

**MINUTES
TOWN OF SWANTON
SELECTBOARD MEETING
In-Person & By Zoom
Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Tuesday, October 4, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Present: James Guilmette, Chair; Earl Fournier, Vice-Chair; Nicole Draper, Ed White, Steve Bourgeois, Members; Brian Savage, Town Administrator; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk; Joseph Cava, Administrative Assistant; Matthew Sullivan, Swanton Chief of Police; Nicholas Brosseau; Joel Clark; Henry Lambert; Cody Hemenway; Aaron Hoague; Lisa Meunier; Sue Day; Jeff Day; Betsy Fournier (ZOOM User); 18023557189 (ZOOM User); Jay (ZOOM User); Cindy Choiniere (ZOOM User); Nick P. (ZOOM User); Deb's Ipad Pro (ZOOM User); Chris Seguin (ZOOM User); Anissa (ZOOM User); Autumn (ZOOM User); Amy Demetrowitz (ZOOM User)

*All motions carried unanimously unless specified otherwise.

- A. Call to Order – Mr. Guilmette called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Guilmette led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Agenda Review
- D. Meeting Topics:
 - 1. Minutes
 - a) September 20, 2022, Regular and Zoom Selectboard Meeting

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the 9/6/22 Selectboard meeting, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.
 - b) September 26, 2022, Joint Meeting with Board of Village Trustees and Selectboard

Tabled to next Selectboard meeting.
 - 2. Public Comments - None
 - 3. Any Other Necessary Business
 - a) Fill Selectboard Vacancy

Members of the Selectboard briefly reviewed the application materials of prospective applicants. Nicholas Brosseau gave a brief summary on his qualifications to fill the vacant role on the Selectboard including his personal interest in community goals and projects. Cody Hemenway is a born and raised Swanton resident to act as a community conduit. Steve Bourgeois has had various roles in consulting and community municipal affairs.

Mr. Fournier asked about what the applicants thought would be a good priority to Swanton? Mr. Brosseau expressed the sidewalk project to have safer pedestrian access to spur economic development. Mr. Hemenway expressed a need to keep Swanton residents in Swanton rather than the trend of moving outside their hometown community. Mr. Bourgeois' concern was around fiscal management and developing a five-year plan to minimize the impacts of inflation on the Swanton taxpayers.

Mr. Fournier proceeded to ask whether the applicants would continue to run past the end of the existing term after March 2023? Mr. Brosseau responded that he would continue to run for office. Mr. Hemenway responded that he says what he feels for hometown spirit and would continue to represent Swanton. Steve also expressed his longevity if accepted to the Selectboard.

Ms. Draper asked about the time commitment to be a Selectboard member, and whether the prospective applicants could meet it? Mr. Brosseau stated that his current work schedule would remain open in the evenings for meetings and other events. Mr. Hemenway said he has relinquished other roles to accept a position with the Town. Mr. Bourgeois expressed that he is semi-retired and would have the open availability to fill the role.

Mr. White asked about the current situation with the Swanton Rec Department and the applicant's thoughts on the Selectboard's proposed contribution from ARPA funds? Mr. Brosseau said he is a firm supporter of the Rec Department. Mr. Hemenway expressed support for their events to encourage healthy lifestyles for kids and families of all ages. Mr. Bourgeois approves of the concept but is waiting on numbers to fully commit.

4. Executive Session (Personnel)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 7:19 p.m., seconded by Mr. Four. Motion carried.

Ms. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 7:30 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the appointment of Steve Bourgeois to complete the remainder of the term on the Selectboard ending in March 2023, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

5. Law Enforcement

a) Swanton Police Chief Report

Chief Sullivan delivered a summary of incidences including traffic violations, suspicious persons, juvenile problems with a total of 45 incidents for the month of September. Chief Sullivan added the contributions of a new hire on the force including their comprehensive background in military service that has prepared them for the role. Depending on the circumstances in regard to an Emergency Management Plan, Chief Sullivan expressed the challenges in patrolling the recreational trails.

Ms. Draper expressed concern about a homeless person sleeping on the steps of the Swanton Public Library. The librarian has already requested the individual not utilize such a prominent community asset in such a way. The librarian has also expressed complaints of dangerous contraband being cleaned up from the library's parking lot including used needles. Mr. White expressed concerns of continued excessive speeding throughout the community and an unusual courtesy transport by Swanton PD between Swanton and Alburgh.

b) Swanton Health Officer Monthly Report

Mr. Savage responded that the Swanton Health Officer had minimal events to report.

6. Old Town Business

a) Public Hearing LVRT Trail Head Project

Mr. Clark opened by discussing and summarizing the proposed site plan for the LVRT Trail Head. The conversation quickly led into funding opportunities including grants through the federal government. The site plan includes a paved parking lot with space to accommodate vehicles and trailers, signage, lighting and delineated wetlands. To summarize if the grant is approved a final plan could be approved by June 2023 with potential construction beginning in fall 2023. Mr. Clark stressed the importance of cutting project aspects if a fuller amount in grant funding weren't possible. Mr. Clark also mentioned the sensitivity of tree clearing along Leduc Dr. to leave a buffer between the proposed parking lot and Leduc Dr.

Mr. Hougue expressed concern over his property's proximity to the proposed parking lot, and the danger that transients pose to neighbors in the immediate area. Mr. Hougue also expressed concern over the maintenance and management plan of the property including bathroom cleanliness and lighting pollution caused by the development of this area and the abuse that would follow.

Ms. Meunier expressed concern about the increased traffic caused by the development of this area. The lack of safety including no crossing guards or bus routes for children was also noted. Ms. Meunier has had conversations with the school board to highlight these concerns and asked about these vehicles utilizing the recreation fields for parking instead of creating a new parking lot. Mr. Guilmette said that the recreation fields aren't a suitable location for people parking utility trailers.

Mr. Brosseau asked about whether the communal bathrooms would be locked during the evening? Mr. Guilmette expressed that it was an option that they could explore. Ms. Draper expressed the expanded usages for this site beyond utility vehicle traffic including other non-motorized uses like walking, bicycling, and equestrian activities.

Mr. Bourgeois expressed using the neighborhood comments to mitigate the effects of developing the area. Mr. Clark agreed that one of the first things to get cut if the funding isn't available, is the bathrooms. Ms. Choiniere expressed that the Town has lied to area residents living on Leduc Dr. saying that there was never any planned development within this area. Ms. Meunier expressed concern whether this area would be policed by the Town or the Village. Mr. Guilmette expressed that there is a contract with the police department between the Town and Village to cover this area.

Mr. Hougue asked about the budget for this project? Mr. Clark stated that the Recreation Commission has figures available, but nothing is concrete until the grant funding is available. Ms. Meunier asked about budgetary concerns for the maintenance of these facilities and whether gates would be installed as a protective measure? Mr. Guilmette expressed that a maintenance plan would be part of the property if bathrooms were installed on the property, but gates and fencing were not a consideration.

Mr. Hougue asked about the size of the proposed parking lot and whether it could be reduced? Mr. Guilmette stressed that this site plan is only a proposal and is not a preliminary design for final execution. Mr. Clark added that the concept plan is not a full design mapping out the surrounding properties. As this project gets closer to planned designs, then issues being raised like hedge rows and trees will be explored.

Ms. Day asked about the letter that was sent out and whether tree cutting will begin soon? Mr. Guilmette said that tree cutting won't begin until a final plan is approved. Ms. Meunier said she wasn't against the project but wanted to see it done right. Mr. Clark said trees won't be cut near the old spur until a final plan is approved, but resident's concerns are being heard, and taken into consideration. On a final note, Mr. Clark raised the letter of support that is needed for the grant package from the Selectboard. Mr. Guilmette said this would be deterred to the next Selectboard meeting.

b) Town Surplus Property Update

Mr. Savage said this was the property on First St. abutting the school's property. The school itself has built an access road, batting cages, and trails on the surplus property, but the school has no intention of acquiring this property. The Town's plan remains the same of doing a boundary line adjustment to combine with the land occupied by the Town Garage.

c) Revolving Loan Fund Update

Mr. Savage gave a brief update on the edits to the application for the revolving loan fund.

7. New Town Business

a) Lake Champlain Housing Loan Forgiveness

Mr. Savage said this is a loan going back 30 years and is about to come due. Lake Champlain Housing would like to continue the loan for another 30 years, but Mr. Savage expressed that this is risky from a banking perspective. Ms. Demetrowitz expressed that the loan should be deferred, not forgiven due to the low-income housing component of the residents residing on this property.

Mr. Guilmette asked about the repayment of this 30-year loan? Ms. Demetrowitz expressed that the expectation was as long as this property remained low-income, it wouldn't require repayment. Ms. Demetrowitz also expressed the recent improvements on the property including water quality. Mr. Guilmette asked about residents of this neighborhood forming a coop needing Selectboard approval? Ms. Demetrowitz said that this is possible, but it would go before a housing review board through the State of Vermont

Mr. White made a motion to forgive the Lake Champlain Housing loan, seconded by Mr. Bourgeois. Motion carried.

Ms. Draper made a motion for Mr. Savage to sign and authorize the paperwork for the loan forgiveness, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

b) SEP Beautification Proposal

Mr. Lambert came forward to summarize SEP's beautification proposal. Part of this plan is to fundraise \$5,000.00 to give back to the community. Part of this proposal also outlines a part-time experienced horticulturist to maintain the proposed project for the first six months following implementation. Mr. Fournier asked about the core of the proposed planting areas? Mr. Lambert defined that it would be the gateway area entering into the Village including Spring St., First St., and Canada St. Mr. Fournier asked about the plantings throughout the community? Mr. Lambert expressed that SEP's intention is to expand throughout the community beyond the gateway areas.

c) Gathering of the Realms Dates for 2023

Mr. Savage began by summarizing the revised dates for the Gathering of the Realms in 2023. As a representative of Swanton Recreation, Ms. Draper expressed support for what this type of fair could do for the community.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to approve the proposed revised dates of festival operations between Friday, September 8, 2023 and Sunday, September 10, 2023, with final cleanup occurring on Monday, September 11, 2023, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

8. Community & Economic Development

a) New Business on Merchants Row

Mr. Savage gave a brief summary of the Divine Treasure's business that is opening on Merchants Row.

9. Highway Department

a) Beebee Road Update

Mr. Guilmette said the Beebe Road paving would begin in the next couple of weeks.

b) Maquam Shore Road Culvert

Mr. Guilmette said the culvert is ordered. Mr. Savage said the only thing they're waiting on is the required easements needed to install the new culvert.

c) Paving Project Update

No new updates, beyond the Beebe Rd. paving project.

d) Request of Bobby Bonk to have a Streetlight Installed at the Intersection of Maquam Shore Road and Janes Road

Mr. Savage said \$95.00 would be needed for the installation of the proposed streetlight with \$3.95 added to the streetlights budget for annual operation.

Mr. Fournier made a motion for improved signage without additional lighting, seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

10. Any Other Necessary Business (Reprise)

a) Library

Mr. Fournier expressed concern of the ice jams forming on the roofline and inadequate heating system that will need to be replaced. Ms. Draper asked about involving Efficiency Vermont to explore cost friendlier alternatives to the existing system.

11. Correspondence - None

12. Public Comments (Reprise)

Mr. Hemenway asked about policing between the Town and the Village covering Route 7? Ms. Fournier responded that Route 7 is covered by the Town and the State of Vermont patrols. Ms. Draper added that its one officer on patrol during this period. Mr. Hemenway responded about increased coverage utilizing local

county sheriffs? Mr. Guilmette responded that during budget season this was an idea that was considered, but it proves to be too costly on the taxpayers.

Mr. White made a motion to appoint Mr. Fournier to the Selectboard Vice-Chair position, seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

13. Upcoming Events

- a) Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. – Town Office Building, 1 Academy Street
- b) Property Taxes due by 5:00 p.m. – Monday, October 17, 2022
- c) Regular and Zoom Selectboard Meeting – Tuesday, October 18, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. – Town Office Building, 1 Academy Street – Site Visit at LVRT Trail Head at 5:00 p.m. on Robin Hood Dr.
- d) DRB Meeting – Thursday, October 27, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. – Town Office Building, 1 Academy Street

14. Executive Session (Personnel)

Ms. Draper made a motion to enter executive session at 9:15 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Mr. Fournier made a motion to exit executive session at 9:42 p.m., seconded by Ms. Draper. Motion carried.

No motions taken.

- E. Adjournment – Mr. Fournier made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 p.m., seconded by Mr. White. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Cava
Administrative Assistant

Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk

Date