

MINUTES SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. Thursday, May 11, 2017
HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING
3RD FLOOR MEETING ROOM

Select Board

Eric Remick, Chair
Danny Hale, Vice Chair
Shari Cornish
Elizabeth Dow
Kory Barclay

Others Present

Jon Jewett, Town Manager

Others Present

Larry Hamel
Lise Hamel

6:00 P.M. – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the Special Select Board meeting to order.

6:04 P.M. – Discussion relating to dangerous building at 71 Wolcott Street.

Eric told Larry and Lise that the Town had received calls from several people who were concerned that the building they own at 71 Wolcott Street was moving and appearing to be collapsing. He went on to say that at this time we don't have any solutions for how to resolve the problem. Eric said that the special meeting is an opportunity to sort things out and to get some kind of agreement on how to approach this situation.

Larry said that he acquired the building in the land sale for the old inn and that he had no choice but to take the property if he wanted the inn. Due to its condition and the expected cost of renovations, he has not been able to leverage the funds necessary to make renovations to it. He said that he believes now that it may be too deteriorated and has reached a point where it needs to come down.

The Town Manager brought up concerns with the potential presence of asbestos and the need to have the structure evaluated. Larry said that doesn't believe any asbestos is present. Jon said that we can only determine that by performing sampling provided by a licensed asbestos sampler.

A general discussion ensued relating to what might happen if the building should collapse and who would be responsible for the cleanup.

Larry offered the building to the Town and said there could be parking for as many as 12 to 13 cars and there would also be space available to park above the building. Larry said there were potential issues with the adjacent landowner and his waterline and access road. The road encroaches on Larry's property and would limit parking up on top.

Eric said that if the Town owned the building there might be other ways to find funding to tear the building down. A Community Development Block Grant or other similar funding sources may be available, but they are highly competitive and involve a complex application process.

There was more discussion about the sidewalk and potential ledge issues in and around the building. Eric asked Larry if he was working on a plan to take the building down and Larry said no, he wasn't working on a plan because he doesn't have the funding to do the work.

Eric said that he is still unconvinced that there is a parking problem in Hardwick. Danny Hale said that he believes there is a significant problem and the space provided by taking the building down would ease some of that problem. Elizabeth Dow said that she doesn't believe there is a significant parking problem, but she went on to say that if there is a parking problem, it is only during the rush-hour times.

The bottom line for the Town Eric said is that we don't want to take on this building without a plan in place.

It was brought up again that it is important to get the asbestos sampling out of the way first, figure out if there is a structural engineer and determine the cost of demolishing the building.

Larry mentioned that the Town Economic Development loan might be a funding option. There was some discussion of how such a loan would work. It was finally suggested that Jon provide an application to Larry and that he complete it. Larry is to find someone to do the asbestos sampling and analysis and pending the results, Larry is to estimate the cost of demolition and apply to the Town for funding. Jon is to assist Larry as much as possible through this process.

The detail of any loan would be worked out as more information is provided on costs. If asbestos is found, cleanup will be costly, if the building collapses first, the cost will likely double as the entire building will need to be considered contaminated with asbestos. Additionally, the owner of a commercial building would need to notify and obtain permission from the Environmental Protection Agency before final demolition and disposal of the building.

At the end of the meeting, the Select Board generally agreed that Larry needs to perform the initial sampling and determine the ultimate cost for demolition and approach the Town for a loan. The details of the loan will be worked out at closing with approval of the Select Board.

7:05 P.M. - Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes approved by: _____
Eric Remick, Chair of the Select Board

Minutes taken by: _____
Jon Jewett, Town Manager