



Town of Mount Holly Planning Commission

Town Office & Remote Electronic – Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 16, 2022

7:00 P.M.

Commission Members Present: Jon McCann (Chair), Jim Seward, Andrew Seward, Brigid Sullivan, Andrew Schulz

Also Present: Renee Sarmento (Clerk), Stephen Michel, Donna Seward, Marianne McGee

1. Jon McCann called the meeting to order at 7:01pm
2. Changes to agenda
 - a. Fowler Brook Road follow-up from Andrew Seward added to New Business
3. Approval of minutes
 - a. The minutes from February 16th, 2022 regular meeting were edited to change the approval date and then approved as edited.
 - b. March 2nd, 2022 special meeting minutes were approved as distributed.
4. Reports & Announcements
 - a. Administrative Officer
 - i. Three Building Construction Registration forms received and reviewed
 - b. Planning Commission Clerk: None
 - c. Planning Commission Chair:
 - i. Chair distributed a blurb about the Crown Point Road from Dennis Devereaux for our consideration for the Town Plan.
 - ii. Chair distributed detailed information received from the Rescue Squad in response to our request
 1. Commissioner Sullivan stated the letter did a good job documenting the problems, but it did not seem to go into detail about what was needed or identify solutions. The Chair wondered if there is reluctance to suggest expensive changes are needed. The Chair suggests we wait until we have a response from the Fire Department and consider getting the two groups together to identify more definitive needs.
 2. Discussion around difficulty of recruitment and new volunteers. Training is unpaid.
 - iii. Chair reviewed the status of the Municipal Planning Grant the town was awarded last fall. The public involvement and steering committee will both involve Fire and Rescue. Requests are out for contractors.
 - iv. Chair shared an update that the ARPA funds the town already has can now be used for both Federal and State grant match. This could allow the Town to seek grants for which the match requirement was too costly in the past. Such a use would allow the Town to leverage the existing funds and increase the benefit perhaps 10-fold, should the Select Board choose. Commissioner Andrew Seward mentioned that it would be better not to use the ARPA funds directly on things that could be covered by grants.
 - v. Chair gave a brief update from the last Select Board meeting. They are considering forming a Development Review Board instead of a Board of

Adjustment. Noted that such a change would require rewriting our land use ordinances.

5. Correspondence
 - a. Subdivision proposals: None
 - b. Building Construction Registrations:
 - i. Preister/Gilchrist, 2355 Belmont Road, new construction (garage)
 - ii. Siegardner, 4623 Route 155, new construction (wood frame, 6-bedroom, 4 bath), new water source (well)
 - iii. Bowditch, 164 Dodge Road, new construction (addition - single room attached to existing house)
 - c. Wastewater system and potable water supply permits: Mr. Porter's permit.
 - d. Email / Other: None
6. Unfinished business
7. New business
 - a. Fowler Brook Road follow-up
 - i. Commissioner Andrew Seward reported on his investigation into the status of Fowler Brook Road. He found that in the 1970's the town gave up 1250 feet more or less of road at the end of Fowler Brook Road (likely connecting to Carrara Camp Rd). There is officially 0.7 miles of public road on Fowler Brook Road from Route 155. The Chair added that measurement by GIS from 155 to the first building is 0.636 miles. This suggests the public road, by measure, extends past the first buildings by some margin and means that the gate is certainly across a public road.
8. Public comments: Stephen Michel complimented Annette on the inventories report she put together with the Conservation Commission. He offered a suggestion that he found some of the terminology/abbreviations difficult to follow and it would be good to define them next time.
9. Upcoming meetings
 - a. Special working meeting (Housing): April 6th, 2022 at 7pm
 - b. Regular meeting: April 20th, 2022 at 7pm
10. The meeting adjourned at 7:35pm

For the Commission,
Renee Sarmiento, Planning Commission Clerk
In draft form until approved on April 20th, 2022

Facilities

a) The rescue station is located on School Street and holds to relatively small ambulance bays, a kitchen and bathroom/ boiler room on the main level and a very small office and a small additional workspace on the second floor.

b) No additional facilities

c) The station has had routine maintenance over the last 10 years as issues have happened. Overall, it is in okay shape. In the winter of 2021 the electric pole for the building fell off due to ice and structural rot. In the process it left a large hole, showing that there are some rot issues with the roof and exterior walls. We have worked to correct this issue with contractors as much as possible without full reconstruction. We have replaced the windows on the main floor as they were rotted out. The ambulance bays are not sized appropriately for modern ambulances. The bay on the right is unusable in its current capacity due to interior dimensional constraints, without opening the exterior bay door. The bay on the left only allows for a small clearance between the wall and the rear of the ambulance, you are forced to climb over the rear bumper of the ambulance to reach the rest of the building. The ambulance has struck the side of the building during parking, this has happened both with the new ambulance and with the two previous ones. This is due to the entry angle into the bay required to make the ambulance fit, left and right clearance between the door frame is minimal. There is no replacement/ upgrade plan, we are just making do with what we have.

d) At this time we are using metal storage cabinets to organize the supplies for the squad, while this does work it is not effective and it is difficult to make all the necessary supplies fit in the available space. Due to the environment of the current building, the bottoms of these metal cabinets are rusting away. We do not have a dedicated space for training, training takes place in the ambulance bay if we need to use more space the ambulance is moved outside for the training time. There is no dedicated space for members to complete reports, which impacts the ability to complete state 911 reports in a timely fashion.

2) Equipment

At The current ambulance is 6 years old, it has approximately 40,000 miles. We have been able to maintain its operation at an acceptable level through regular in house and contracted maintained. The ambulance is capable of providing BLS and ALS service. We hope to continue to use this ambulance for the foreseeable future. Our last ambulances on average have lasted 10 years, we are looking to have the same goal for this one.

b) The ambulance is now required by state law to have a specific locking system for the stretcher in the back; this necessitated the purchase of the Stryker load system that cost \$24,000 in 2020. We also have a Lucas device that is a mechanical compression device used during CPR. This piece of equipment costs \$15,000 and was purchased in 2017. We also have a Life Pak 15 that was purchased in 2016, the Life Pak 15 costs \$27,000. Prior to the new ambulance we had purchased the Stryker Power stretcher in 2013, this cost \$14,000.

3) Personnel

a) Currently we have 1 uncertified member, 1 EMR, 4 EMTs, 4 AEMTs for a total of 10 active members. A 911 call response requires one EMT/ AEMT and either a second licensed provider or a driver who is CPR/AED certified, in accordance with state protocol. It is always better to have two licensed providers but that is not always possible. Mount Holly Fire has been instrumental in assisting us with responding to 911 calls due to the nature of a volunteer rescue agency, and the limited number of members available for calls at any given time. With only 10 active members that is not enough to be fully staffed at all times. We all have jobs that require us to be unavailable for portions of the day as well as having family responsibilities.

b) Without a concerted effort to add new members, our numbers will continue to decline. We have 4 members who are between 20 and 40 the remaining members are all over the age of 40. EMS is not something you can do forever, it is mentally and physically demanding with a very high turnover and burnout rate.

c) We have regularly advertised the need for new members in the chitchat, on Facebook and during our update to the select board. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic our members have not had the capacity to engage in active recruitment while providing quality emergency medical services, certification maintenance and training, while simultaneously maintaining careers and families. We hope to increase our recruitment efforts again soon.

4) Mount Holly Rescue has been providing EMS services to the town of Mount Holly for nearly 50 years. This is not an easy feat, as you most likely noted above there is a high cost to the equipment needed to provide the care our community members deserve. While all of this equipment is necessary for us to provide these services there is a significant educational component for each level of licensure. The Emergency Medical Responder course is 60 hours, to obtain an EMT license the course is 120 hours, the Advanced EMT Course is an additional 350 hours on top of the EMT course. There is also a national testing requirement for all levels of EMS providers, in addition to the classroom educational portion and clinical practical requirements. In addition to the initial licensure requirements, the medical field requires continuing education to maintain our certifications and adherence to the prevailing best practices set forth by the national registry and state physicians. This is required just to provide the EMS service to the community. We then have members who have additional responsibilities for billing, supplies and keeping Mount Holly Rescue operating. On any given day you are likely to find one of our members either at home or at the building working on paperwork, training or plans for Rescue.

THE CROWN POINT ROAD IN MOUNT HOLLY

During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), soldiers travelled from several British colonies to defend the fort at Crown Point, New York. Fort No. 4 in Charlestown, New Hampshire became one of the mustering points to move soldiers and supplies. The need for a passable road from Fort No. 4 led to an order from British General Jeffery Amherst to rough out a trail through the New Hampshire Grants in the fall of 1759, to be completed the following year.

This early Crown Point Military Road, about 78 miles long, entered what later became Mount Holly in an area now known as Buttermilk Falls and continued northwest, following close to the Shunpike Road of today through Hortonville Four Corners, and into Shrewsbury. The Twenty-eight Mile Encampment was established a short distance north of the falls in our town.

Prior to 1776 the section of the road between the towns of Cavendish and Shrewsbury was relocated farther north. The new trail crossed through the Dix Hill area of Ludlow into the Town of Plymouth, entered Mount Holly near Lake Ninevah, and continued south of Proctor Hill. Not far to the west the soldiers camped at what was known as the Halfway Encampment beyond the end of what we now call Perry Road. From here the road headed west and rejoined the original 1759 road near the Shrewsbury town line.

In 1777 after the last major Revolutionary War campaign in the Champlain region, soldiers traveled home on the Crown Point Road, and it later provided a trail when early settlers were coming into Vermont in the 1780s. About this time a turnpike route was surveyed on the south side of Buttermilk Falls and its Black River tributary. Settlers were already moving into the west side of Ludlow Mountain which became part of the new Town of Mount Holly in 1792.

By Mount Holly historian and long-time Crown Point Road Association member Dennis Devereux.