

**TOWN OF WHEELOCK
PUBLIC HEARING AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2019
REGARDING
ARTICLE 22 AND ARTICLE 23 BOND VOTE
MINUTES**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Selectboard Chairperson Jason DiGiulio. The Law requires that any bond vote that comes before the town needs to have an informational meeting. This is the informational meeting regarding the two bond votes which will come to us at town meeting. The Town Hall Bond is Article 22 and the Burrington Property is Article 23. Jason DiGiulio said that neither of these two Bonds came from the Board.

Present: Wheelock Selectboard members, Jason DiGiulio and Ann Lawless, member Dennis Sawyer is not present. Lucia Dente, Administrative Assistant. Citizens; Carol Rossi, Gaylon Smith, Diana Kadamus, Cary Hunter, James Mitchell, Chris DiGiulio, Linda Rhodes, Zac Hunter, Arthur Hunter, Teresa Hunter, Ryan Hanrahan, Patrick Hunter and Kathleen Hunter.

Jason asked if there is anyone speaking for the Town Hall Project. Carol Rossi, citizen said that she is the one who submitted the Petition which is known as Article 22 Bond Vote. She said that if we are going to stay in this building, for any reason, there are requirements that we have to meet. One being public safety requirements.

Jason asked if there is anyone speaking for the Burrington Property. Before we continue Jason wanted everyone to know that there are two kinds of consensus in town that the vote is one or the other. Understand that is not the case. One can pass, one can fail and both can pass or fail. Citizen Diana Kadamus spoke about Article 23 the Burrington Property. She spoke about the Town Hall meeting on February 20, 2019. She said the deal can be done the same day. Experts said the building is half in and half out of the floodplain. It seems like the garage is the biggest issue and if we purchase this property, we can close the deal and go in and move the trucks the same day. Question was asked about how big the property was and it is 29 acres.

Ann Lawless, Wheelock Selectboard member said that "On February 20 at 11:00 am we met here at Town Hall " with representatives from the Federal Army Corps of Engineers, State flood experts and the Wheelock Selectboard to discuss the Burrington property (698 Rte 122). (A proposal to purchase this property is the subject of the public hearing on February 25 and one of the bond votes, Article 23, on Town Meeting day). After first meeting at Town Hall, the group visited the property. Miss Amy Nixon from the Caledonia-Record was also in attendance and she put an article in the Caledonia-Record regarding the meeting on the morning of February 20th. (See attached) A copy was on the table. Carol Rossi is concerned about the safety problems. Is it insured? We are not a member of the Flood insurance program. A statement was made by a citizen that the building has radiant heat. Carol Rossi said that Mrs.

Burrington said that there is only some radiant heat. The building is assessed for \$212,300 and has 29 acres.

At 11:54 am, most of the group went to the site. Mike Burrington noted from what could be seen in very deep snow, that he didn't think he had concerns. Sacha Pealer (a floodplain manager from the "Agency of Natural Resources") said the property is within the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA's) flood hazard area. Wetlands or not, it looks like there is an issue with flooding. A berm is likely to collapse because of pushing from the horseshoe shape of the turn in the river. She recommended that all investments be made as far away from the river as possible. The FEMA map from the 1970s could be clarified with an engineer's work. It takes about a month for FEMA to issue a correction. The group also walked up to examine the bridge on Rte. 122. It looks to be in good condition. Mike Adams, Senior Project Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, pointed out that VTrans is not replacing bridges where there is not currently a problem. Because of the bridge's angle relative to the stream, there is constriction that could cause the river to spread into the floodplain. The issue will be allowing the river to flood as much as it needs. Julie Follensbee, Wetlands Program VT ANR Dept. of Environmental Conservation, gave us this pamphlet regarding Landowner's Guide to Wetlands which is also on the table. Julie noted dogwood and alder on the side of the property away from the river – species that often grow in wetlands. She said she could not say for sure whether it is a wetland because of all the snow.

Sasha Pealer also noted that if Wheelock were in NFIP, we could possibly get grant funding to relocate the current garage. She offered to return when we get Patrick Ross to come visit to determine if we need a stream alteration permit. Julie Follensbee offered to return after snowmelt to determine if there is a wetland.

Ann Lawless presented DRAFT Minutes of the February 20th meeting and walk through of the Burrington Property. One person did not make it and that was Patrick Ross, P.E. Rivers Program.

Jason DiGiulio said that Patrick Ross, P.E. did email today and he said one of the concerns is the flooding consideration. He said "given the flooding potential and the berm consideration to protect this property – an alternative analysis and engineering evaluation will need to be done.

Regarding Article 23 – Town Hall Building. Carol Rossi stated that we need a facility that is handicap accessible that meets all the safety requirements. She feels that this plan would do it. We can have our meetings at The Miller's Run School but we still need a polling place in Wheelock. We are paying as much for garbage as she is asking for this building. The taxes on \$100,000 property will go up. \$.47 per week. A property worth \$150,000 would cost \$.70 per week and \$200,000 \$.94 per week. Carol Rossi thanked everyone for coming. Ann Lawless stated that the building is on the State's Historic Register.

Ann Lawless spoke about Paul Costello, VT Council on Rural development, who was at our last Board meeting and spoke about the various work that his organization can do to help town's

like Wheelock come up with a plan of action on some of these issues at no cost to the Town of Wheelock. The Wheelock Selectboard voted unanimously to work with them.

Jason DiGiulio summed it up that we have a building that is non-compliant. We have 2 proposals, Article 22 for \$800,000 for Town Hall building repairs and renovations. Article 23, purchasing the Burrington property on Rte 122 for \$212,300.

Adjournment: Jason DiGiulio thanked everyone for coming. It was a very organized meeting. He said to please vote on March 5, 2019. There will be two Australian Ballots.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm by Jason DiGiulio, Wheelock Selectboard Chairperson.
