the step transformers behind the fire station and bookstore. It is not certain whose property that is, probably the School

District's. Selectmen agreed that this location is preferable to the two proposals received in recent weeks, and expressed appreciation to the Public Service of NH for their efforts in finding alternative proposals.

Crockett's Corner

The State DOT will hold a public meeting on this on October 15 at 7 p.m. at Whipple. It will include discussion of Crockett's Corner as well as the entire reclaiming project from the interstate to Wilmot. The meeting will be advertised.

Public Works

Richard Lee joined the Selectmen at 9:00 AM and reported that cost of asphalt has risen from \$60/ton to \$90/ton, so to pave Quail Run this year as planned would cost \$76,500, not the \$68,000 that was budgeted. As mentioned earlier in the meeting, the contractor has suggested that the cost may go down next spring, so he would like to encumber that \$68,000. He pointed out that if the price were to go down just \$10 per ton, they would save \$8500. If it were to go down \$20, they would save \$17,000. Asked if they would have time to do Quail Run, Rocky Ridge and Rowell Hill—all in 2009, he said yes, because they would do all the prep work including drainage this year. He clarified that they still plan to do County Road this year—that is, the section from Route 114 to Hilltop entrance and on the other side of Newport Road, from the shopping center to just past the hospital.

Jessie Levine asked, what if they wait on the paving, and the costs go up, rather than down. Richard Lee said paving contractors have backed out of contracts before. Jessie Levine asked, if the Town bumps this work to next year, will it be too much in addition to the Department's regular work. Richard Lee said no, they can do prep work and drainage this year, and grinding and paving next year. Brian Prescott asked how much they would be encumbering. Richard Lee said they would encumber the \$68,000 budgeted for the paving of Quail Run, the \$40,000 budgeted for shimming, and \$8,000 or \$9,000 -- whatever the balance remaining after the work on County and Page roads is completed. He added that they are still waiting for TDS to place its lines on Quail Run. Then they will get to the prep and drainage there. Jessie Levine will send a letter explaining all this to residents of Quail Run.

Asked about a large emerging rock on Elkins Road, Richard Lee said he is in process of purchasing a demonstration of a device that will break that up so it can be removed. That should be done this fall.

Citizens' Advisory Committee

This committee will meet on September 27, and discuss the preliminary budget figures as well as any other questions that may come up.

Master Plan

Larry Ballin has reported that Ken McWilliams has reduced the cost to complete the energy chapter of this by 20%. He added that attendance at the Master Plan work sessions is high.

Energy Committee

Jessie Levine reported that the committee is going to request a budget this year, and it will include the cost of a student intern. Brian Prescott suggested that one thing Energy Committee members might be able to do is meet with and assist people in town who may need help with buttoning down their homes for

winter, or even with provision of some insulating materials. Selectmen agreed that this would be a good idea, and Jessie Levine will put that in a memo to the energy committee.

Roundabout

Jessie Levine reported that this is still on schedule and budget. They addressed the problem of stops and starts at last week's meeting. This week they will be doing a portion of the sidewalk, and beginning work on the second half of the round about half is in place now.

Budget Committee

The committee will meet tonight at 7, and Brian Prescott will provide the Selectmen's update.

Other

- Schultz land purchase: Done.
- KCC: Larry Ballin and Jessie Levine will meet with this group on Thursday morning.
- Elkins Charette: Facilitator is awaiting GIS information from the Town.
- Brian Prescott asked about the strip of land that Town meeting agreed to give up to Doug Homan and Buker. Doug Homan would like to remove some dead trees.
- The Elkins Cemetery sign is either missing or broken. Jessie Levine said replacement will be \$1500. Insurance will pay \$500 (that is, less the \$1000 deductible), and the Town has already spent the line item allocating that deductible for 2008. She asked if it is worthwhile to file a claim, or should they just go ahead and buy a new sign. Selectmen said it is worthwhile to file. Question was raised about the number of cemeteries in Town and under whose purview they fall. New London has the Elkins Cemetery, the one on Old Main Street, and one on County Road. Maintenance falls to the Town's Public Works Department, and is covered by the cemetery maintenance budget.

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Per NH RSA 91-A:3 (d), Selectmen moved, seconded and unanimously approved the motion to enter non public session in order to discuss a question regarding real property. Kaplan-yes. Ballin-yes. Prescott-yes.

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At 10 a.m., Selectmen reentered public session, and having no further business to discuss, adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah A. Denz
Recording Secretary