

Mendon Planning Commission Minutes (DRAFT)
Special Meeting
June 8, 2017

Present: Bill Godair, Phil Douglas, Justin Lindholm, Nicole Kesselring, Neil Langer, Fred Bagley and Teri Corsones were present. Select Board member Richard Wilcox was also present. A Special Meeting of the Mendon Planning Commission was noticed for Thursday, June 8, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. The Agenda for the Special Meeting included two items, each requested by the Select Board: Further discussion of the Rolston Rest Project; and, discussion about the formation of an Economic Development Committee.

Rolston Rest Project: Background information regarding the Rolston Rest Project is set forth in the March 13, 2017 Mendon Planning Commission minutes. The March 13, 2017 minutes noted that it does not appear that the vast majority of the property is able to be developed for residential or commercial use. The minutes also reflected the fact that Mendon Planning Commission members noted the recreational, wildlife habitat and water resource protections that public ownership would offer. Members confirmed at the Special Meeting what was also indicated in the minutes, namely, that the proposed acquisition is not inconsistent with the Mendon Zoning Regulations or the Mendon Town Plan.

Members reviewed an e-mail that Kate Wanner, Project Manager with the Trust for Public Land, sent to Teri Corsones and Justin Lindholm on June 8, 2017, explaining that she was unable to be at the Special Meeting. She asked that three matters be shared at the meeting. The first is that the contract for the Blue Ridge Properties LLC property does not permit the Trust for Public Land to purchase only a portion of the property. Ms. Wanner indicated that if the Town of Mendon does not support Green Mountain National Forest ownership of the property in Mendon, the Trust for Public Land will seek to find another conservation outcome for the 307 acres in Mendon. Members expressed support for GMNF ownership of the property.

The second matter referenced a graph which was attached to the e-mail, showing a history of the per-acre payments from the United States Forest Service to towns as a payment in lieu of taxes from 1996 – 2016. Such payments have increased from \$.72 per acre in 1996 to \$2.59 per acre in 2016.

The third matter referred to the economic benefits of having public land within Mendon's borders. Ms. Wanner encouraged the Town of Mendon "to explore whether there is any opportunity for a small parking lot in Mendon to be a new access to GMNF and the trail network."

With respect to the third matter, Mr. Wilcox reviewed a variety of specific proposals that the Select Board would like to make regarding Ms. Wanner's recommendation in particular, and regarding the recreational and economic development aspects of the

project in general. The specific proposals concern use of the gravel pit in the immediate vicinity of the project, use of the "Johnson Bypass" so as to ensure reasonable access to the trail system, the addition of an appropriately located and sized parking area, adequate signage informing the public of the recreational opportunities afforded by the project, and necessary improvements/enhancements to the trail system itself. The "Johnson Bypass" proposal also included favorable discussion about the bypass being available for emergency use by motor vehicles to and from Route 100 through Chittenden and Mendon, as well as by towns on the other side in an emergency. Members discussed the numerous safety, recreational, and economic development goals that the proposals would further. Justin Lindholm moved to support the proposals that the Select Board intends to review with the various stakeholders. Bill Godair seconded the motion, and the motion unanimously carried.

Economic Development Committee: Mr. Wilcox discussed the formation of an Economic Development Committee to explore how the Town of Mendon might be able to increase its tax base, particularly along Route 4. Members favored the formation of such a committee as an ad hoc committee appointed by the Select Board. Several members of the Planning Commission may have an interest in serving on the committee. As noted in the March 13, 2017 Mendon Planning Commission minutes, the Mendon Planning Commission plans to update the Mendon Town Plan, ideally in conjunction with a Municipal Planning Grant in the next grant cycle. Coordination with an Economic Development Committee would be integral to the economic development aspects of an updated Town Plan.

The next regular meeting of the Mendon Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, July 3, 2017 at 5:15 p.m. at the Mendon Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Teri Corsones