



Town of Amherst, NH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
Barbara Landry Meeting Room
2 Main Street
Monday, July 14, 2014 at 6:30 PM

Call to Order: Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Attendees: Chairman, Dwight Brew, Vice Chairman Mike Akillian, Selectmen John D'Angelo and Tom Grella. Also present: Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, and Suzanne Beauchesne taking minutes. Selectman Galinson was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance: Wally Key, Beaver Brook Association representative, led the pledge.

III. Citizens' Forum

Chairman Brew recognized four citizens wishing to address the Board.

Linda Kaiser asked that her comments be deferred following Director Berry's report on the Manchester Road Bridge project.

Sue Clark rose to suggest that the completion of construction and the beginning of school would present the town with a "tremendous opportunity" to change the culture/behavior of the community relative to speeding traffic. Ms. Clark felt that an effective, concentrated effort would not be possible without the help of the police department and offered to bring people together to make a proposal to the Police Chief and members of the Safety Committee. Vice Chair Akillian commented that later in the meeting he would be proposing a strategic planning process that would address the speeding issue and many others.

Ran Peck, a 5-year resident of Amherst, echoed Sue Clark's comments and felt that more police presence would be effective, as it has been in Mont Vernon. Vice Chair Akillian indicated that while he supports the notion of figuring out what to do about the problem, he is hesitant to embrace the issue in a piecemeal fashion. Dealing with one issue may exacerbate another which is why he is proposing a strategic planning process for dealing with issues more comprehensively.

Brad Knight came forward to talk about the playing fields in the community. Mr. Knight stated that because of the cemetery fields closing, soccer/lacrosse must reduce its enrollment by 30 percent. Mr. Knight further stated that eight playing fields were ready to be used once details could be worked out with the Board. Chairman Brew reminded Mr. Knight that they had spoken many times on the matter and though the matter remains unresolved, it is not for lack of communication with selectmen. Selectman Grella stated that he and Town Administrator O'Mara would meet with Mr. Knight this coming week.

IV. Public Hearing/Accept and Expend Unanticipated Funds

Selectman D'Angelo moved to open the public hearing to accept and expend unanticipated revenue pursuant to RSA 31:95-b: III (a). Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0

Town Administrator O'Mara asked the Board to accept a grant in the amount of \$11,530 received by the Division of Historical Resources (DHR). There were no comments from the public. Vice Chairman Akillian moved to close the public hearing. Selectman D'Angelo seconded. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo moved that Amherst enter into a contract with the State of NH, acting by and through the Department of Cultural Resources providing for the performance by this Municipality of certain

52 services as documented within the grant application, and that the official listed, James M. O'Mara, Jr.,
53 Town Administrator, on behalf of this Municipality is authorized and directed to enter into the said grant
54 agreement with the State of NH, and that they are to take any and all such actions that may be deemed
55 necessary, desirable or appropriate in order to execute, seal, acknowledge and deliver any and all
56 documents, agreements and other instruments on behalf of this Municipality in order to accomplish the
57 same. It is further resolved that the signature of the above authorized party or parties of this Municipality,
58 when affixed to any instrument or document described in, or contemplated by, this resolution, shall be
59 conclusive evidence of the authority of said parties to bind this Municipality; thereby, the foregoing
60 resolutions have not been revoked, annulled, or amended in any manner whatsoever, and remain in full
61 force and effect. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0
62

63 **V. Beaver Brook Association Presentation**

64
65 Wally Key, an Amherst resident, and representative of the Beaver Brook Association (BBA) in Hollis,
66 distributed a written document and provided information regarding the association whose mission is
67 education and land stewardship. There is a proposed gas pipeline coming into the region that is currently
68 shown going across Beaver Brook property that is protected with conservation easements. The BBA's
69 conservation lands span more than 1,280 acres of forests, fields and wetlands in Hollis, Brookline, and
70 Milford, and the association has fiduciary responsibility to defend the easements. BBA has engaged the
71 services of Tri-Mont Engineering Company to develop three viable alternative routes that minimize the
72 impact on conservation land while using as many public right-of-ways as possible. Two of the potential
73 routes would impact Amherst along a power line corridor near the commercial area of 101A. The
74 association wants town leadership to know what the BBA is doing and why. More information can be
75 found at the Beaver Brook Association website.
76

77 Vice Chair Akillian asked if the State was the approving authority. Mr. Key felt that Kinder Morgan,
78 working for Liberty Utilities, was about eight weeks away from making their decision. Mr. Key will clarify
79 the decision making process and get that information to Administrator O'Mara. [Note: The Federal Energy
80 Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the governmental decision-making body.] Selectman D'Angelo
81 commented that two alternative routes (Option 1 and 2) were viable and would help entice commercial
82 industries to the Bon Terrain area, which has been a problem in the past.
83

84 **VI. Amherst Village Strategic Plan**

85
86 Vice Chairman Akillian provided an overview and written proposal aimed at coordinating the various
87 infrastructure projects planned for the Amherst Village Center, including sidewalk and roadway
88 improvements and utility services. The project goals include:
89

- 90 1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of all issues associated with the Amherst Village Center.
- 91 2. Identify issues and needed improvements to vehicular travel, pedestrian and transportation patterns in
- 92 the village.
- 93 3. Identify barriers and needed improvements to pedestrian travel in the village.
- 94 4. Identify strategies to maintain and enhance the historic nature and community character unique to
- 95 Amherst's Village Center.
- 96 5. Develop a vision for the Village and identify needed land use changes.
- 97 6. Address the current status and future needs of utilities in the Village.
- 98 7. Develop recommendations for phased improvements.
- 99

100 The proposed strategic plan will utilize extensive public outreach to seek input from numerous groups, town
101 boards, and residents. A project committee, consisting of no more than 12 people, will be selected by and
102 have oversight from the Board of Selectmen, and will be assisted by a Nashua Regional Planning Team

(NRPC). The project will encompass a number of tasks to include public outreach via focus groups, an electronic survey, and open forum. NRPC and the committee will undertake document review, develop a set of specific issues and strategies to deal with each issue which can then be laid out in a grid format listing issues from high to low impact, feasibility, and costs. The final task will be the development of recommendations and an implementation schedule. The cost of the project is estimated at \$15,000 -- \$10,000 of which could come from the iTRaC Program grant.

All Board members felt it important to begin the discussion even while acknowledging the many strategic initiatives already underway. The project will provide for continued strategic thinking and a forum for engaging the citizens of town who have varying viewpoints. Selectman D'Angelo cautioned that if this plan focuses solely on traffic flows and pedestrian issues it will not address the key issue of what Amherst wants the Village Center to be. He stated that he believes more businesses are needed in the Village Center to "bring it to life". Currently, unless one has business at Mike's Auto, Moultons store, or the Town Hall, there is little reason for anyone to go to the Village Center. He cited the decision of the Amherst Farmer's Market to relocate out of the Village Center to a location on Route 101-A due to insufficient customer traffic as an example of the issue. Vice Chairman Akillian indicated that he would not allow the planning process to simply be a mechanism for the few to come to vent their pent up angst and lobby for one particular issue or another. All participants would have to come "through the door with the welfare of the town in mind".

Vice Chair Akillian moved to undertake the Amherst Village Center Strategic Planning Project in collaboration with NRPC. Seconded by Selectman Grella. Vote 4-0

VII. Manchester Road Bridge Update

Public Works Director Bruce Berry reviewed a written update on the upcoming bridge work. Director Berry expects the completed engineering plans to be submitted to NHDOT on July 18th for approval. Permits are done, and Director Berry has provided approval to submit the wetland permit to NHDES. As part of that requirement, Hoyle Tanner will send notification to abutters this date. The bridge has been designed and approved for a 25 mph speed limit. Director Berry also stated that the reimbursement bill signed by the Governor actually becomes law on July 29th and the town cannot go out for bids before that date. Hoyle-Tanner has recommended soliciting bids in November since most contractors have completed their projects and can turn their attention to new, upcoming projects. The timeline likely would see a Spring construction project.

Linda Kaiser expressed her frustration that a design was selected that does not require her signature, and again stated that she had been trying to force the Board to address the traffic problems and look at alternatives. She then asked who was "going to move her fence". Chairman Brew stated that the bridge had to be closed and the Board has always felt it was the town's responsibility to repair it. Vice Chairman Akillian stated that pursuing a design with a retaining wall makes it unnecessary to obtain a temporary easement from Ms. Kaiser for the construction phase. That said, Ms. Kaiser can still elect to grant a temporary easement for the town to forego the retaining wall in lieu of a gradual sloping design onto her property. Hoyle-Tanner was to supply the design of the incline.

Rolf Biggers acknowledged that the bridge work and traffic concerns are two separate issues. Mr. Biggers suggested that the same traffic fix done in front of town hall could be done on the other side of the bridge. Mr. Biggers said he was encouraged by Vice Chair Akillian's proposal for a comprehensive review of issues surrounding the Village Center and beyond.

Selectman Grella moved that bids be solicited in November with a likely construction start in the Spring of 2015. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

154
155 **VIII. Committee and Commission Appointments**
156

157 **a. Conservation Commission Alternate**

158 Selectman D'Angelo moved to appoint G. Wesley Robertson as an Alternate to the Conservation
159 Commission. Seconded by Selectman Grella. Vote 4-0
160

161 **b. Recreation Commission Alternate**

162 Vice Chair Akillian moved to appoint Stephen Amari as an Alternate to the Recreation Commission.
163 Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0
164

165 **IX. Town Administrator's Report**
166

167 **a. EMS Division Personnel Request**

168 Selectman D'Angelo moved to hire Caitlin McDonough to the EMS Division. Seconded by Selectman
169 Grella. Vote 4-0
170

171 **b. DPW Vehicle Parts Bid**

172 Selectman Grella moved to award Bid # 06-14 to the lowest bidder, HP Fairfield of Pembroke, NH for
173 DPW Vehicle Parts (Plow, Wing, Dump Body) for a total price of \$69,209.00. Seconded by Selectman
174 D'Angelo. Vote 4-0
175

176 **c. Village Green Usage Requests**

177 Vice Chairman Akillian motioned to allow the Congregational Church the use of the Village Green for a
178 church picnic on Sunday, September 7, 2014 and pending receipt of current insurance certificate. Seconded
179 by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0
180

181 Selectman D'Angelo motioned to allow Boy Scout Troop 613 the use of the Village Green across from
182 Moulton's Market during the Halloween Trick-or-Treat, and pending receipt of current insurance
183 certificate. Seconded by Vice Chairman Akillian. Vote 4-0
184

185 **d. Information Security Policy Update**

186 Town Administrator O'Mara reported that the subject policy, as approved at the Board's last meeting
187 pending discussion with department heads, has been put into practice effective June 23, 2014.
188

189 **e. Update – Letter from Brad Knight**

190 Administrator O'Mara read through a letter sent to Mr. Knight dated July 3, 2014 [**letter attached**] stating
191 that the use of his property must adhere to the Zoning Ordinances of the Town.
192

193 **f. FY14 Encumbrance**

194 Administrator O'Mara indicated that the FY14 encumbrance for Annual Mowing Maintenance in the
195 amount of \$1,340 was withdrawn.
196

197 **g. Stormwater Coalition – No updates at this time.**

198 **h. Right-to-Know – None at this time.**
199
200

201 **X. Old and New Business**
202

Budget Transfer: Vice Chairman Akillian moved to transfer the sum of \$10,843.00 from and to the General Government account (Budget Transfer Number FY14-35). Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

Budget Transfer: Vice Chairman Akillian moved to transfer the sum of \$35,627.17 from and to the General Government account (Budget Transfer Number FY14-36). Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

Administrator O'Mara distributed and read through a letter received from the Brookline Board of Selectmen expressing appreciation for the Amherst Fire Department's timely and valuable assistance in responding to a fire on the evening of June 24th. Administrator O'Mara will forward the letter to Chief Conley.

Administrator O'Mara reported that the MRI team would be conducting interviews on Monday to include meetings with three citizens with diverse viewpoints. Administrator O'Mara suggested advertising an open forum inviting all interested parties to attend.

Vice Chairman Akillian reported that in line with improving the town's website, and making it more user friendly, Katie Button has been volunteering her ideas on ways to improve the usability of the site from a citizen's perspective. The Board expressed their thanks for Ms. Button's willingness to help.

XI. Approvals

a. Accounts Payable

Selectman D'Angelo motioned to approve one (1) FY14 Estimated Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$375,000 dated July 3, 2014 and approve one (1) FY14 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$388,313.07 dated July 3, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Vice Chair Akillian. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo motioned to rescind one (1) FY14 Estimated Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$381,000 dated July 3, 2014. Seconded by Vice Chair Akillian. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo motioned to approve one (1) FY14 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$86,363.99 dated July 14, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Vice Chair Akillian. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo motioned to approve one (1) FY15 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$440,077.34 dated July 14, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Vice Chair Akillian. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo motioned to approve one (1) FY14 Estimated Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$60,000 dated July 31, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Vice Chair Akillian. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo motioned to approve one (1) FY15 Estimated Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$235,881.04 dated July 31, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Vice Chair Akillian. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo motioned to approve one (1) FY14 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$38,394.69 dated July 1, 2014, subject to review and audit (Town Clerk Transfers to the State of NH). Seconded by Vice Chair Akillian. Vote 4-0

Selectman D'Angelo motioned to approve one (1) FY15 Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$3,559,287.00 dated August 1, 2014, subject to review and audit (Schools). Seconded by Vice Chair Akillian. Vote 4-0

b. Payroll

Vice Chairman Akillian motioned to rescind one (1) FY14 Estimated Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$183,000 dated July 10, 2014 and approve one (1) FY14 Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$188,890.16 dated July 10, 2014. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

Vice Chairman Akillian motioned to approve one (1) FY15 Estimated Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$197,975.24 dated July 24, 2014, subject to review and audit. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

c. Board of Selectman Minutes

Vice Chairman Akillian motioned to approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of June 23, 2014. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

d. Yield Tax

Vice Chairman Akillian motioned to approve and sign the Timber Tax Levy and Certification of Yield Tax for Map 007, Lots 044-000 and 013-003 in the amount of \$975.93. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

e. Forest Land Reimbursement

Vice Chairman Akillian motioned to approve and sign the Application for Reimbursement to Towns and Cities in which Federal and State Forest Land is situated for Map 004, Lot 068-000. Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Vote 4-0

f. PSNH Pole License

Administrator O'Mara indicated that, in accordance with the requirements of RSA 72:23, I, (b), the Public Service of NH (PSNH) requested permission to install/replace pole(s) located in Amherst. The Board was asked to grant a Petition and Pole License to PSNH to erect and maintain poles and structures with wires, cables, conduits and devices thereon, together with sustaining, strengthening and protecting fixtures as may be necessary along, and under the public way located on Old Milford Road. Administrator O'Mara further stated that erected poles are taxable and PSNH is to sign the Petition prior to the Board providing written approval.

XI. Non-Public Session

Vice Chairman Akillian moved to enter into non-public session at 8:13 p.m. pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (e) and NH RSA 91-A:3 II (a). Seconded by Selectman D'Angelo. Roll Call: Akillian-yes, Brew-yes, D'Angelo-yes, Grella-yes. Vote was unanimous.



**Amherst Village Center Strategic Plan
iTRaC Project
DRAFT Scope of Work
June 18, 2014**

Project Overview

The Amherst Village is a quintessential and picturesque New England town center. Beautiful homes surround extensive green spaces that are crisscrossed with old cow paths. These paths, once very practical, have long since evolved into paved roadways with confusing travel patterns. The Amherst Village Center Strategic Plan will utilize extensive public outreach to seek input from numerous groups, town boards, and residents in the vicinity of the town center. The input will be analyzed to identify the most pressing issues facing the center and prioritize strategies to address them.

Of particular interest is coordinating the various infrastructure projects planned for the Village Center, including sidewalk and roadway improvements and utility services. There is a need to identify current utility issues and access, as well as needs and plans for additional utility connections. In addition to infrastructure, we anticipate that topics such as historic character, parks and recreation, businesses, schools, and residential needs will also be addressed through the process.

Project Purpose and Goals

The project aims to achieve the following:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of all issues associated with the Amherst Village Center.
2. Identify issues and needed improvements to vehicular travel, pedestrian and transportation patterns in the Village.
3. Identify barriers and needed improvements to pedestrian travel in the Village.
4. Identify strategies to maintain and enhance the historic nature and community character unique to Amherst's Village Center.
5. Develop a vision for the Village and identify needed land use changes.
6. Address the current status and future needs of utilities in the village.
7. Develop recommendations for phased improvements.

Project Study Area

This project will focus on the Amherst Village Center. The primary study area will be the community center area (as provided from GRANIT) as well as the transportation connections through the Village Center and the adjacent area as shown on the attached map.

Project Committee

The project committee will be selected by and have oversight from the Amherst Board of Selectmen. The Committee will have between 8-12 members representing the following groups:

- Board of Selectmen
- Planning Board
- Heritage Commission
- Historical Society
- School District
- Town Staff
- Businesses
- Parks and Recreation
- 2-3 residents, both from within and outside the study area

The Board of Selectmen will clarify the process, expectations and role of the committee members in writing.

NRPC Project Team

Camille Pattison, Principal Planner, camillep@nashuarpc.org

Jen Czysz, Senior Planner

Mark Connors, Regional Planner

Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager

Kristina Sargent, Regional Planner

Task 1 – Public Outreach

Public outreach is always the most successful when local groups in town are willing to take the lead on specific events. The Board of Selectmen have committed to being active in forming the Project Committee, soliciting public participation and informing the community about the process. NRPC will develop brochures, maps and outreach materials for use in raising awareness about the project and to encourage public engagement.

NRPC recommends the following public outreach process:

1. The Project Committee members will conduct focus group meetings with groups such as:
 - Historical Society
 - Heritage Commission
 - Town Boards, Commissions and Committees
 - Village Center Residents / Businesses / Churches
 - Town Staff

NRPC and the Committee will develop a standard list of questions. NRPC will provide facilitation training for Committee members, as well as handouts and other resources as

needed. Committee members will be responsible for scheduling and facilitating the focus groups and returning the results to NRPC for summarizing.

2. Town-wide Electronic survey: NRPC and the Committee will develop survey questions and NRPC will develop an electronic survey for distribution, and summarize the results.
3. Project page on Town website with social media updates, and regular updates to other media such as Amherst Citizen and Amherst Today.
4. Large “open house” style event which will be marketed town-wide. This type of event can either be a kick-off event prior to the focus groups or a culminating event that delves deeper into issues identified through the focus groups. We recommend the latter for this project. The event consists of a series of topic stations such as utilities, sidewalks, historic character, recreation, etc. Each station provides information on existing conditions with a map and then poses a question designed to solicit public input. Each station will be staffed by a Committee member or NRPC staff. NRPC and the Committee will organize and coordinate this event.

Public outreach efforts will be a vital part of the project’s success. In addition, the Committee may want to consider utilizing the following outreach techniques: Town Festival; Direct Mailings; House Meetings/Meetings in a Box; or Chocolate and Wine Event.

Task 2 – Document Review

Conduct a detailed review of the following documents:

- Town of Amherst Master Plan, 2012
- Amherst Non-Residential Site Plan Regulations
- Historic Plan
- NRPC Traffic Study

Task 3 – Identify Issues

After conducting the input meetings and document review, NRPC staff will develop a table of issues specific to the Amherst Village Center.

Task 4 – Develop Strategies

The issues will be discussed in detail with the Project Committee and strategies will be brainstormed to address each issue. NRPC staff will work with the committee to prioritize the strategies utilizing an impact feasibility grid that results in a matrix of projects that range from high-impact, high-feasibility to low-impact, low-feasibility. As part of this process, Town Departments will be asked to provide cost estimates for infrastructure and other improvements.

Task 5 – Develop Recommendations and Implementation Schedule

A final report will summarize key findings from all of the public outreach efforts and the document review, and will identify the issues, strategies and barriers to implementation.

The final report will include a comprehensive action plan that prioritizes projects, and provides a multi-year timeline to coordinate infrastructure improvements. An implementation matrix will identify key groups to lead initiatives, cost estimates and timeframes.

Major Timeline Milestones

Summer 2014 – Selectmen form Project Committee

September – November 2014 – Public Outreach, Town-wide electronic survey, Document Review, Focus Groups

January 2015 – Open House event

February – March 2015 – Impact/Feasibility Analysis, Prioritize Issues

April – May 2015 – Develop Strategies with cost estimates

May – June 2015 – Develop Recommendations and Implementation Schedule

Budget

Committee Meetings and GIS \$1,450.00

Task 1 – Public Outreach \$6,750.00

- Brochure/Community Engagement Materials
- Focus Group Facilitation Materials and Training
- Summarizing focus group input
- Electronic Survey and Analysis
- Press releases, media updates
- Open House Event

Task 2 – Document Review \$775.00

- Review of all relevant reports and documents and summarize issues

Task 3 – Issue identification \$1,250.00

- Develop report of issues from document review and public input

Task 4 - Develop Strategies \$1,525.00

- Conduct Impact Feasibility Analysis with committee and prioritize

Task 5 – Recommendations and Implementation Schedule \$3,250.00

- Final Report and Action Plan

Project Total= \$15,000

NRPC iTRaC Program - \$10,000.00

Town of Amherst - \$5,000.00