

SNRCC September 14, 2022 Minutes

- Call SNRCC meeting to Order:
 - Don, Gail, Sean, Mike, Chandler in person; Jon, Fred, Christine on Zoom... Rosemary Sadler, Jim White from public present; Don Porter from Finance Committee
- Identify minute taker – Chandler
- Review and Approve Agenda – Don motions, Chandler seconds (8-0)
- Review and approve minutes of August 10, 2022
 - Sean motions, Don seconds (7-0; Mike abstains – wasn't at meeting)
- Public Comment (for items not on agenda)
- Meet with Don Porter/Finance Committee presentation on the proposed LOT
 - Want to reduce heavy reliance on property taxes
 - Diversify & expand other town revenue sources
 - LOT is reliable, 'projectable' source of revenue
 - Can provide funding for voter-approved infrastructure projects
 - 1% levy added to State sales tax on retail sales, rooms, meals, & alcohol
 - 70% LOT to town, 30% to State for PILOT program
 - What would be exempt? Clothing, food, gas & diesel, retail electricity & heating fuel, OTC drugs, feminine hygiene products, ag products, motor vehicle purchases & rent, etc...
 - Software to setup for those with businesses not significant
 - Annual LOT estimated at \$939,961 (after State takes 30% cut)... town would receive LOT quarterly
 - LOT would help cover services (e.g., medical, police) provided to tourists
 - Gail: do any major budget expenditures include schooling? Don P: no just town portion of total tax bill
 - What would LOT be spent on? Infrastructure (rec/bike paths), capital equipment (trucks, computers), debt service, long-term investments, land conservation (open space)
 - Sean: Can LOT monies be set aside for future investments, or does it have to be spent within that year/immediately? Don P: If LOT not spent-through, can set aside for investments the subsequent year... community has control over it.
 - LOT charter amendment is voted on by town constituents
 - Gail: who makes the decisions for priorities of how LOT money spent? Don P: incorporated into town budget process
 - Mike: is there anything that will set priorities for LOT money as they stand now in stone so that they cannot be changed, if say, turnover in Select Board occurs? Don P: priorities right now are the policy for long term investments. Mike: what's to stop a SB 10 years from now to change the priorities? Don P: expenditures go to the ballot, constituents have right to reject these unfavorable measures.
 - Jim: is there any data from towns that have this tax that show growth in sectors that aren't necessarily part of a town's vision? Don P: most expenditures have gone towards bettering the community, e.g., refurbishing/upkeeping old buildings.
 - Jim: while the services created by the tax may not be directly pushing towards growth, certain consequences may be inevitable.
 - Gail: community engagement ought to be able to influence how LOT spent... Don P: LOT dedicated to certain capital improvement

- Mike: what services aren't being provided without LOT in place? Don P: currently capital improvements paid for by property tax (...this is why property taxes can be offset by LOT)
 - Don P: if capital improvement needs less than LOT, LOT money wouldn't be spent on other items... would be saved for next year
 - Sean: important to note, Shelburne residents almost always vote to pass capital improvement items. If LOT can reduce burden on property taxes paid by residents, that would be great.
 - Don R: has the town considered other revenue options? Don P: this is the easiest and most reliable route.
- Development Review 1 applications for Sept 21
 - Gail: notice of decision of project for storage units reflects changes that have occurred since this project first came about awhile back.
 - Appears that instead of storage for trucks, equipment, etc., as proposed two years ago, will instead be storage units instead.
 - Will be a one-step review... our comments must be in by next day (Sept 15)
 - Is adjacent to Munroe Brook.
 - Mike: Town owns ROW in between existing storage units and proposed storage units.
 - Don: this kind of undeveloped lot is a scenic resource. Sean: project will provide berms/screens to protect views. Gail: if we want to protect views, should ask that they plant more than just grass.
 - Assurance SNRCC wants: State Permit for stormwater is adhered to (that there is one, if there isn't); Munroe Brook's water quality is protected; scenic views from Shelburne Road protected.
 - Mike: Munroe Brook is identified impaired watershed... want to make sure project doesn't interfere with flow restoration efforts.
 - Mike makes motion to provide these comments/concerns to PC, Sean seconds (8-0)
- Update on meeting with Planning Commission
 - Skipping second meeting at end of this month. First meeting in October will deal with stormwater.
 - Gail: we should make sure to convey what priorities we have to continue to pass along to Adele. We must continue to show up at meetings and make ourselves heard.
- Add/edit/delete key list of SNRCC objectives
 - Sean: specify which of our maps: forest patch (new, not yet adopted) & habitat map for town plan (codified in town plan) to enforce
 - Gail: Lee only signed contract with Arrowood one week ago; so, they are behind and asking for extension of project until later in January.
 - Mike: Open Space & conservation fund moved to start of list. Add some main bullet points. What do we want to do with conservation? Increase funding amount? Conservation fund used to receive small amount of tax monies.
 - Gail: Make sure our definition of conservation defined clearly.
 - Sean: This has all been clearly defined in past Open Space plans of the past.
 - Don P: First, need to remind the public what the long-term goals actually are. Second, need to actually act upon those goals. Showcase what SNRCC has actually done with funding in the past.

- Gail: Typically use our funds to leverage larger donations from private organizations to pay for projects. Our funds have leveraged 5x the amount.
 - Don P: For example, if we didn't have funds, X project (highlight a conserved area) wouldn't exist and might be a development instead.
 - On review process (Gail & Don R): sounds like Adele is indicating we no longer need to submit an official Section 600 letter... but we still need to make sure that we submit SNRCC's comments on time to be heard *early in the process*
 - Jim W: One or more committee members should be heavily involved in the process of the bylaw re-write. For example, Shelburne's rules on wildlife in subdivisions minimal, yet a town like Norwich has much better language on protections in place. It is crucial that we are involved in crafting the updated language.
 - Gail: We need broader engagement from SNRCC and the community as well. If there are residents that are passionate about natural resources, they need to be involved in the process and make their voices heard (e.g., run for committee, commission positions).
 - Sean: Sounds as if PC doesn't want any regulatory ideas from us, just policy statements. But is the latter actually meaningful?
 - Jon: Can we get in writing from Adele what exactly she wants us to do? Chandler: How about we formally invite her to our next meeting to participate in a 15-30 minute dialogue.
- Discuss whether to express an opinion on the consolidated wastewater treatment plant plan
 - Sean: Aside from the cost, what option has the least impact on the environment?
 - Mike: Connecting the two plants involves piping regardless. Facility across from SCS discharges into McCabe Brook; facility off of Bay Road discharges directly into the lake.
 - Don P: Been working with Chris on this project for past four years. Biggest hurdle is cost.
 - Updates/New Business
 - Gail away Sept 15-19, Oct 5-11; Don R gone until Oct19, i.e., missing our next meeting.
 - Push October meeting until Wednesday, October 19.
 - Mike will go over signage for October meetings.
 - Adjourn – completion of discussion
 - Sean moves, Mike seconds (8-0).