

**BENNINGTON SELECT BOARD MEETING  
BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY  
130 RIVER STREET  
BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

***MONDAY, JULY 11, 2016***

**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Jacobs – Chair; Michael Keane-Vice Chair; Jim Carroll; Jeanne Conner; Jeannie Jenkins; Donald Campbell; Justin Corcoran

*Absent: None*

**ALSO PRESENT:** Stuart Hurd, Town Manager; Dan Monks, Zoning Administrator & Assistant Town Manager; Patrick McArdle, Rutland Herald; Keith Whitcomb, Bennington Banner; Linda E. Bermudez – Secretary; (8) Citizens

At 6:00 P.M., **Tom Jacobs** called the meeting to order.

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. CONSENT AGENDA (A-B)**

*A) Minutes – June 27, 2016*

*B) Warrants*

There were no questions.

**MOTION:** Jim Carroll motioned and Michael Keane seconded to accept and approve the minutes of June 27, 2016 as well as the warrant as submitted. Motion passed unanimously (*Donald Campbell & Justin Corcoran abstained from the June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016 minutes vote ONLY*)

**3. CITIZENS**

There were no citizen comments this evening.

#### **4. BENNINGTON AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT COPMANY**

John Likakis stepped forward to introduce himself and the other members of the non-profit group that are now leasing the airport from the State of Vermont. He noted it is a two-year lease and their mission is to get the airport back up and running. They have plans to hold a multitude of events for both the “flying public” and local public. Mr. Likakas spoke of the many benefits of having an airport. They include enhancing local and regional markets and serving as disaster relief areas among many others.

Some of the marketing ideas include “Day Trip Packages” (by plane) promoting golf, sightseeing, historical references and “fly-in” breakfasts. These would be in specialized marketing areas for the aviation public (magazines etc). They will also be marketing to those who fly into Mt. Snow (for skiing etc). Currently their airport is very expensive and very crowded. We would like to show them the benefits and ease of flying into Bennington airport and driving the remaining distance.

Mr. Likakas noted there are already some businesses stationed at the Bennington Airport including the Green Mountain Skydivers and the Cival Air Patrol (CAPS) program. They are looking to add more. Additionally they would like to add a flying club and educational programs for all grades to become involved. They will be reaching out to the lower grades as well as Middle and High Schools, Vermont Technical College and an Annex for Adult learning.

To make the “fly-in” packages more successful they would like to add “courtesy cars”. These allow those who fly-in the ability to drive the area without having to rent a car. Donations are accepted as long as the car runs. They are also working with the Town to obtain any old police vehicles for this use. Mr. Likakas encouraged the public to come visit the Airport anytime. The normal operating hours are from 8:30-4:30. More information can be found on the website [www.benningtonairport.com](http://www.benningtonairport.com)

Tom Jacobs asked about their marketing funding. Mr. Likakas stated they receive a small stipend from the State.

Jim Carroll suggested they partner with the Fire Departments and Rescue Squad for fund raising. This was very successful years ago. Mr. Likakas stated he would look into that but was happy to announce the Fire Department would be conducting their first crash rescue training at the Airport in almost (10) years.

All the Select Board members agreed this was a very exciting project. Mr. Likakas stated they are run now solely on volunteerism. Over the course of the next two years they hope to add jobs, have this be a porthole for youth careers and even manufacturing. Ideally at the end of the lease we hope to have the airport at a point where a private organization will take it over and continue to run it (successfully).

Tom Jacobs thanked Mr. Likakas and invited him to return and share status updates and any needs they may have. This is an asset we need to take advantage of the opportunity.

#### **5. BENNINGTON REDEVELOPMENT GROUP LLC**

Tom Jacobs reviewed the announcement made recently regarding the option for acquisition of the Greenberg property. This is a private partnership investment.

Bill Colvin introduced himself and conducted the presentation. He noted that the different partners in this group realize that Bennington’s health is the key to their own institutional health. Bennington’s Downtown Area Plan is in place and the Redevelopment Study has been completed. These factors make this the right time to move forward with this project.

Mr. Colvin briefly discussed the approach as being mixed uses (residential & commercial), pedestrian orientated with park streetscapes. He shared some conceptual design drafts of the buildings and the boundaries of the project area.

Members of the group were listed and stated they will raise the funds, secure tenants and renovate the properties. They will rely heavily on tax credits and municipal support for this project. Mr. Colvin then referenced Barre and Brattleboro projects that were similar and successful.

Timeframes were briefly discussed. The "Pre-development" phase would be approximately (18) months. This would include securing tenants and developing the actual design. This would be followed by an additional (18) months for actual construction. The project cost could be between \$20-30 million dollars. Mr. Colvin continued by briefly discussing the finance options and ways to donate to the project including IRA investments and donations. Because (3) of the partners are "non-profit" organizations (Southern Vermont College, Bennington College and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center) the public could donate through them requesting the funds be put to this project but be a tax write-off for the person donating.

Mr. Colvin stated ways the Town could help in this development. They included sponsoring Block Grants (from the State), Tax Stabilization, Revolving Loans, infrastructure improvements and parking.

Jeannie Jenkins stated this was also very exciting. She asked if the community would have any opportunity for input. Mr. Colvin referred again to donations and contributions.

Jim Carroll stated this was outstanding work done and thanked Tom Jacobs and Michael Keane for bringing St. Alban's Mayor down for a visit. Mr. Carroll continued by asking if Shires Housing would play any role in this project. They have access and are eligible for many grants. Perhaps there could be a partnership. Mr. Colvin stated perhaps, but they want to see the demand for market rate housing first.

Justin Corcoran stated it is a very interesting project.

Jeanne Conner stated this seems to be coming together at the right time. Malls are closing and downtowns are reviving.

Tom Jacobs stated the community has skin in the game. He reminded the public that there is a lot of space for a downtown hotel (referenced old Tuttle's property). It doesn't have to be at the Putnam. Phase one is the real economic development. Once that's developed the following phases come easier.

Mike Bethel, Bennington resident moved forward to congratulate the Board on the Airport presentation and this presentation. He then asked about the timeframe. Mr. Colvin stated an Environmental Assessment is needed before they can close. After that is secured it will take approximately (30) days to close. The group expects to own the property in less than 120 days total from now.

## **6. 2016 LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATIONS - CILANTRO**

Tom noted more activity downtown with the Cilantro application. It was then circulated for signatures.

## 7. MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager stated the State of Vermont appoints the Town's Health Officer. Kevin Goodhue's term is now up. The Town is recommending Kevin Goodhue be re-appointed as Town Health Officer.

**Motion: Michael Keane moved and Donald Campbell seconded to sign the letter of recommendation to appoint Kevin Goodhue as Bennington Health Officer. Motion passed unanimously**

The Manager then stated the Town would like to sponsor a Block Party for the residents of Pleasant Street on Saturday July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. This would require road closure of Pleasant Street from Park Street to the top at Main Street from 10:00am to 4:00pm. There will be games for kids, live music (maybe) and the Fire Department will conduct a BBQ.

**Motion: Michael Keane moved and Donald Campbell seconded to allow the road closure for the Pleasant Street Block Party on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 as presented. Motion passed unanimously**

## 8. OTHER BUSINESS

Jim Carroll stated he has received complaints of bad "Wi-Fi" service along Northside Drive. The Manager stated he didn't know why but will look into it.

Tom Jacobs noted there was no need for Executive Session. There would be a small break and the Board shall meet at the Depot Street Highway garage for a tour. No further business will be conducted this evening.

**Motion: Michael Keane moved and Donald Campbell seconded to close this evening's meeting. Motion passed unanimously**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda E. Bermudez  
Secretary