

Old Bennington Village Trustee Meeting

February 5, 2018

Present: Charles Edson, Ron Rabidou, Andrew Buchsbaum, Susan Wright, Don Miller, and Kathy Wagenknecht. Absent: Donna Berry Citizens present: Richard Poeton, Jill Jones, Susanne Buchsbaum, Charles Kozlosky, Marta Kozlosky, and Marianne Peters.

Meeting called to order by Chair, Don Miller at 7:05.

Minutes of December were not available for review. Minutes of January 2 were approved as presented on a motion made by Ron and seconded by Charlie.

Citizens Comments:

Richard Poeton.

- 1) Sidewalks do exist on the west side of Moment Avenue at least down to the Stromgrens.
- 2) In the past, the village has funded sidewalk improvements as appropriate and able.
- 3) Richard suggested getting a legal opinion as to the -potential liability issues.
- 4) Richard opined that leaving the sidewalks alone as they stand is “no choice” (the sidewalks can be fixed or the Village could tear them up).

Charles Kozlosky presented a letter he had written about the sidewalks. Charles opined that “roads are a higher priority”. A copy is attached.

Marianne Peters commented that on Long Island (in a community she was familiar with), it was the Homeowners responsibility to clear the snow off sidewalks and to maintain the sidewalks, i.e., if the municipality ended up doing maintenance on a sidewalk, the Homeowner would be billed.

Jill Jones. Doing “nothing” is not OK. Jill does not want to see taxes go up (use/find some grant money.).

Andy commented that John Kaplan from the State will be coming to meet with him and that may involve a state grant, but even with a grant, the Village would be expected to spend some money. The swale is a high priority.

C Edson offered a police report. Charlie attended the BCRC meeting, indicating that the speakers’ presentations were on line.

A Buchsbaum reiterated that John Kaplan of the Vermont Department of Transportation will be here, probably sometime in April. Conversations continue with the state and with MSK about the crosswalk project at Route 9; the state will not help with the sidewalk near the cemetery, but assistance is expected on the northeast corner. The curbing in front of Caswell’s was discussed; the funding had been approved last year for that project. Numerous potholes should be addressed at the same time. The curbing at the Circle is damaged; Marylou Chicote may be able to get the state to repair.

R. Rabidou reported that he has reached out to Dr. Mahler.

S. Wright reported that the parks are frozen, but that spring will bring new flowers to the Green.

K. Wagenknecht presented the monthly budget report, noting that salt and plowing expenses have been higher to date than expected. The bill from MSK was changed from the highway repair account to the capital construction account on the advice of Charlie. The warrants list was approved as amended (the MSK account) on a motion by Ron, seconded by Andy.

Kathy then shared her explanation of Old Bennington taxes compared to the Bennington Town and Village of Bennington taxes. Kathy concluded that "Old Bennington taxes are LESS EXPENSIVE than Bennington taxes." This results from the fact that "Village Residents pay Village Highway Tax IN PLACE OF Town Highway Taxes". The difference is about \$150 per \$100,000 of assessed value. Kathy will share this information at the Annual Meeting.

Under Old Business:

- 1) There is at least one Vacancy on the Village Boards (ZBA).
- 2) Andy shared some draft charts he had been working on to illustrate some of the options on sidewalk improvements that may be presented at the Annual Meeting.
S. Wright opined that aesthetics and history should be considerations and that she did not want the Village "over concreted".
- 3) Ron initiated a discussion of the proposed website. Without objection, it was reaffirmed that the question of establishing a Village website would be presented to the Annual Meeting.
- 4) D. Miller asked for a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing candidate(s) for the position of Zoning Administrator, including details of a possible offer and compensation levels. A motion made by Ron, seconded by Andy was passed. Bob Bullington, as chair of the Planning Commission was asked to join the session.

After the Executive Session was closed, a motion was made by Charlie and seconded by Ron that Don be authorized to offer Dennis McCarthy the position of Zoning Administrator at a rate of \$15 per hour, that and other details to be negotiated.

On motion of A. Buchsbaum, seconded by C. Edson, adjourned at 8:47.

Next meeting will be March 6, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Miller, instead of the Village Clerk