



TOWN OF BROOKLYN

P.O. Box 356 - Route 6 and 169
BROOKLYN, CONNECTICUT 06234

OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
(860) 779-3411 Option 2

TOWN CLERK
(860) 779-3411 Option 4

TAX COLLECTOR
(860) 779-3411 Option 5

ASSESSOR
(860) 779-3411 Option 6

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 9, 2023, 6:30 pm
Clifford B. Green Memorial Building
and via Zoom

Present: Austin Tanner, Lou Brodeur, Joe Voccio, Lisa Mileski, Recording Secretary

Also Present: Carrie Barna, Galliehue Blevins, Sandy Brodeur, Steve Fiedler, Mary Kalencik, Chris Maxim, Kyle Morrissey, Jenn Nemeth, Matt Nemeth, Matt Noren, Jean Pothier, Richard Pothier, Jessica Solis, Linda Trahan, Amy Turner, Kathy Williamson, Other members of the public

Via Zoom: Heather Allen, Sarah Bouchard, Steve Breen, Jason Burgess, Shelley Cates, Kimberly Day, Allen Fitzgerald, Maria Gandy-Winslow, A. Genna, Ryan Graham, Stephanie Grocki-Hynes, Richard Ives, Carrie Juhasz, Jessica King, Sharon Loughlin, Audrey Lussier, Melisa Moone, Kerri O'Neill, Sara Phelps, Michael Podzaline, Frankie Ruiz, Brian Simmons, Lori Claudi Soffel, Mike Snyder, K. Vilaysone, Diane Wimmer, WINY, Troy Wood, Other members of the public

1. Call to Order: A. Tanner called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

2. Approve Meeting Minutes of October 26, 2023: L. Brodeur made a motion to approve the minutes of October 26, 2023; J. Voccio seconded the motion; and the minutes of October 26, 2023 were approved.

3. Public Comment: Several individuals, both online and in person, made comments about the lawsuit involving the Town and the Ice Box and Jenn and Matt Nemeth. There were also typed messages from people online.

4. New Business

a. Fire Lane: A. Tanner said the State passed a statute years ago that Towns could make their own fire ordinances, and the Town of Brooklyn never did it, so we are trying to form a fire lane ordinance. J. Voccio stated he would like more time to review. L. Brodeur made a motion to table this to the next meeting; J. Voccio seconded; and the motion passed.

b. Beta Group: A. Tanner stated that this is a group that we hired to survey our roads; that he met with the representative last week and let him know that the Town received the STEAP Grant for Church Street, so he will come up with a plan for other roads, and they will meet again in the near future.

5. Old Business

a. JMN/Fire District Lawsuit: A. Tanner read a statement that he prepared and commented that he has a responsibility to all taxpayers. J. Voccio made a motion that the Board go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting to further discuss the lawsuit; L. Brodeur seconded; and the motion was passed. J. Voccio discussed the importance of having insurance, a Town meeting, and the process and steps that need to be followed, etc.

6. Review Single Family Dwellings Report: The report was acknowledged by the Board.

7. Discussion on Financials: L. Brodeur had a question about the assistant assessor's wages, which is overbudget because the position was switched from full-time to part-time. L. Brodeur also questioned why the Fire Marshall is overbudget on

overtime, and A. Tanner will check on this. He also questioned why there was an encumbrance on Rukstela Road building repairs of \$4,000.00, and A. Tanner will check on this as well.

8. Approve Bills:

-L. Brodeur made a motion to approve Voucher #1263 dated November 9, 2023 in the amount of \$14,196.00; J. Voccio seconded and asked if the \$14,000.00 payment was for the gate; and the motion passed.

-L. Brodeur made a motion to approve Voucher #1264 dated November 9, 2023 in the amount of \$61,172.36; J. Voccio seconded; and the motion passed.

-L. Brodeur made a motion to approve Voucher #1265 dated November 9, 2023 in the amount of \$292.91; J. Voccio seconded; and the motion passed.

-L. Brodeur made a motion to approve Voucher #1267 dated November 9, 2023 in the amount of \$82.66; J. Voccio seconded; and the motion passed.

-A. Tanner made a motion to approve Voucher #1272 dated November 9, 2023 in the amount of \$1,645.83; J. Voccio seconded; and the motion passed.

9. Other Business: J. Voccio stated that the Housing Authority has received correspondence from Habitat for Humanity looking for suitable sites to purchase or acquire either land or homes in need of renovations to house homeowners that are looking to employ some sweat equity to help build their own home and the Board briefly discussed this. A. Tanner mentioned that Saturday, November 11, 2023, was the Veterans Day Ceremony at the monument, as was the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day at the Woodstock Town Hall.

10. Public Comment: Several individuals, both online and in person, made comments about the lawsuit involving the Town and the Ice Box and Jenn and Matt Nemeth. There were also typed messages from people online.

11. Executive Session: J. Voccio made a motion for the Board to go into Executive Session; L. Brodeur seconded; and the Board went into Executive Session at 8:03 pm with Sandy Brodeur, Ray Preece, and Lisa Mileski present. L. Brodeur made a motion to come out of Executive Session; J. Voccio seconded; and the Board came out of Executive Session at 8:44 pm.

11. Adjourn: J. Voccio made a motion to adjourn the meeting; L. Brodeur seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Mileski, Recording Secretary

Kathy

Oct 13 demand

I Have listened to The concerns of our citizens and acknowledge The urgency of our situation with The TMM enterprises

I have had conversations with both our attorneys and our Insurance company and expressed our Hopes That we could get all parties Together and Desires a Settlement. They Have assured me That it would be possible but ^{NOT} until They Have Had Time To assess The recent Demand That They Have received ¹¹⁻²³. I realize This won't make a lot of The Supporters Happy But we must realize That we also have to assure That ~~use~~ The Town is responsible in its actions and duly address all aspects of The Suit

Doug - overtime
Rubstella Rd encumbrance \$400
Fancy four day over.

Housing Authority -
future Agenda - Habitat looking for Land - Homer
Nov 16 2021 Appearance by Ins.
Carriso - More Apt To Solve other Law suits

00:04:19 RG: can people from out of town speak?
00:06:01 Sharon Loughlin: Replying to "can people from out ..."

This is not a public hearing, but it can't hurt to identify yourself and ask.

00:10:35 Mike Snyder: I also want to put on the record my grave concern for the way this town is handling the situation with Ice Box and Suto. Frankly, it's mind-blowing that this is still going on years after the initial lawsuit was filed. It's the obligation of the Board of Selectmen to resolve this situation immediately, rather than continuing to purposely and strategically drag this out with the intent to bleed the Nemeth family dry.

00:17:34 Brian Simmons: Did they say how much the Icebox is looking for with this law suit?

00:18:10 Mike Snyder: I believe that is still privileged information between the attorneys

00:19:01 Brian Simmons: It would be nice to have this information

00:20:27 RG: if your mic isn't muted everyone can hear you...especially if you're cursing...just FYI

00:20:51 Stephanie Grocki Hynes: I wasn't aware until recently that the other businesses were also involved. Perhaps the EBFD should not be located where it is or do as the other commenter stated about using the 19acre parcel for alternate entrance/exit routes

00:20:52 RG: can

00:21:08 RG: can't discuss it but your tax dollars are paying for it

00:23:04 Brian Simmons: So how much more will this cost me on my taxes

00:23:34 Mike Snyder: The town is clearly dragging their feet on purpose to sink the Nemeth family...they should be ashamed

00:26:06 Mike Snyder: The attorney works for the BOS and the town...not the other way around. Blaming the attorney is such poor leadership.

00:27:46 RG: Reacted to "The attorney works f..." with 👍

00:28:30 Kimberly Day: Reacted to "The attorney works f..." with 👍

00:28:33 RG: Replying to "The town is clearly ..."

why would they want to sink a small business in their small town, I don't get it
00:28:39 Melisa Moone: Austin, when are you going to make John Berard and Doug Kramer do their job? My family could have died due to their neglect and now it's been over a year since you brushed this under the rug! Still issues! So what else we are not as rich or in your class we are allowed to live in shambles?

00:30:47 Mike Snyder: I think it's worth pointing out that if this goes to trial (meaning the town doesn't enter good faith negotiations with the Nemeth on a settlement), it's going to cost the town a LOT more money. It's a disservice to the taxpayers in this community if this goes to trial.

00:31:41 RG: small town destroying jobs, not smart. ZERO small businesses will now want to come into town. CONGRATS BROOKLYN!

00:32:54 Kathryn Galvin: Reacted to "I think it's worth p..." with 👍

00:32:57 Kim's iPhone: Austin said his door is open to the. He can't discuss it.

00:33:14 Kim's iPhone: Which is it? His door is open or he can't discuss it?

00:33:32 RG: Reacted to "I think it's worth p..." with 👍

00:33:35 Sara Phelps: As a previous employee of the Ice Box, I BEG you to

please make this family whole again. Their businesses are a foundation of the Brooklyn community.

00:34:07 RG: I'd love to hear the governor's thoughts on a town in Windham county basically destroying a small business. he LOVES small business

00:34:16 Kim's iPhone: Speaks volumes about you again

00:34:51 RG: Reacted to "Speaks volumes about..." with 😊

00:35:46 Melisa Moone: I am a resident in the town of Brooklyn why are you blowing me off? Why?

00:36:06 Melisa Moone: No its not

00:36:11 Melisa Moone: He is blowing me off

00:36:15 Melisa Moone: Me too i wanna know

00:36:25 Melisa Moone: Stop blowing certain people off that is so bias

00:36:28 Melisa Moone: No its not

00:36:30 Melisa Moone: He lies

00:38:27 RG: FIRST SELECTMAN

Candidate Votes %

Tanner (R) 925

61.18%

Ives (D) 587

38.82%

00:38:42 Melisa Moone: Thats right thats why i share

00:39:03 RG: pssst...FIRST SELECTMAN

Candidate Votes and %

Tanner (R) 925

61.18%

Ives (D) 587

38.82%

00:40:46 Melisa Moone: No answer Austin?

00:40:49 Melisa Moone: Ok i will c

00:41:01 Kim's iPhone: No

00:42:57 Kim's iPhone: Reacted to "Speaks volumes about..." with 😊

00:42:59 Kim's iPhone: Removed a 😊 reaction from "Speaks volumes about..."

00:43:07 Kim's iPhone: Reacted to "Speaks volumes about..." with 😊

00:43:08 Kim's iPhone: Removed a 😊 reaction from "Speaks volumes about..."

00:43:13 Kathryn Galvin: So disheartened by this situation. Beyond the damage done to the Nemeth family brought irresponsibly by the town, and their businesses, why would any business want to come to Brooklyn. This damage goes far beyond today. This needs to be settled immediately. We need to make this right.

00:44:19 RG: hmmm what perfect timing 😊

00:46:55 carrie juhasz: this is the letter that I read onto the public record

00:47:07 Melisa Moone: Fire and housing code business is more important than roads buddy

00:47:50 RG: so i'm confused, they did make a demand letter?

00:48:12 RG: MUTE YOUR MICS

00:48:37 Melisa Moone: Fire and housing code business is more important than roads buddy

00:52:07 Brian Simmons: Replying to "MUTE YOUR MICS"

sounds like it has but due to litigation Austin cannot talk about it

00:53:43 RG: I don't care how you figure it out, this whole thing shouldn't have happened in the first place!

00:54:19 Mike Snyder: It's in the insurance company's best interest to enter good faith negotiations sooner rather than later.

00:57:57 Sharon Loughlin: Whoever is running the zoom meeting is able to mute all participants.

01:06:44 RG: Whomever is in charge for the town (BOS, insurance atty, etc) needs to HURRY up and pay out before this business is FORCED to close.

01:07:47 RG: That's right, the town can do this to ANYONE. These are your elected officials. They are suppose to perform the will of the townspeople.

01:08:18 Melisa Moone: Reacted to "That's right, the to..." with ♥

01:14:21 RG: ya, why isn't the lawyer at the meeting?

01:26:03 RG: right, let the towns people decide

01:28:51: I would love to know why he is being so rude to the people who ELECTED HIM!

01:31:13: You are working for these people and you are letting every single resident of the town of Brooklyn down. you should be ashamed of yourself. instead of telling people to not let it get to them,

01:31:55 Brian Simmons: you need to turn us off

01:31:55: you should let it get to you. you are destroying your community and a families life because you do not want to take accountability and end things even though you CAN do that. PUT A STOP TO THIS!

01:32:23: THE LEADERS OF BROOKLYN SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF THEMSELVES!

01:33:04 Brian Simmons: good night guys



We build strength, stability,
self-reliance and shelter.

October 13, 2023

Hello Austin Tanner,

As you know, many Connecticut residents are struggling to afford the cost of home. Many renters face having to choose between paying for housing or for food, medical care or other essential expenses. Aspiring homebuyers are increasingly priced out of the housing market, setting back efforts to close homeownership gaps for households in need.

Habitat believes that "affordable homeownership", where no more than 30% of the monthly gross household income is spent on housing, is the answer to the housing crisis. Habitat's mortgages come with lower down payments; actually, in many cases our loans are \$0 down with 0% interest. Once the barriers are removed, the homeownership model quickly gains momentum.

The benefits of homeownership extend beyond just the family. Habitat families contribute to their local tax base, which helps fund and strengthen infrastructure improvements, local public education, and public institutions. In 2020, Habitat homeowners in eastern Connecticut paid \$100,526 in local and state taxes and \$103,722 in property taxes. In addition, our work supports local contractors and businesses, injecting \$1.55 into the economy for every dollar we invest.

Our biggest project to date, an FHLB, CHFA and ARPA-funded neighborhood in the Greenville section of Norwich, will be complete by the holidays. Seven families have already moved in, and 3 more are on the way. By the end of 2024, where there was once a burnt structure or a few acres of abandoned property 13 new homes will stand, each adding a new family to the Norwich community, schools, and work force.

The derelict property model is a win-win. It increases the quantity of affordable addresses within a municipality, as well as the options for currently stressed renters. Anything is possible, whether there's space for single- or multi-family homes, renovations or restorations...or even a new neighborhood. It's not as hard as it sounds, but it requires collaboration between community partners.

I'm writing to ask you and your team to think about such pieces of land. An eyesore or attractive nuisance could very well be a dream home for a family who needs and deserves a chance at decent shelter. Please consider any unoccupied plots around town, and if you find something interesting, please call me. We will look at every possibility to bring more homes to at-risk families in eastern Connecticut.

In Partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah H. Lufler".

Sarah H. Lufler

Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut

Thank you, Austin!

September 14, 2021

William Weaver, Sr.
District President
Brooklyn Fire District

Dear Mr. Weaver:

Many thanks to you and Pat for coming in to talk to me. It is good to meet the people who are responsible for operations in our town. As I discussed with you, I have always been involved in how the Fire District is functioning and it's relationship with the East Brooklyn Fire Co. I feel I at least have a basic understanding now.

In another note, we discussed the status of the fire lane. I am disappointed that the former First Selection conveyed to you that we had no stake in this and advised to you it was a civil matter. We have clear policy in our Town Ordinances addressing this issue (a copy is enclosed). The Town under this ordinance could, and will be willing to do now, enforce this ordinance to the fullest extent. I hope this is helpful and I would be willing to have further discussions if needed. Finally, on a drive-by I noticed there are already "No Parking Fire Lane" signs on the Route 6 side of No. Main St. I will also check on the regulations to allow a sign for the fire company, not just a picture sign as is presently there.

If I can be of any further assistance, let me know.

Atty. My. Beth

Austin Tanner
First Selection
Town of Brooklyn

Atty. My.

Cl. Pat Gauthier