



TOWN OF CHARLTON
 Minutes of Special Selectmen's Roundtable Meeting
 Tuesday – February 11, 2014

Submitted by UCS
 Date 3/5/14
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In attendance:

Board of Selectmen members: Frederick C. Swensen – Chairman, David M. Singer – Vice-Chairman, Joseph J. Szafarowicz – Clerk and Town Administrator – Robin L. Craver
 Finance Committee Members: Peter Cooper, Douglas Stepien, Frank Morrill, Dennis Tully and Daniel Prouty
 Others in attendance: Robert Lemansky – Water/Sewer Commissioner / Private Developer, Joseph Ostrowski – Wire Inspector, Nancy Shields – Building Inspectional Services, Curtis Meskus – Building Commissioner and Peter Starkus – Gas & Plumbing Inspector. Also in attendance: Terek & Ted Mroczkowski, business owners of Ted's and Gordon Gilbman, resident.

Finance Chairman Frank Morrill called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. Chairman Morrill stated that they had a Finance Committee meeting a few weeks ago and the discussion was that we need more money. The Finance Committee tries to find ways to infuse money into the budget. While looking at this, the process of new growth came up. It was discussed that all town boards need to work together and it didn't appear that way. It was thought that we needed to examine better ways to work together so everyone was on the same page. His Board wanted to sit down with the Boards and discuss economic development so Chairman Morrill asked Mrs. Craver if this can be done to have everyone sit and put together some way to understand and maybe help each other. He did state this has nothing to do with what he's heard, it's not a political thing. Chairman Morrill stated that in all his years on the Finance Committee, no one has ever been treated disrespectfully.

Chairman Swensen thanked Chairman Morrill and agreed with what's been said. He also thanked Ted and Terek Mroczkowski for coming to the meeting. He stated he's the one that asked Ted and Terek if they would be interested in coming to a meeting to discuss the process of building new. Chairman Swensen stated that the biggest thing we should focus on as a town is commercial growth in this town. He reiterated what Chairman Morrill stated and that was to not make this personal. This meeting is how we can all learn. He asked all to go around the table and introduce themselves. He also stated that anyone that wanted to speak would be allowed to.

Charlton's Future Growth. Chairman Swensen stated what we really need to look at is commercial growth. He stated that a lot of people think that once we get water and sewer service down route 20, we'll be beating businesses off with a stick but he's not sure that's the case. He's hoping we can use Ted's Package Store as a case study and the processes that are involved in building in the Town of Charlton and learn from that and if we can make that a more efficient system. The first thing to start on that would be to talk about the permitting process a little bit. Mr. Meskus started off by saying zoning, if it's an appropriate use that it's going to be in, without having that, it won't go anywhere. Mr. Tully asked Mr. Meskus to elaborate a little as there are ways to get around the zoning, there are other options. Mr. Meskus stated that zoning is a set of land regulations that we have voted by the townspeople that certain uses are allowed in certain places. He also stated that a land owner can petition to the Board of Selectmen for Town Meeting to change zoning. Mr. Prouty stated that he went through that in Oxford and the Planning Board there wasn't acting the way the people wanted and it passed against what the Planning Board wanted. Mr. Lemansky stated that we could have the perfect layout but we need the players to come in. Chairman Swensen's hope is that we work as a team to get the permitting process done. Mr. Prouty stated that there is a statute out there 43E which is an expedited permitting process but Charlton is not on the list. He also stated that people he deals with, feel that our system is not fair. Mr. Cooper stated that we lost a lot of business because of the process. Chairman Swensen stated that it seems like

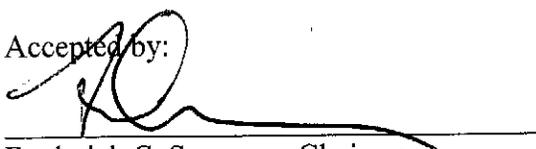
the biggest we have to look at, is the permitting process and he asked the Mroczkowski's to explain what was involved in the process. Terek explained that they hired someone to do the project which included getting the permits. He stated that they ran into issues because of time. He said that there was wording on the application that had to be changed but it couldn't be done at the first meeting, it had to be rescheduled to the next one. It was explained that all the people in the plaza had to leave and the mortgages and water/sewer bills still had to be paid but the delay in permitting left them with paying out and nothing coming in. Chairman Swensen mentioned that boards don't meet as often in the summer but building takes place mostly in the summer. Maybe that's something that can be looked at. Terek Mroczkowski was asked to talk about the pier review process. Mr. Mroczkowski stated that all that did was cost him money. They had no say in it. They paid \$40,000 for an engineer to sign off on this. Chairman Swensen stated that he was told that the pier review process is more cost effective and more efficient to the town. Mr. Prouty gave a few examples as well. He stated that if we were to start our businesses now, we wouldn't be able to start them up with the process under the code rules. Mr. Szafarowicz asked if this is a state mandated process that all sites have to go through? Mr. Prouty stated that a lot of towns don't have it. It's a town bylaw. Chairman Swensen asked the contractors that were here if the pier review process common and the answer was no. Terek mentioned that two weeks after they got their permit, they were told they had to add additional drainage and rip up part of the parking lot that they weren't going to. Mr. Meskus stated that he in his department, does pier review as well. He asked what responsibility does the town have if a neighbor calls and says there is water coming onto their property now because of the building. He knows stormwater management is an issue. Mr. Morrill stated that he has built houses but never developments and he referred back to what Mr. Tully said, something is missing common sense wise if you have your stamp that you have to put on something where your liable for it then someone else comes along and reviews it, changes it, stamps it, there's something wrong with that. Mr. Szafarowicz stated that as a group we should look at the bylaws, zoning and come up with a list and learn from it. Ted Mroczkowski stated that they went into a lot of offices and would have liked to have seen these offices help. No one smiled and they would say this is how it's going to be. Why can't they help a business? Mr. Cooper would like to put the conversation in a different direction. He would like to see solutions. He stated that the Board of Selectmen makes the appointments on the EDC and that could be a step for a change. Two things bothered him very much. One is how citizens are treated when they go in to get a permit. He also suggested adopting the fast track bill for Charlton. Mr. Singer said he came here tonight to just listen. He hopes there are many more meetings to follow. He left the meeting. Mr. Szafarowicz stated that we need to get more information and digest it. Chairman Swensen went back to what Mr. Meskus was saying. He asked if the drainage was changed by the town and a resident complains, how does it work to be fixed? Mr. Meskus stated that there is some sort of expertise that people need to look at the issues. He said that an engineer should be able to have a conversation. Mr. Starkus stated that he took offense to a statement made by Mr. Cooper where he said department inspectors are not very nice. He's done plumbing inspections for the Town of Charlton for 28 years. He doesn't think you will find anyone in this community that would say he gave people grief. As an inspector, he accommodates people in this town. He does inspections on Saturdays and Sundays so that people do not have to take an extra day off. Mr. Cooper stated that he never said any departments and he never said Mr. Starkus and he apologized. What he was saying is there has been times when people come here, Charlton is getting a reputation that it's not easy to deal with. He didn't say anything to offend anyone, he's just bringing it to everyone's attention. Mr. Mroczkowski stated that they have worked with Mr. Starkus, Mr. Ostrowski and Mr. Meskus and they were great to work with. Mr. Meskus was asked before what makes a good project go and he replied, zoning, good plans and professional people. Mrs. Craver would like to talk about the permitting process as small as people getting a water hook up. She had a conversation with someone that was trying to put in a water line but besides here, they had to go to Southbridge as well and go through their process. Mr. Lemansky stated that the Water/ Sewer Commission has reviewed the process and made some changes to it. He would recommend having the building secretary who is knowledgeable enough to sign off on the permit if they see that everything is checked off. That's how Auburn does it. Mrs. Craver recommended looking at the other smaller processes to too see if we could make changes. Mr. Tully stated going back to the pier review process, one thing strikes him as a little odd. The engineer who is in charge of the project is basing all of his work on regulations, then as you move towards the details, there is interpretation

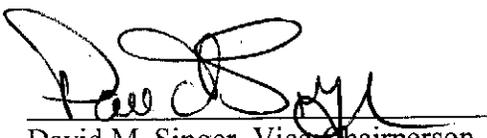
that happens and then the final result. To put in a process in this town where we are going to ask a pier to review an engineer's details and all your looking at is the final details, your missing the entire thought process. Your allowing the pier to say I wouldn't have done it this way, you have to do it like this. He thinks this really needs to be addressed. He also said he read something in the paper that was very disturbing to him which was we have a process, it's perfect, it can't be improved and that's why we are not participating. He feels that anyone who thinks they are smarter than anyone else needs to go. This will not allow us to add growth to our town. Mr. Morrill thinks the most important thing is town is changing the culture. He is concerned that there are people that aren't here and they play a big role in this. The number one job we have is to service the citizens in town and look to economic growth and the future of the town. We need to start being solution providers. Mr. Szafarowicz recommended looking at the permit costs. He also thought it would be good to know the process such as what does it take to have the plumbing inspector, building, planning. Chairman Swensen asked the Mroczkowski's what their cost for permitting was. Terek stated that with everything, they hit the \$50,000 mark. Terek stated that the demographics aren't here yet to expand. Mr. Morrill feels we need to take a list of things from this meeting. Ted Mroczkowski stated it should be one fee to cover everything. Make it a predictable fee. Mr. Szafarowicz said we should look at suggestions for the next meeting and he has four. One is looking at the zoning board of appeals authority to grant variances; look at the pier view legislation – what are the words in that bylaw that make that happen; 43D permitting and creating one person for contact. Chairman Swensen stated that we can also take a look at the Site Plan Review process. He also stated to a comment made by Peter Cooper regarding the Board of Selectmen having control over some parts, the Board is looking at this closely. There are parts that the Board has no control over. Mr. Tully asked if there is a process for someone to challenge the Planning Board if the plan they want is declined? Mr. Lemansky stated that he's dealt with the Planning Board a lot and has never seen that happen if it's zoned for that use. Chairman Swensen stated that we can look into Mr. Tully's question as well. Mr. Prouty feels we should have the EDC and Planning Board separate. He feels there is a conflict. Mr. Lemansky mentioned having a sub-committee for those instead of going to court to see if it could be resolved. Mr. Prouty stated that there is a new business in town called the Charlton Business Association which would be able to help some of these projects. Chairman Swensen stated that what we could do on our level is look at the process, the relationship between some committees and boards and the process. He would like to see the Board build a relationship with the EDC. He thanked Ted and Terek for coming. Mr. Prouty thanked them for being the anchor in Charlton City. Chairman Swensen stated that we will schedule another meeting down the road and thanked everyone for coming.

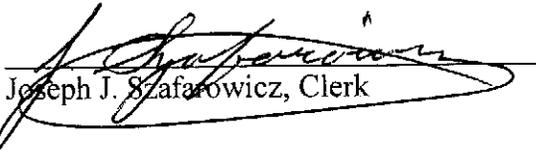
Meeting adjourned.

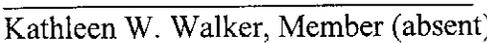
Submitted by:
Mary C. Devlin
Administrative Assistant

Accepted by:


Frederick C. Swensen, Chairman


David M. Singer, Vice-Chairperson


Joseph J. Szafarowicz, Clerk


Kathleen W. Walker, Member (absent)


Brent Sellew, Member (absent)