

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
September 23, 2014
DRAFT MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Board members present: Gail Cromwell, John Kieley, George Willard

Call to order by Cromwell at 5:30 p.m.

Paperwork: Signed real estate transfer form for Town Forest Conservation Easement.
Signed building permit application for a shed for Cabana, M 06 L 035.
Reviewed and signed vouchers.

Tax Exemption: Mark Stetson, Avitar Associates met with the Board. Kieley asked Stetson about tax exemptions for religious purposes. Stetson said tax exemption would depend on the status of a filing, if religious then it would be exempt if it qualifies under State statutes. Qualification is set by statutes and case law. The property must be occupied and used for the religious purposes.

2014 Assessment Updates: Mark Stetson, Avitar Associates discussed the 2014 assessment updates. The required USPA manual, which gives information regarding the work done to determine assessments, was turned over to the Board. This manual will be available for review in the office during regular business hours. Stetson said that 26 property owners came to the informal hearings. Cromwell informed Stetson that there had been complaints that the time frame of 3 days to call Avitar to request a hearing was too short; Cromwell suggested 5 days for people to call. Stetson will forward this request to his Supervisor.

Cromwell asked about having the tax assessments on-line. Stetson explained that people are able to purchase a subscription to Avitar's website and access assessment information; this is usually done by appraisers and real estate agents. Stetson can have someone from Avitar forward a quote on how much it would cost the town to make assessments available. C. Kieley stated the town should do this – as people should be able to find public information from the privacy of their homes.

J. Kieley asked about the status of interior inspections. Stetson stated that typically 1/3 of the property owners do not allow interior inspections.

Stetson informed the Board that he will have his Supervisor send a contract proposal for the next 5 year assessment cycle.

Library: Christine Robideaux and Casey Jones, representing the Library Trustees, informed the Board that the Library had received a gift of \$11,361.32 from the Greenville Women's Club. The Greenville Women's Club has been dissolved and their by-laws stated that in case of dissolution any funds would be divided between the Temple, Greenville and New Ipswich Libraries to be used for special needs for the libraries and not for general operating expenses. The Library Trustees will need to hold a public hearing for acceptance of the gift pursuant to RSA 202-A:4-C, which was adopted by the Town of Temple at the March 12, 1994 Town Meeting.

Minutes: Move by Kieley to approve the 9/9/14 minutes as amended, second by Cromwell and voted in the unanimous affirmative.

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Forest Monks: Ajaha Eto; Ajaha Anando, Tom Hanna (Attorney), Eric McCord and Bruce Kantner met with the Board. The Board was told that the Monks have been renting from the Kantner's since July 14, 2014. The Monks plan to purchase all of the Kantner property and have signed a purchase and sale agreement. This P&S is contingent upon the Monks raising the agreed upon amount of money, receiving a special exception from the Town of Temple Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA), obtaining their tax exempt religious status from the State of NH and negotiating with the Temple Board of Selectmen (BOS) for a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes).

Ajaha Eto explained that the primary purpose of the proposed monastery is the training of Monks. Secondary is interface with people who come to learn meditation or practice Buddhism. The Forest Monks focus is on a personal contemplative manner in communion with nature. They would build huts to do meditation in. This would be a mainly resident community eventually having 20 to 25 members. They would also have long term and short term guests. They would be looking at having volunteers for maintenance and grounds keeping rather than employees. Cromwell asked the nature of the huts and Ajaha Eto explained that they are a simple enclosed square for meditation, sleeping and study with an outdoor area for walking back and forth, usually 100 to 200 square feet and heated. They would also have an outhouse or composting toilet.

The Monks are a recognized 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and they are working on the NH requirements for a religious organization. There will be two tax exempt organizations, the Monks will own the land and the second organization will control all funds. Both entities will exist beside each other.

Attorney Hanna stated that they will be applying to the ZBA for a special exception under Section 13 of the Temple Zoning Ordinance. Planning Board site plan review may or may not be required, if new buildings are proposed. They are aware that they will need building permits from the BOS for the huts and that there will be current use penalties for the areas where the huts will be built. At the present time there are enough buildings for their use on the properties being purchased. There may be one or two buildings removed at some point as they will not suit the Monks needs over the long term. Hanna said that they would like to have some idea how the town would treat the current use issue. Currently there is 1 acre NICU at Jessen Lane, 1 acre NICU at the Cliffhouse, and 3 acres NICU at Derbyshire Farm. The question about the LUCT for the huts was asked, the Board will have Mark Stetson of Avitar review the requirements and a letter will be sent. A PILOT will be discussed at the time of an application for tax exempt status which would happen before April 2015 or April 2016, depending on when the closing occurs. The P&S requires closing not later than June 15, 2015. The Kantner's have an 8 year option to re-purchase 4 acres, and all parties are aware that this would need to go to the Planning Board.

Kieley asked if the Monks would consider a conservation easement on the property. Hanna stated that he had advised them not to consider an easement until they know the land and how they will be using the land. They may be willing to consider an easement at some point in time.

Converse Road Bridge: Tim Fiske, Road Agent and Jim Holler, Cold River Bridges met with the Board. Holler is digging and preparing the footing for the west side of the bridge. Holler explained the changes made pursuant to the recommendations from Dubois & King. A conference call with D&K, Contech, Holler and Kieley with occur at 9:00 am on the 24th of September 2014. Holler stated that he will not pay D&K any money for the

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increased cost due to the issue about the footings. Fiske asked that the question be put to D&K why they are requiring all this work when the arch has not changed.

Highway Budget: Tim Fiske, Road Agent, spoke to the Board about his maintenance budget. The transmission for the tractor is in Connecticut being rebuilt, the clutch in the tractor is also being replaced. The cost is estimated to be \$15,000 to \$16,000. The vehicle maintenance budget is already over. Fiske is proposing use of the expendable trust. Fiske also informed the Board that he will not be sealing approximately ½ mile of road and he will try to save in other line items to help cover the vehicle maintenance line item.

Move by Kieleley to adjourn, second by Willard, and so voted at 8:04 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Debra Harling

~ Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 5:30 pm ~