

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES**

JANUARY 9, 2006

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Douglas W. Lyon, Selectman
Ruth I. Clough, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT:

June Fichter, Executive Director, Lake Sunapee Protective Association
Robert Wood, Associate Director, Lake Sunapee Protective Association
Terry Dancy, New London representative to Lake Sunapee Protective Association
John Clough, New London representative to Board of Directors, Lake Sunapee Protective Association
Ruth White, New London Conservation Commission
Cheryl Cook, New London resident, Clock Watch Committee
Evan Fradenburgh, New London resident, Clock Watch Committee
Hank Otto, New London resident, Clock Watch Committee
Deb Perkins, New London resident, Clock Watch Committee
Peter Stanley, Zoning Administrator
Bob and DJ Lavoie, New London residents
Carolyn Dube, Argus Champion
Debbie Cross, Intertown Record

Chair Kaplan called the meeting to order at 8:10 AM.

Meeting Minutes: Mr. Lyon moved to approve the minutes of January 3, 2006. Second Ms. Clough and approved 3-0.

Tracy Library Request to Serve Alcohol: Ms. Levine referred to a request from the Tracy Librarians to serve alcohol at the open house on January 31, 2006, subject to the provisions of Town's alcohol ordinance. Mr. Lyon moved to approve the request, seconded by Ms. Clough and approved 3-0.

Planning Board Update: Ms. Clough reported on the public hearings of January 3, 2006. Amendments 1-3 were accepted, but amendments 4 and 5 hit a "snag" due to the proposed effect on density. There was a vocal element present at the public hearing that felt that the Planning Board would be destroying the cluster concept and robbing property owners of their rights and property value by decreasing density. Mr. Lyon said these types of amendments have overwhelmingly been supported by voters; people in general are in favor of restricting growth in New London. He said he's not sure if it's the drawbridge mentality or just that people do not want to see New London growth. Mr. Kaplan agreed, but said what's left is the less ideal land, and if that is taken away that's another chunk that cannot be developed. He asked if there was a way to accomplish the wetland reduction while allowing the same number of houses. Mr. Lyon replied that all zoning creates restrictions, and the question is whether there is a legitimate greater good provided by the proposed change. That is, does the notion of wetland density restrictions have a valid constructive argument?

Ms. Levine agreed that as with all decisions, voters must weight the public benefit vs. private restrictions. Mr. Lyon said this is similar to the Town's project of renaming streets and renumbering homes; individually, it created inconveniences, but there was a greater benefit for the good of the community. There are often microeconomic consequences to macroeconomic decisions. Mr. Kaplan said that if it is

presented that there would be 20 or 50 fewer homes as a result of the Planning Board's recommendation, then people could decide if that is what they wanted or not, but without that information they cannot make an informed decision. Ms. Levine said the purpose of these amendment is not to reduce development but to protect natural resources. She said the discussion surrounding the proposed Granger development highlighted areas in which the Zoning Ordinance did not address concerns about the natural environment and the downstream effects of development.

Bob Lavoie asked if the Planning Board should adjust density in the remainder of town to have balance and diversity of housing. Mr. Lyon said the build-out study conducted during the last revision of the Master Plan projected a built-out population of 9,000 residents in New London, and we're at only 4,400 now. He suggested that the reduction of that figure by a few houses may not be a big issue overall. Ms. Clough said housing diversity is another question entirely that needs to be discussed during the next Master Plan process. Mr. Lyon said the point about having different levels of housing certainly relates to public benefit and should be discussed. DJ Lavoie said it would be a selling point for those concerned about the loss of useful land.

Ms. Clough said that there were similar concerns about Amendment 5 regarding steep slopes, although the Planning Board took out the proposed restrictions relating to slopes between 15-25% and focused instead on slopes of 25% and higher.

The remainder of the amendments were accepted and will be taken forward to a vote in March. There was a lively discussion about the petitioned warrant article regarding pedestals and electric meters installed within the front yard setback. Ms. Clough said Michael Todd was adamant that the petition accurately described what he wanted to achieve.

Sunapee Area Watershed Coalition: At 9:00 AM, the Selectmen were joined by June Fichter and Robert Wood of the Lake Sunapee Protective Association. Ms. Fichter explained that she was not here today as executive director of the LSPA but to update the Selectmen on the activities of the Sunapee Area Watershed Coalition, or SAWC. She said that the SAWC has held monthly meetings of its members, consisting of representatives of the towns in the Lake Sunapee watershed. Terry Dancy, who is present this morning, is New London's representative. She said attendance that the meetings has varied but has been as high as 35 people. SAWC has established some structure, such as a steering committee and subcommittees to focus on three topics: land use, education, and water quality. The education committee has sent out a newsletter and survey (400 have been returned out of 8000 sent). Results of the survey will be analyzed by LSPA and by a Colby-Sawyer student who will make this her senior project. Ms. Fichter expects the report in March-April.

Mr. Wood reported that SAWC has a website, currently working off the private website of Ken Lawson, the Springfield representative (<http://home.earthlink.net/%7Esunapeewatershed>). SAWC has worked with DES to secure a pilot grant of \$50,000 for 2006-2007, and the Granite State Rural Water Association will help SAWC establish a watershed management plan. The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) will also continue to play a big part in the coalition and will work with GSRWA on a build out study update for the region.

Ms. Fichter said the preliminary results of the survey indicate that respondents want to maintain the rural quality of the region, maintain water quality, balance growth with environmental issues, and enforce existing regulations. Studies have shown that after the watershed has more than 15% impervious surface coverage, water quality begins to go down. One of the goals of SAWC will be to determine what to do with water runoff. Mr. Wood showed slides of the Sunapee Hills development around Chalk Pond in Newbury, which is a good example of not maintaining water quality, rural quality, or enforcing regulations. He said the subdivision is primarily ½-acre lots that are smaller as they approach the water, and most of it is on slopes. All of these lots are buildable because they are grandfathered, which means

that there could be potential lawsuits, neighbors suing neighbors. He showed slides of storm damage to septic systems on two of the properties. Ms. Clough informed Mr. Wood about the Selectmen's earlier discussion about growth and the fragile environment.

Terry Dancy said that Karen Ebel, chair of the Planning Board, had asked for SAWC's opinion on density that cannot be answered specifically except to say that density is an important component of watershed protection. The land use subcommittee is reviewing the ordinance from all six of the watershed towns and comparing them for thoroughness and coverage. The New London Zoning Ordinance was assessed as being superior overall but it was noted that New London has less specific requirements regarding erosion control. He added that other towns might have better regulations, but New London has looser enforcement by way of its Zoning Board of Adjustment. He queried the point of having regulations if the ZBA was not willing to enforce them. He said the Town's approach to zoning should be "what you have to do rather than what you can get around."

The Selectmen thanked those present for their time, and all departed at 9:25 AM.

Town Clock Restoration Committee: At 9:30 AM, the Selectmen were joined by New London residents Cheryl Cook, Evan Fradenburgh, Hank Otto, Deb Perkins, and by Zoning Administrator Peter Stanley, to talk about restoration of the Town Clock at the First Baptist Church. Evan Fradenburgh introduced the group as "Clock Watch," and said that they came together in the spirit of Bud Lauridsen to restore the Town Clock to working order. He handed out a history of the clock prepared by Deb Perkins. The clock, which was given to the Town and installed at FBC in 1884, was driven for over 100 years by falling weights that had to be wound once a week. The clock kept time and struck once an hour, which caused objection to some and was removed when Bob Thurston was pastor of the church. It now has electronic mechanisms to run the time piece. Bud Lauridsen had hoped to reinstate the clock to mechanical operations, and it would be of historical significance to restore timekeeping to how it used to be. The original parts of the clock are all there and in pretty good to excellent condition.

Mr. Fradenburgh said the clock belongs to all of the residents of Town although it resides in the church. The Clock Watch committee sought a couple of proposals and came up with a person to do the restoration work. The proposals include: 1) the restoration of mechanical operation, which would require winding once per week by pulling up a box of rocks which would descend over the course of the week (about \$2800) and 2) restoring the chime of the Revere bell on the hour during daylight hours (about \$7,400). This would not restore the original mechanism, which had a higher weight over a longer distance and would not allow the mechanism to be limited to daylight hours. Plus, there is a new organ at FBC and there would be a potential risk to the organ when the weight dropped. The proposal suggests an electrically driven system that would actuate the hammer that hits the bell and could be easily adjusted for daylight savings. He said the total cost of \$10,260 is a reasonably priced proposal for the Town to support, and the Clock Watch committee hopes to raise most of the money through private fundraising.

Mr. Fradenburgh said the Church also needs to do some work on the access way to the clock. The clock used to be access by a walkway across the roof of the adjacent building and through a catwalk in the attic, and now there is an indoor stairway to the attic but passage from the attic to the tower is awkward and not particularly safe. Clock Watch is meeting with the Church trustees to discuss improving the safety, broadening the walkway, putting in handles and lighting and removing obstructions. He noted that the Church recently received recognition as a national historic monument, the second in town to be listed as such. The clock is a historic item, and the Revere bell also has historic value. He said the New London Historical Society supports the idea of restoring the clock, and he hopes they could make access to the clock and bell available on occasion to small groups of people.

Chair Kaplan asked if it was the Revere bell that was struck when the clock chimed, and Mr. Fradenburgh replied that it was. Ms. Clough said she had spoken to Laurie Lauridsen about why the Town owned the

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clock, and was informed that FBC had operated as the Town Meeting House for a number of years. Cheryl Cook said it was traditional for clocks to be installed in the highest place in town, which would have been the FBC tower.

Deb Perkins referred to a "clock box," which was the vessel for keeping the father's pocketwatch when he came home from the fields. This was frequently a family's only timepiece; antique timepieces are rare and revered and that is why this clock is such a treasure.

Ms. Levine suggested that the warrant article could ask Town Meeting to approve an expendable trust fund for this purpose, and donations could be deposited into the fund and the balance raised at Town Meeting. If more than \$10,260 is raised, the money could stay in the fund for ongoing maintenance. Ms. Cook asked if the Selectmen could approve restoration if all of the money were raised privately. This led to a discussion about whether the funds would be a gift to the Town or whether the funds could be spent without Town Meeting approval (they could not).

Peter Stanley said he had spoken to Bud Lauridsen many times about the project, and what is being proposed is practical, realistic, and the prices are good. Ms. Cook asked what the Town currently pays to maintain the clock, and Mr. Stanley said it's about \$250 per year.

Mr. Fradenburgh asked if the clock repair could go forward even if the Church did not approve the safety improvements, and Mr. Stanley said yes, the two are not mutually exclusive.

The Selectmen thanked those present for their work and said they are looking forward to the finished product. All departed at 10:00 AM.

KRSD Deliberative Session: The Selectmen briefly discussed the deliberative session that was held on Saturday, January 7, 2006. Mr. Lyon and Ms. Levine had attended and reported that discussion was civil and productive, and the presentations by KARMA and the School Board regarding the school site were informative.

Building Permits:

- Town of New London, Elkins Post Office, 349 Elkins Road (Map 077, Lot 012), permit to remove existing wood deck and install new wood deck approximately 6' wide by 12' long; interior renovations to interior finishes including removal of several interior partitions – Approved (Permit 06-001)

Sign Permit Applications:

- Temporary sign permit application for the New London Hospital to display a 2' x 3' sandwich board sign at the Information Booth showing the Hospital Days 2006 from July 30- August 5, 2006 - Approved

Other Items for Signature:

- Disbursement & Payroll Voucher for the week of January 9, 2006 – Approved
- Authorization from the State of New Hampshire, DMV, to grant Linda M. Hardy, Town Clerk & Tax Collector, the authority to collect and remit to the municipality payment for boat fees as required by RSA 72-A:3 - Approved
- Application for use of the Town Office Sydney L. Crook Conference Room for KARMA for a Meeting Presentation on Wednesday, January 4, 2006 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. - Approved

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- Application for use of the Town Office Sydney L. Crook Conference Room for New London Hospital Days 2006 from August 3 - August 5, 2006 for all day use. - Approved
- Application for use of the New London Town Commons for New London Hospital Days 2006 from August 1 - August 5, 2006 - Approved

There being no further business, the Selectmen voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie Levine
Town Administrator