

Mont Vernon Planning Board**Public Meeting Via Zoom****March 23, 2021****AGENDA**

Times are approximate and subject to change without notice.

7:00 pm Lot Line Adjustment Stehlik, Szok, Berry

13 & 17 Old Milford Road, Lots 1-38-3 & 1-39

7:45 pm Discussion on Library Roadway

8:30 pm Selection and Appointment of Chair, Vice Chair & Secretary

8:45 pm Other Business

Mail & Announcements

Review of Minutes 3/9/21

9:00 pm Adjournment

Present: Bill McKinney, Bill Johnson, Steve Bennett, Tim Berry, Chip Spalding, Jim Bird

Absent: Rebecca Schwarz, Dave Hall, Eric Will, Charles Baker

7:02 PM – Lot Line Adjustment Stehlik, Szok, Berry 13 & 17 Old Milford Rd.

McKinney opened the meeting and had everyone recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Tim Berry began the presentation for their lot line adjustment. They had a survey done in February 2020. They are simply shifting lot lines to make the lot shapes better on all sides. Lot 1-39 will go from 7.27 acres down to 6.71 acres and Lot 1-38-3 will go from 2.13 acres to 2.68 acres. Three new markers will be placed to delineate the new boundary lines. Randy Smith, an abutter on the backside, said he will not be affected by this lot line adjustment. Bill Watson, also an abutter on the backside, has no objection to this. **Spalding** noted that there is no signature block on page one of the plan set done by Meridian. This will need to be added so the Chairman and Secretary of the Planning Board can sign off and Joan can record with NH Deeds. **Spalding** noted that the Planning Board usually asks for drainage easements. Berry stated that the town has already done extensive drainage work on the edge of Old Milford Road. The Board reviewed the notes on the plan. After review, **Spalding** does not feel it

necessary to request additional easements on this. He feels we can conditionally approve based on updating the plans to include a signature block and also receiving electronically in order to update NRPC for our tax maps. **Bird** feels we need to accept the plan first and then motion to approve after review. **McKinney** stated that this is a lot line adjustment; not a subdivision. This is more of a formality that the lot line adjustment is brought to the Board. The Planning Board does not have the authority to approve or deny a lot line adjustment unless they are making an additional buildable lot or a more non-conforming lot than exists. We have limited powers to approve or deny; we can accept the plan as presented. **Bird** motioned to accept the plan for review seconded by **Johnson**. All in favor. **Bird** motioned to approve the lot line adjustment plan as presented conditionally with a signature block being added and it being provided in electronic format, seconded by **Johnson**. All in favor.

7:45 PM – Library Roadway Discussion

McKinney noted that this proposed project is not a subdivision. This is one parcel that remains one parcel; the town is dividing it up for separate uses, but not subdividing. The Planning Board has limited authority to approve or deny what they presented to us. The goal for this evening is to address concerns that we had. We did bring up some concerns with the location of conduits and some drainage concerns; but ultimately, this is a municipal project on municipal land with no subdivision involved. His hope is that from the Board's point of view, we can get support for this project so when the Library Trustees go to town meeting, they can walk in with support from the Planning Board and the Selectmen and get this town to back them on the project. Cindy Raspiller pointed out that this is a joint roadway that will service both the library and the cemetery. One change to the plan is that the conduits will show extending all the way up to the cemetery line. **Johnson** noted that the plans we saw a month ago were an RFQ set of documents in order to establish some budget costs for the work. In a quick cursory review of what we saw, there were some areas of concern or deficiencies that needed to be revisited; they could have a costly impact on the project budget. There have not been any changes or improvements made to the plans we saw a month ago. Raspiller stated that engineers cost money. This is a town project. The library trustees have used trust fund money that is available for their use in addition to funding that had been approved at town meeting. John Quinlan added that there was no desire to go further than what was presented because the drawings and proposal were created just to get a concept idea of how much it would cost to put in a road. They are not looking to improve those plans until the town actually accepts the project. Then they will go to a finished product that will be much more detailed and have all the corrections discussed over the last month. **Spalding** submitted six pages of comments. He sees significant issues with the current drainage being proposed. The drainage is set up to actually flood based on the detention system set up. That flooding actually goes underneath the closed drainage system of the road and if the drainage fails on the first part the flooding actually gets higher on the road. He sees this as being a tremendous burden being put on the Town as far as the design that has been submitted. The catch basins are actually in the swales of the road so they cannot be maintained in the winter time by a plow; they have to be dug out by hand. As we all know, our town does not have an extensive closed drainage system. This would be the biggest and a huge burden. Not only are we looking at removing active farming area, we are filling in wetlands. Also, in reviewing the docs, it appears that the septic system does not even meet the state setback requirements in order to adequately meet the wetland setbacks which he believes is 75'. In the final set of documents at Town Hall, there is no consideration for handicap access; if you look at all the detail blocks, they've all been crossed out. It does not look like there is sufficient turn around space. It is unfortunate that this plan moved this far along without getting some input from the Planning Board; this is a very bad plan in his opinion and not one that would be a good plan for the town to proceed on. **Johnson** feels it is worth spending the money up front to get it right rather than having to come back later and ask for more to fix the design. Raspiller apologized for not coming to the Planning Board much earlier in the project; it was not suggested to them until January of this year. There is a lot of valuable input that they've gotten that would have been very helpful to have had two years ago. However, comments notwithstanding, the design as currently laid out has both wetlands and septic approvals from the State of NH. She understands that we have concerns. She is concerned that if they do something now that changes those permits, that's more money that has to be spent again. There currently are not funds appropriated to spend more money on engineering at this point. She is not in the position to make changes at this time. They need to resolve the issue of whether or not this is in fact part of the library project. This is actually the cemetery access road along which the library sits; both of which are essential functions of the Town of Mont Vernon. As to taking useful farmland out of production, that decision was made back in 1997 when the town bought the land for this

project. **Spalding** stated that there is also property set aside for library use that is not active farmland. It is woodland and it is upland, not in wetlands. Raspiller said their first choice of site was in fact in those woodlands. Essentially, they would have had to disturb far more wetlands in order to get there because of where the wetlands are situated and the ledge in that area. They were told that the cost to construct the library would be about twice as much there and they did not feel they could come to the vote with that. **McKinney** noted that we requested they come to the Planning Board in January because that was when we were made aware that there was a formal plan out there. Prior to that we didn't even know there was a formal plan being presented. **Spalding** asked if the library or cemetery people had considered going off of Weston Hill Road to get access; the town property is right in front of the Transfer Station and that would keep them out of the wetlands. Quinlan said yes, but the access grade from Weston Hill Road was considered far too steep. **Spalding** said he ran some numbers and it is about an 8% grade. **Berry** stated that this will be a town road. The Board of Selectmen have probably more power when it comes to town roads than anything else in the running of the town. They will definitely be weighing in on this roadway. He respects **Spalding's** opinions about the drainage system. Our DPW Director may not be thrilled about the closed drainage system. It is very important that water from the road does not end up in Carleton Pond; the Conservation Commission weighed in on that extensively. He doesn't know if the BOS will support this plan. It is unfortunate that this didn't come before the Planning Board sooner; they have way more expertise than the Selectmen do and if we had heard what we are hearing now a couple of years ago, maybe the plan would have been changed. He hopes it can be figured out. Raspiller noted that they've had Selectmen's representatives as part of this process for as long as she has been involved in it. This has not been done behind closed doors. **McKinney** suggested that the Selectmen possibly look to create and adopt a policy that any project for the town such as this that will impact the taxpayers be required to go to the Planning Board for review. We don't have any policy for that right now. The Planning Board has to be involved early on to avoid the situation we are in now. He suggests that all comments and concerns should be provided to the Library Trustees, Selectmen and Planning Board so they can be addressed with the engineers. Some of these concerns may be an oversight by the engineers that should not be the Town's financial responsibility to address. He went on to say that while there is not Planning Board support for this project tonight, we should work together with the engineers and the Library Trustees to address the larger of these issues prior to us putting this forward to Town Meeting. Bonnie Angulas questioned if this was strictly a road to the cemetery, and it was up to Lou Springer and the Selectmen to engineer that road, when would that start in their timeline looking at Lou's 8 to 10 year timeline? As a taxpayer, she is paying for this road whether there is a library or not. She wants to know how this process would be different if it was Lou proposing a road to the inevitable cemetery. Would there not be drainage? Would it not be off Grand Hill Road? Would it be suggested that you chose the wrong site for the cemetery? What part of this conversation would be different if we were talking about the cemetery? **McKinney** answered that nothing would be different, only because the concern here is that the long-term maintenance is going to be very costly for the town. The roadway itself is going to be costly, but your potential long-term maintenance due to flooding, the expansion of soils, water that gets trapped under the roadway that causes the roadway to break up is a very big concern. The town needs to maintain this roadway whether it is a roadway to the library or to the library and the cemetery. The roadway seems to be poorly designed for long-term maintenance costs for the Town. **Spalding** added that these comments provided by the Planning Board are not singling out any group; they are based on professional experience and Planning Board experience. It would have been great to have the Planning Board engaged much earlier in the process; maybe some planning could have been done that could have applied some Best Practices. Also, getting the DPW in early on this would have been very helpful. **Johnson** added that if the cemetery came to us with a different access road design than what we are reviewing for the library, we would base our comments on the type of access road that the cemetery was seeking to build. Lou Springer stated that he doesn't understand how they could hire professional engineers and designers and they could do such a supposedly bad job; it doesn't make sense to him. **Johnson** added that if the Town has already expended money and paid a professional engineering firm to create the documents we have, and there are some noted deficiencies in the design, you ought to be able to go back and challenge that and ask that they address the deficiencies at their expense, not the Town's expense. Lou Springer stated that these plans being criticized today have been paid for by the Library Trustees and the Cemetery Trustees, not the Town. Jill Weber noted that they have been working with land that turned up multiple surprises every time they had a design. Suddenly, they would have to change direction because the land that was chosen to start with was so problematic. They have tried desperately to provide the solutions along the way so as to bring something to the Town that they could support. They've been at this library project for many years.

They are very grateful for the Planning Board's input, but the journey has been arduous to say the least. The state has been involved; they have taken all the advice and paid for all the advice. She feels that we need to respect the process that has gone along the way thus far. **Spalding** stated that the Planning Board urges anyone to consult with them before they start engaging with a land surveyor or licensed engineer, or before submitting permits to the state. This seems to be absent here. We are here to support the Town of Mont Vernon; we are here to give guidance at the very beginning so that property owners and land owners don't have to spend a lot of money in perhaps going down the wrong road. **McKinney** suggested that we get our notes together from the DPW Director, **Spalding** and **Johnson** and get them presented to the Library Trustees, Cemetery Trustees, Selectmen, Planning Board and the engineers and do what we can to address the concerns at hand. He thanked the Library Trustees, Bonnie Angulas and the Cemetery Trustees for joining us.

8:40 PM – Other Business

The Board reviewed the minutes of 3/9/21. **Berry** motioned to accept the minutes as written seconded by **Bennett**. All in favor.

8:45 PM – Selection of Chair, Vice Chair & Secretary

McKinney and **Johnson** have both chosen to step down from their Board positions. The Selectmen have appointed Jim **Bird** as a full member of the Board. **Bird** nominated **Bennett** for Chairman. **Bennett** declined. **McKinney** nominated **Bird** for Chairman, **Bennett** for Vice Chairman and **Spalding** for Secretary. **Berry** motioned to appoint **Bird** as Chairman, **Bennett** as Vic-Chairman and **Spalding** as Secretary, seconded by **McKinney**. All in favor.

9:00PM

As there was no further business before the Board, **Bennett** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Berry**. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cleary

Administrative Assistant