

**Board of Selectmen
30 April 2007
Minutes**

6:00 p.m. - Chairman Brian Forst called the meeting to order. Present were Chairman Forst, Selectman Dave Clairmont and Recording Clerk Lois Dionne. Administrative Assistant Tim Warren was not in attendance. Selectman Don Guarino arrived at 6:10 p.m.

Tonight the Selectmen were to interview the applicants to the various Town Boards. Three of the applicants were unable to attend tonight's meeting, but will be interviewed at a later date. To fill the vacant time slots, the Selectmen discussed other business.

Shellcamp Beach – Lois Dionne informed the Selectmen that she had received a call from Andrew Hook from Shellcamp Association. She said Mr. Hook had stated that he had spoken with the person who controls the water level of the dam, and had been told that the boards would be put back in the dam in mid May, so there are just a couple of weeks in which to get the culvert done. Chairman Forst asked Dave Clairmont if he had a chance to speak with the road agent to see if he could get it done. Dave said he had spoken with Paul and Paul wouldn't be able to get to it in time, so it would need to be put out to bid. It was felt that we should invite bids in an effort to get the bids in quicker. There were several contractors mentioned, and Lois will ask Tim Warren to call the contractors with the details.

Conservation Commission Interviews

Brenda Sens requested to be reappointed to the Conservation Commission. Brenda has spent eight years on the commission, and after a very brief discussion, it was decided to reappoint her.

Chairman Forst explained that on the boards where there were more openings than there were applicants, he would ask to have the applicants appointed after the interview. For the one board where there were more applicants than positions, Brian said they would do all the interviews, then the Selectmen would deliberate, and chose the applicant they felt was most qualified to fill the position. He explained that if Brenda Sens and Dick deSeve were both reappointed to the Conservation Commission, there would still be two vacancies on the board.

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MOTION: Dave Clairmont moved to reappoint Brenda Sens for her third consecutive full term on the Conservation Commission as a regular member. Selectman Guarino seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Dick deSeve had also asked to be reappointed to the Conservation Commission, but was unable to attend tonight's meeting. There was a brief discussion, and it was felt that since the Selectmen knew Dick and were aware of his contributions to the Conservation Commission, they could reappoint him tonight.

MOTION: Selectman Clairmont moved to reappoint Richard deSeve to his third consecutive term on the Gilmanton Conservation Commission as a voting member. Selectman Guarino seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Approval of Minutes – The Selectmen reviewed the minutes of the last two week's meetings.

MOTION: Selectman Guarino moved to accept the minutes of April 16, 2007 as presented. Selectman Clairmont seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

MOTION: Selectman Clairmont moved to accept the minutes of April 23, 2007 as amended. Motion passed 2-0. Selectman Guarino did not vote, as he was not present at last week's meeting.

Recycling Center- Selectman Guarino noted that the minutes of last week's meeting had reflected that the recycling center had to close early a couple of times because of the compactor being full. He asked if Doug had spoken with Ralph Goodwin about changing his day for dumping. Don was updated about the discussion at last week's meeting regarding the recycling center.

School Closure – Selectman Guarino stated that he had been asked why during the past rainstorm, Gilford High School was open, but the elementary school was closed. He said that many of the roads in town were in such bad shape that they were closed, and wondered why the buses had gone out for the high school. It was felt that the decision to close schools is made between the school principal and the road agent. It was stated that it has to be decided early, and the roads weren't in bad condition at the time the high school buses had gone out, and there had been a ninety-minute delay for the elementary school, but the roads had deteriorated rapidly by the time the elementary buses were to go out.

Places Mill Road – Selectman Guarino asked about the site walk that had taken place with the Boy Scouts on last Wednesday. Chairman Forst explained that he, Dave Clairmont, Bob Flanders, Attorney McLaughlin and representatives of the Boy Scouts had done a site walk on Places Mill Road to try to come to terms on the repairs and upgrade that would be necessary on Places Mill Road to bring it up to the condition of the

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Town's specifications, and get the proper information to enable the job to be put out to bid.

Brian stated that the Scouts have requested another site walk because they have a new director with significant road experience, and they want to be sure the Town and the Scouts are on the same page as far as what needs to be done to the road. The Scouts are supposed to get in touch with Bob Flanders to arrange a time and date for the walk.

HDC Application

Allen Everett requested to be appointed as a full member of the Historic District Commission. Mr. Everett has been an alternate for two years, missing only one meeting. After a very brief discussion, during which Don Guarino, Selectmen's Representative to the HDC, stated that he felt Mr. Everett had been a valuable member of the HDC and recommended appointing him as a full member.

MOTION: Selectman Clairmont moved to appoint Allen Everett for a three-year term on the HDC as a regular member. Selectman Guarino seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Site Walk – Tax-Deeded Properties- Chairman Forst reminded the Board that they had a site walk on Sunday May 6th at 7:00 a.m. to review the properties that are scheduled to go for tax deeding.

Planning Board Interviews – Chairman Forst reminded the people present that because there were five applicants for one position the Selectmen would interview all the applicants, then the Selectmen would deliberate and then would make a decision.

Betty Ann Abbott – Betty Ann stated that she has a long history in community service, which includes among others: six years in municipal government, one year on the Gilmanton Budget Committee, Deputy Town Clerk & Tax Collector for the Town of Gilmanton and Public Relations Director for the Town of Bloomfield, Ct. Betty Ann stated that she has strong skills in project management and complex problem analysis and resolution, as well as experience in conflict resolution. Mrs. Abbott stated that she has also worked with the Planning Board on a parcel of land she owns with her husband, for which they have a provisional plan approval in place for construction of Abbott Business Networks office building. Betty Ann added that she had enjoyed being involved with the town and meeting people, and would like to be involved with the community again.

Brian Forst asked what Betty Ann foresaw for Gilmanton and what she felt our needs are. Betty Ann felt the Town needs some commercial development to assist with offsetting the escalating tax rate. Brian stated that Gilmanton has a very limited area for that sort of development, and asked if she felt Gilmanton could somehow have commercial development to help our tax base. Betty Ann replied that she does feel we

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can; there is some land available. She asked if it would be a possibility to extend the commercial zone to come farther up Rt 140. Betty Ann added that this would be up to the town, and she is in favor of commercial development as long as it doesn't step on the will of the people of the town or the environment.

Selectman Clairmont asked if Betty Ann had any expertise in site plan development. She replied her only experience was with the land she owns on Rte 106 and South Road. Dave asked if she had any plan reading experience. Betty Ann said she didn't, but felt that being an alternate was being in training, and she learns quickly. Dave asked if Betty Ann had any background in economic development. She said she did in college; her major had been in Design and Environmental Analysis, and they studied the design and sociology of municipalities.

Selectman Clairmont noted that Gilmanton's population is aging, and we aren't making adequate plans for that in terms of medical facilities, and small retail facilities, etc. Betty Ann said she would like to encourage older people to stay in Town. She felt that school age children and the cost of education is what is "killing" us; it isn't the Town budget.

Selectman Guarino asked when she speaks of the commercial lot the Abbotts own on Rt 106, if she was personally involved in the planning of it. She replied that she was.

Brett Currier – Brett stated that he has lived in Gilmanton for twenty-six years, and raised his children here, and they are putting their roots down here. Brett said he has concerns where the town is going, and we need to protect the environment; the quality of water and the quality of life in Gilmanton, but he realizes that if we don't do something to increase the tax base, we could have a beautiful place that nobody can afford to live in. Brett feels we are heading that way at a fast pace. Brett said he loves children, and doesn't feel that children shouldn't live in Gilmanton because the school costs money. He thinks people who feel that way probably never had children, but felt we need to find a way to make it work so we don't tax ourselves, or our children, out of Town. He felt it would come to a point where the school issue would come to be a State or Federal problem.

Brett felt he could be an asset to the Planning Board. He has been in the construction field for 21 years, can read blueprints and knows what wetlands are, and what kinds of trees there are and where they grow. Brett felt we need to have something like a 55+ community that doesn't put children in the schools, but are still taxed. He said they would more likely need ambulance service, etc., but Gilmanton charges for things like that, so it wouldn't create a tax burden. Brett said we have businesses in town that register their trucks in Belmont because Belmont treats them better. He said the Planners should work with those people to see what they could do to get them to register their vehicles in Gilmanton. He said that is free tax money, and no burden to the school or anything. Brett said he has attended several Planning Board meetings, and agrees with

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some things, and doesn't agree with others. Brett said he has a strong opinion on things, but is willing to learn.

Chairman Forst stated that the Planning Board Regulations state that a Board member must avoid conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest and reasons for a member to disqualify him/herself are if – a member stands to gain financial benefit, or the member has been retained or employed by the applicant or has performed some service for the applicant that is directly related to the matter at hand. Brian asked if Brett felt, as a contractor, because a percentage of what comes before the Planning Board deals with construction, he felt he could be objective. Brett felt he could. He said if he knew that if a subdivision was going to get approved, and he were going to work for them, he would not vote on the issue. He said that for a general subdivision, that he might or might not work on, it would be fair for him to have his opinion on it. Brian stated that Brett has a lot of knowledge of site plans, septic systems, etc. which he sees as an asset for a planning board situation, but there would always be the possibility that people might not see him as being objective for that reason.

Dave Clairmont stated that the largest percentage of decisions the Planning Board makes concern subdivisions. He said a lot of issues have been lot size and contiguous square footage, and a lot of issues that have arisen are slopes on septic systems, slopes on foundations and backfill. Dave asked if Brett felt he would be a contributor of good viable information in helping the board make a decision. Brett felt he could. He has done several houses of his own, laying out a house, and knowing what to cut, and what not to cut to make a lot aesthetically pleasing as well as to work so you don't have water in the basement and driveway issues, etc.

Selectman Guarino said he remembered Brett out front campaigning against an ordinance for a setback the Planning Board was trying to pass. He said there were two issues, and Brett was out front campaigning against them. Brett said he was against limiting building permits at the time, so he had voted against that. He said he didn't know about the other one, but at a meeting upstairs, a combined meeting of the Planning Board and Conservation Commission, they were trying to establish a 75' buffer zone from any wetland, and he was against that.

Don asked what Brett felt about open land. He said there was a survey, and one of the things the people in town said they like is the open land. Brett said he likes to look at open land, but it isn't his, and he doesn't pay taxes on it. Brett said some people have maintained their land so it looks beautiful, but maybe the plan, when they had purchased it years ago, had been that would be their nest egg when they retire, but now with ordinances that are in place, because they have kept it up, they can't develop it and retire. He said if they had just let it go, and become overgrown, it wouldn't be an issue. He said the best way to keep open space is to buy it; ownership is the best zoning.

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Don stated that Brett had previously stated that if the current rules were in place when he had built his subdivision a few years ago, he would not have been able to build his subdivision. Don felt Brett was angry with the planning board. Brett admitted he was angry because there is a set of guidelines put in place by the vote of the people, and he felt if you know the rules and play by the rules, you are all set. He said a setback from the front, side and wetlands, in the State of New Hampshire, is all included in the calculation of a lot loading size, and has been that way in Gilmanton. Brett added that there is no setback from a wetland. He said if you ask the State people, the best clean up on a leach field is a wetland, not in the wetland but the soil leading up to the wetland cleans up affluent better than anything. Brett stated that because the Planning Board didn't get the 5 acre minimum requirement they wanted, they decided to get it another way, so they decided they had been reading the rules wrong, and now we are getting waivers because there is a court case and they are waiting to see how the appeal process is going to work to decide how the rules will go. He felt they should keep the rules in place, play by the rules and stay out of the courtrooms. Brett said this is one reason he wants to be on the planning board. Brett said he is angry with this, and felt others should be angry too.

Cindy Houghton – Cindy Houghton said she had lived in town since 1995, raised her daughter here, and has served on the School Board and Budget Committee. She said she saw there was an opening on the Planning Board, and she likes to see new blood and balance on a board, that is why she put her name in. Cindy said she doesn't have site-plan experience, but realizes it is not a voting position; it is a learning position, but feels she can learn. She said her background is in project management.

Brian Forst asked Cindy how she perceives the future of Gilmanton. Cindy stated that she is also concerned about the tax rate, and feels we can do commercial development in town, but it has to be done in a smart way. She said she doesn't want to see a Wal-Mart or McDonalds in Gilmanton, but would listen to all opportunities that come before the Planning Board with an open mind. Cindy was concerned about the aging people and children in Town. She didn't feel we have many opportunities for the children.

Don asked if Cindy felt she would be able to make the Planning Board meetings. Cindy stated that she makes all meetings she is committed to.

Dave asked how Cindy felt about promotion of commercial development and elderly housing. Cindy said she would be in favor of promoting elderly housing, but wasn't sure what Dave meant by promoting commercial development. Dave felt there is land available in the commercial district, and asked Cindy what she felt the Town could do to have people take advantage of that. Cindy felt it should be made a friendly process when they go before the boards, and they should be treated with fairness and respect. She said she didn't know how she would go about promoting it. Dave asked if Cindy felt more things should be done within the Town to make it a friendly place to raise a family. Cindy said she did.

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Brian stated that there had been a lot of talk about commercial development, and that is an issue, but he felt Brett had hit on a subject that is very important to the Town; the subdivision of property. He asked if Cindy felt the rules are clear-cut. Cindy said she would have to look at the rules, but she noticed that when the Planning Board puts issues on the ballot, some of them are confusing and difficult to understand. Cindy felt that is something she would learn by being on the board. She wasn't sure the rules are clear, and she didn't feel a good job is being done communicating why something is being done.

Don stated that we have a very small commercial zone. He stated that in the future the Planning Board might have a say over different commercial districts, elderly housing districts, etc, and asked what Cindy would like to see for the future of Gilmanton. Cindy said she would like to see a community that has something to offer for everyone who lives here. She said the voters are the ones who make the ultimate decision, but she would like to see more outreach to the community and getting more input, then using that input.

Monica Jerkins – Monica stated that she is the least known of the candidates, and had moved here five years ago. Monica said she is from a small town in Maine, smaller than Gilmanton, and was impressed with the Town. She said small town, New England rural atmosphere is embedded in her. Monica said she has worked with the GYO, and had helped organize the grand opening of the fields. Monica said that what impressed her most about Gilmanton was that some towns have to solicit people to be on their boards, but Gilmanton has more people than positions. Monica said she is seeking an alternate position on the Planning Board with the hopes of it leading to something more permanent.

Monica felt she has a lot to offer the board through her knowledge as a planning technician for Alton, and had previously worked for a land-use law firm, and has been involved with various community projects. She said her husband is a surveyor, and she reads plans, and is very technically experienced in all aspects of subdivision processes and site plans. Monica added that she has personally drafted subdivision regulations and has been involved with the Master Plan process. She felt she could come in with fresh views, and good ideas and help develop them.

Brian stated that because Monica was fairly new to Town she might have a different aspect of things than people who have been here a long time, and asked what her perception was of Gilmanton, and what she sees as a positive way for us to be moving.

Monica stated that Gilmanton has the second highest tax rate in Belknap County, and she would like to promote what she referred to as economic development, not commercial development, because there are many different types of development that would produce economic results. She said when you say "commercial"; you might be being a little narrow-minded. Monica said that with economic development, you need to look at what

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would help the town with placement, not just zoning, by using what is available in the whole town to place things strategically and would be of the most benefit. Brian Forst said economic growth could be any facet such as agriculture, light industry, etc. whereas with commercial, you tend to think big business. He asked if Monica had any suggestion as to what would be good for Gilmanton.

Monica said that she is not going into this with an agenda, and any suggestions she might have would have to be discussed with a board; she doesn't plan to overhaul things to try to make it the Town she wants, that you have to take into account what the people want, and to work with the committees. Monica said the question had been asked of another applicant if they had felt the rules are cut and dry. She stated that well-written rules can be very clear, but more often that people who don't have experience writing the rules leave them a little too vague, and that leaves them open to interpretation.

Don noted that Monica had moved here from a small town in Maine, and stated that sometimes people who work in town government, they use one town as a stepping stone to go on to a larger town. He asked if she was offered a position in a larger town, if she would move. Monica stated that they have lived many places, but this is where they have decided they want to put down roots. She said her husband had been offered a job where he would have made considerable more money than he is making here, but they like the quality of life here, and this is where they want to raise their family.

Dave asked what Monica felt the Town would have to offer her children when they get out of school, and if it wasn't very much, what she would do to try to change that. Monica said it has been her experience that it wouldn't be easy for any child starting out just out of school to be able to afford to stay here, but hoped they would appreciate the town enough to want to move back here at a later date. She felt this could change with some economic promotion.

Dave said he had gotten into a hypothetical conversation with a member of another board and they had been talking about economic development. He said the person had commented that we need more businesses in the community, but we need only businesses that don't create demand for labor. Dave asked how Monica interpreted that. Monica disagreed with the statement; we want jobs for people.

Dave stated that Brett had touched on the contiguous square footage rule, and you can only create a building lot that has 30,000 sq ft of building area, unless you get a waiver. He said Brett made comments about setbacks, and asked how Monica felt that determination should be made. Monica felt there needs to be a balance. She said Gilmanton has historic amenities; valuable resources such as wetlands and open space, and they need to be protected, but at the same time, you need to look at it from different perspectives, such as scientific or visual, but you need a balance, and you should take both sides into consideration when you are trying to find that balance.

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Dave said he had attended a seminar on planning, and there was mention of condensing development to a small area and limiting urban sprawl. He asked what Monica felt about that. Monica felt it was a good idea. There was a brief discussion.

Frank Gianni – Frank said he has lived in Gilmanton for five years, and before that had been all over the country in the elevator industry. He said he has had experience in dealing with construction and codes, and has worked with state and local boards. Frank said he grew up in the Winnisquam area, and having lived so many places he really appreciates living here. Frank said he has seen condensed development where the houses are so close there is no privacy and zero lot lines and no zoning. He said this is why he feels a planning board is important to the future of a town, and we need to listen to what the people want. Frank said we need to try to attract small businesses and create work for people. He said some towns give businesses tax breaks for a certain number of years. Frank felt it would be difficult to attract economic development here because of the limited area.

Frank stated that he has no personal agenda and could be very open and objective. He said that if rules and regulations were all clear and cut and dry, you wouldn't need a planning board.

Brian asked Frank where he had seen other places, where he felt Gilmanton might want to go, and what Gilmanton could improve on. Frank said we need to be careful, and that Brett had brought up a good point when he mentioned open land, and about people who use this as a source for retirement. He said we have to be careful about how we look at things, and are we going to hurt someone so we can see a beautiful sunset. He didn't think we need a lot of change, but the biggest problem is the tax rate. Frank said he wasn't fighting change, but change for the sake of change is not good.

Dave asked how Frank felt about intertwining businesses into residential areas, as opposed to having businesses in a segregated area. Frank felt that could be a problem; it depends on the area and how much traffic it would cause, etc.

Dave asked how Frank felt about developments of one-acre lots. Frank said he had seen it, and didn't feel one acre was bad.

Dave asked if Frank had any experience in plan reading or site lay out of external issues such as drainage, road issues, etc. Frank replied that he had a lot of experience because when they were putting in new elevators, it wasn't just the inside of the building they looked at, but had to work with architects and determine where they were drilling wasn't in wetlands and that type of thing.

Don asked if Frank felt he would be able to attend all the Planning Board Meetings. Frank replied that wouldn't be a problem. Don asked why Frank had chosen the Planning

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Board to serve on rather than one of the other committees, such as Conservation Commission. Frank said the Planning Board was the one he felt most qualified for.

Deliberations – The Selectmen deliberated, and made their choice of candidate for the planning board by the process of elimination.

MOTION – Selectman Guarino moved to appoint Monica Jerkins as the alternate Planning Board member for a three-year term. Dave Clairmont seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

9:12 p.m. – MOTION – Selectman Clairmont moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Guarino seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Dionne
Recording Clerk