



MINUTES

TOWN OF THOMPSON

ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2020 @ 8:00 AM

MERRILL SENEY COMMUNITY ROOM – TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Al Landry, Richard Trudeau, Celeste Guimont, JoAnn Hall

ALSO PRESENT: Amy St. Onge, First Selectperson; Tyra Penn-Gesek, Town Planner; Paul Hopkins, Assessor; Donna Hall, Recording Secretary

Al Landry, Chair, called the meeting at 8:03 AM.

- 1) Accept Minutes of 07-09-2020 Ordinance Review Committee Meeting

A Motion was made by Celeste Guimont to accept the Minutes with typo errors corrected, seconded by JoAnn Hall. All in favor, Motion carries.

Al Landry made a Motion to swap the order of agenda Item 2.a. Proposed Blight Ordinance & 2.b. Review Veteran's Tax Exemption Ordinance, seconded by Dick Trudeau. All in favor, Motion carries.

- 2) New Business

- a) Review Veteran's Tax Exemption Ordinance #10-048

Donna handed out the correct verbiage written by Paul, our Town Assessor. Paul Hopkins, Assessor, was present to explain the clerical errors to members. Members agreed with the verbiage corrections & thanked Paul for his insight. Members approved the clerical revisions last month per the Motion made by JoAnn Hall & seconded by Al Landry. Donna will send corrected language to the Board of Selectmen.

- b) Revised Proposed Blight Ordinance

Members will resume reviewing the Blight Ordinance where they left off last month at Section 9. Before they begin, Al Landry noted throughout this ordinance wherever "First Selectman/Selectwoman" is stated, it should be changed to "Selectperson", members agreed to wording change. Section 9.A.1 was reviewed & OK. Section 9.B.1,2, were reviewed & OK. Section 9.B.3 need to remove \$100.00 per day & state "For each violation of this Ordinance which continues beyond the date set by the Officer for corrective action, including any extensions granted, a civil penalty shall be imposed." Fine value needs to be added to the Ordinance Fee/Fine Schedule, members agreed. Section 9.B.4. JoAnn Hall questioned the July 1, 1997 date used in this section. Tyra Penn-Gesek stated she did look into the date & it is

relevant & has to be kept. Section 9.B.5. was reviewed & OK. Section 9.B.6. Dick Trudeau pointed out a clerical error in first sentence "Any owner who does not admit to liability as set forth in 9-E" should state as set forth in Section 9.B.5. members agreed, Tyra will make the change. Al Landry questioned the funding for a Hearing Officer, the Blight Officer, etc. Tyra suggested this position possibly be combined with the Zoning Officer position. First Selectman Amy St. Onge, was hoping a volunteer might donate their time. Al Landry stated if it were combined with Zoning Officer position, this would create a full time position & include benefits, how would this be funded?? Section 9.C.1,2,3,4.a,b,c, were all reviewed & OK. Section 9.C.5,6,7 were reviewed & OK. Section 10 was reviewed & OK. Section 10.A.,B,C,D. Were reviewed, Al Landry doesn't agree with lowering the property tax assessment for three years. Discussion ensued. JoAnn Hall suggested a tax freeze for three years. Tyra suggested wording "In accordance with CGS 12-21e, municipalities with anti-blight ordinances are authorized to freeze the property tax assessment on property rehabilitated under the Ordinance." Discussion ensued, combine Section 10.C.&D. these two sentences into one to read "The adjusted assessment shall reflect the value of the structure prior to rehabilitation for a period of three (3) years." Members agreed. Sections 11&12 were reviewed & OK. Al Landry liked the changes in Section 2.A.1-5, listing out the agencies & departments. Al Landry still has concerns with Section 2.D. 3rd bullet that reads "A structurally faulty foundation" this needs to be determined by a Professional Engineer, Al asked at whose expense, the Town's?? JoAnn Hall stated an engineer is very costly. Discussion ensued. JoAnn Hall noted Section 2.D.2nd bullet states "Collapsing or missing walls, roof, floors, or chimneys" these items should be separated out or are all these considered one blight?? Members discussed & agree, should be separate offenses. Section 2.F. stated two or more dead trees, etc....Al Landry feels it should read one (1) dead tree.....discussion ensued, members agreed. Section 8.A. Al Landry is opposed to using drones, or any other technological device should be prohibited. Al disagrees with the Town's spying on property owners. Al Landry stated if people can't afford to take care of their blighted property, fees & fines are not going to help the property owners, Al is against the revised proposed Blight Ordinance. Tyra Penn-Gesek stated there's a great deal of discretion in the ordinance & working with the property owner to improve the blighted property is the goal. Amy St. Onge stated she looks at the proposed blight ordinance as a standard, she feels this would help improve blighted properties throughout the Town. Discussion ensued. Amy St. Onge stated the proposed ordinance still has to go to Town Meeting for adoption.

A Motion was made by Dick Trudeau to wait until the next meeting upon final review & editing by Tyra, seconded by Al Landry. All in favor. Motion carries.

Tyra Penn-Gesek, Town Planner, left the meeting to amend the working draft of the proposed Blight Ordinance.

3) Old Business

a) Transfer Station Ordinance #10-021 Review for Updates

Donna handed out the final revisions made from last month's meeting with Richard Benoit, Public Works Director, & Amy St. Onge, First Selectman. Members reviewed. A Motion was made by Al Landry to accept the final revisions for the Transfer Station Ordinance as were discussed last month with Richard & Amy, & send forward to the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Dick Trudeau. All in favor, Motion carries.

Celeste Guimont noted this should be added to Ordinance Book Table of Contents, under Transfer Station ~ see Garbage, Rubbish, Refuse Ordinance....." as she & Dick had trouble locating this ordinance in the book. Members agreed.

b) Driveway Ordinance #10-053 Review for Updates

Donna handed out the final revisions made from last month's meeting with Richard Benoit, Public Works Director, & Amy St. Onge, First Selectman. Members reviewed. A Motion was made by Al Landry to accept the final revisions for the Driveway Ordinance as were discussed last month with Richard & Amy, & send forward to the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Dick Trudeau. All in favor, Motion carries.

c) Recreation Commission Ordinance #10-039

Still awaiting more info from Recreation Commission & the Recreation Director.

d) Code of Ordinances History Book Update by Celeste Guimont

Celeste gave a brief update, she plans on resuming her research on Monday, August 17th, 2020, & will continue on until she's finished the historical ordinances. Celeste has been an amazing help in researching the historical ordinances!!!

4) Citizen's Comments

Donna handed out her response from Ken Slater, the Town Attorney, discussion ensued. Dick Trudeau asked what this involved, Celeste Guimont explained the history of this budget discussion split proposal, during budget sessions, the budget is split into the government budget & the education budget & sent to Town vote. Taxpayers get very upset if the government portion of the budget is approved, but the education portion of the budget is not approved, or vice versa, the Board of Finance continues to cut from both budgets, even after the townspeople have approved the government portion of the budget. Celeste would like to propose that whatever portion of the budget the townspeople approve by town vote, remains as it stands, & cannot be further cut by the Board of Finance, only the portion of the vote that was not approved can be further cut. Dick Trudeau disagrees with this proposal, he feels the Board of Education budget has to be adjusted along with the government budget to make the bottom line work. Discussion ensued. Former selectmen have been in favor of this proposal. First Selectman Amy St. Onge explained the Board of Finance budget process to members. Al Landry wants to read & digest what the Town Attorney has stated. And possibly Celeste Guimont could draft a proposed budget ordinance separating the government & education portions of the budget to discuss amongst members next month.

Tyra Penn-Gesek, Town Planner, rejoined the meeting with the proposed revised Blight Ordinance revisions that were discussed earlier & handed out to attending members. Members discussed revisions briefly. Dick Trudeau would like time to read & digest the

revisions before voting on. Will add to next month's agenda for final discussion, revisions, & vote.

5) Member's Comments

Member's discussed their next month's meeting date. A Motion was made by Dick Trudeau to have the meeting on Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 8:00 AM, seconded by Celeste Guimont. All in favor, Motion carries.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Donna M. Hall,
Recording Secretary