

November 27, 2017 7:00PM Selectmen's Meeting

Present: Don Chabon, Chuck Cardillo, Terry Flynn, Danielle Fillio

Don welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Don announced that the Town Offices have a new phone system. Danielle added that it is basically the same system and that within a few days all voice mails should be set up.

First on the agenda were the Stockbridge members of the Berkshire Hills Regional School Committee with updates. The three Stockbridge representatives introduced themselves: Jason St. Peter, Dan Weston and Sean Stephen.

Dan Weston stated that he had a conflict of interest as he works for Southern Berkshire and therefore cannot discuss the consolidation of services.

Jason St. Peter said that as long as he had been on the committee, the committee as a whole has been outspoken that they are open to any possible mergers and have an actual subcommittee. They sent out feelers and met with Lee with a lukewarm response. The Superintendent is now the Superintendent with Shaker Mountain. Most recently the subcommittee met with South Berkshire to discuss shared services. They are open to any type of merger, but as much as they want to grow, it takes another town to reciprocate.

Mr. Weston said that they share their Superintendent and have contracts with Richmond and Farmington River as well as school choice students.

Jason said that Monument Mountain High School has reached 50 years old and has reached its lifespan and something needs to be done at this point. What this will be is up in the air. They are forming a committee to discuss the options and make decisions. Don asked about a time frame and they are looking at a year. Terry said that with the conversations on mergers, this would be a key question before moving forward on building size. Jason said that they are currently moving on both of these things on parallel tracks.

The Town just received a letter that they are looking for representatives from the Select Board and Finance Board, and three citizens of Stockbridge. In addition to those nine they are looking for three more individuals. Anyone interested should apply to the Superintendent's Office and they will be picked by the school committee.

Terry commended the school committee from withdrawing for one school district for the entire county idea and pursuing what they are now. He felt that one school would have been disastrous.

Jason said that differently from when the district began, currently all three Towns vote on the school committee members, no matter which Town they are from.

Chuck questioned the low reading scores recently reported in the newspaper and Dan said that it was seriously discussed and will be again. He continued that the State test is a single test, a new test and he felt that some of the reporting was inaccurate but that we do need to have better performance.

Ginger Schwartz, 22 Main Street, asked if the building presents a deadline; a point it will be uninhabitable, and Jason said that at this point it did not. It is less than ideal but there are always risks.

Christine Rasmussen, 3 Sergeant Street, mentioned the cost of transportation for the district according to the report by the State auditor and asked if there was movement in this area. Mr. Weston said that the cost did have about a 40% increase and the State pays approximately 70% of regular transportation cost, not special education transportation, because we are a regional district. He said that this is a tough fight but is what it is for right now.

Don thanked the School Board members for participating. Terry also shared his view on removing the standardized testing from the districts all together; as parents are now opting out their children from the testing and this affects the rating based on participation. Dan said that we are rated a level 3 based on population. He said that they are attempting to get School Committee Associations on this.

Next on the agenda involved a request of 37 Interlaken Developers, also known as DeSisto to appear before the Board. He continued that there is no official application from them and this is specifically about the agenda; not about the pros and cons or merits of the proposals. About a year ago they appeared with a sketch plan review. They have appeared in front of other committees and boards recently. He said the question before the board is if they grant the request and if so how, and in light of the information, how to proceed.

Don asked that the representatives from 37 Interlaken to come forward and explain why they are asking to come before the board. Rob Akroyd from Greylock Design came forward as the representative for 37 Interlaken for that evening. He stated that their intention and hope was to come again before the board; they have amended their plans slightly and have begun the process of a bylaw reviews. He said that it is an informal presentation and would like to come before them with updates.

Don stated that according to their literature, there was intention to propose changes to the bylaws. Mr. Akroyd said they would bring the Board up to speed with their thoughts are on the proposed changes to the bylaws. Don thanked him and asked for discussion.

Don asked for them to provide the Board with written information to review before they bring them in for discussion. Don would like specifics pertaining to \$2 million. He would like more detailed explanations on the jobs and employment.

Stuart Hirschfield, 6 Meadow Road, asked if there is going to be a submission in writing to the Board if it would be provided ahead to the public and it was confirmed.

Jim Balfanz, 4 Interlaken Road, asked all three Selectmen if they had visited any of their presentations and all three responded that they had not. Jim's comment was that it seemed that a meeting might accomplish more than what might be presented in writing.

Terry said that he wanted to maintain a detached status and maintain his position of objectivity and did not want to feel pressured to hear information. They are just requesting information to review and to not be rushed.

Jim did not feel that it was rushing but the more information they can get on something, the better the decision they will make when that time arrives. He felt it was reasonable to request a meeting to update the board.

Don said that they will receive and review the information and have a meeting.

Patrick White, Hawthorne Street, asked if they had a time line. Chuck said that currently they could not comment on a time line. Patrick suggested they have an economic impact study for the community; to do an independent study on the project, to look at the possible upsides and downsides of this project for the Town. Don said that this will all be fully explored and everyone will have the opportunity to be heard and all perspectives explored; this is just the beginning.

Terry added that this is a process and looking to the future of Stockbridge the Planning Board has embraced this process and formed the Zoning Review Committee but this process will not happen overnight.

With no further business Don made a motion to adjourn; Terry seconded. All were in favor.