

Village of Old Bennington
Trustees Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2019

Officials present: Trustees Andy Buchsbaum, Charles Edson, Ron Rabidou, Jim Warren, and Susan Wright, as well as Clerk Steven Anisman and Treasurer Kathy Wagenknecht.

Officials absent: none

Residents present: James Gallen, Megan Schwarzkopf.

1. Opening. Ron Rabidou called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.
2. Minutes.
 - a. There were no changes.
 - b. Andy Buchsbaum moved to approve the draft minutes for the November 5 trustees meeting, Susan Wright seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.
3. Citizen Comments. James Gallen mentioned that the minutes are written extraordinarily well and are literate, mellifluous, erudite, concise, informative, urbane, and a genuine joy to read. He then asked where the sidewalk to Bank St would be placed. There appear to be no obvious places that would not interfere with extant trees or structures. Trustees mentioned, however, that it would provide a safe walkway, and could also help with water control. There are currently no specific plans in place to locate it. Sidewalks would be necessary if federal money is to be attached to the project.

Megan Schwarzkopf wondered if the planned Monument Avenue sidewalk installation could be delayed until mid-May so that she could be present when it is installed across her driveway. Andy Buchsbaum will discuss this with Jamie Jerome to determine if that can be done. Notes regarding a history of serving on the board are available from Consi West. Megan wondered if tree planting funds could be shifted towards tree maintenance and/or pruning. The drain grate in front of 37 Monument was not cleaned this past fall, Megan ended up cleaning that herself. Andy Buchsbaum noted that there are other storm drains in the cobble gutters that are becoming clogged. Additional efforts will be made to have those cleaned.

4. Reports of Commissioners.
 - a. Road Commissioner.
 - i. Andy Buchsbaum noted that the application to change Bank St to a Class 2 road has been submitted to the state after work by him and Charles Edson. Stuart Hurd was helpful in writing a letter of support on behalf of the town. Results should be available in April. State grants can then be applied for in June or July, although those funds would need to be considered in the context of the 2021 budget.
 - ii. Andy Buchsbaum attended a road commissioner meeting, and found a group that specializes in road preservation, and many methods can be considered. Cold mix asphalt is a surface treatment that may be appropriate in some areas, such as Catamount Lane and Church Lane. Crack sealing is a cost-effective maintenance

step that needs to be pursued quickly. All roads should be addressed to at least a minimal extent while large projects are underway. Cost estimates will be obtained.

- iii. Elm Street drainage is problematic and floods the tree area between Ron Rabidou's house and John Williams' house. A mid-street crown would potentially help, as might reconfiguration of the sidewalk.

b. Tree Commissioner.

- i. Jim Warren reviewed the dead tree in the right of way on the corner of Walloomsac and Fairview. A letter was sent in keeping with the Village bylaws.
- ii. Greater Heights may call back regarding a dying tree on the Village Green.

c. Parks and Sidewalks Commissioner.

- i. Susan Wright mentioned a streetlamp that was down, and a number of calls that she received regarding the issue. The lamp was carted away although its current whereabouts are unknown; Susan will follow up with Monument Electric to see if it is salvageable. If not, information regarding a replacement will be obtained. The workmen who broke it will be paying for the repair/replacement via insurance.
- ii. The idea of an emergency protocol to allow work to be done between meetings had previously been discussed, and has broad support amongst the Trustees. Routine matters should be handled by the appropriate Commissioner, particularly if a hazard is present. Trustees will try to let others know via e-mail or some informal means what projects are being undertaken in this way. If the incorrect Trustee is contacted, those requests will be forwarded to the appropriate Commissioner for disposition.
- iii. The monument stone at the Academy building was gone and is now back. James Gallen had it repaired under an insurance claim. It is unclear whether issues such as this are the responsibility of the homeowners or the Village.

d. Police Commissioner.

- i. Police Commissioner. Charles Edson presented the report: Andy worked 80 hours. 20 tickets were issued worth \$3,136 of fines, there were 42 property checks/watches were performed. Speeding and low speeds are noted frequently (~29% of drivers) on Bank Street; most commonly just after midnight.

e. Treasurer.

- i. Multiple expenses were paid, details are in the Treasurer's Report.
- ii. Tax delinquencies are being addressed. There is a book from the state regarding methods of collecting delinquent taxes; Kathy has obtained it and is reading it actively, and finds it to be inspired and mellifluous.
- iii. 9 properties received letters for delinquent taxes. 3 of those have already been paid; the remainder are subject to late fees.
- iv. Payment in lieu of taxes ("pilot") was received from the state, totaling \$8,213 this year. The highway fines payment was received from the state (these appear to be quarterly) in the amount of 3,141.31.
- v. The interim audit has been completed. Everything was in order.
- vi. Kathy Wagenknecht presented the warrant list. Charles Edson moved to approve the warrant list, Andy Buchsbaum seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.

5. Planning Commission

- a. Ron Rabidou noted that the Planning Commission will hold a hearing on December 12 to discuss proposed amendments to the zoning bylaws and subdivision

regulations. Ron said he would work with Bob Bullington to attempt to create a redlined version of the proposed documents showing any changes from the current documents.

b. Dennis McCarthy is retiring as Administrative Officer, and Bob Bullington has begun a search for a new administrative officer. Ron Rabidou has agreed to sit in on interviews.

6. Old Business. Susan Wright mentioned that there is no progress yet on the bench. The likely price range is \$800-\$900. That may require multiple bake sales.

7. New Business. There was none.

8. Adjournment. Jim Warren moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 pm, Andy Buchsbaum seconded the motion, and the trustees unanimously approved the motion.