

Selectmen's minutes of meeting July 15, 2019

Members present: Mark Newman, Brian O'Rourke, George Riley, Dolores Harasyko, Admin. Asst.

Called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Mark opened the Special Permit Hearing for the SARC regarding their sign. Legal notice was placed in the Berkshire Record and abutters notices sent out by registered mail. Brian reviewed the sign bylaws. The issues with the sign they currently have are:

It is attached to the guardrail

It is larger than the bylaw allows

It does not meet the setback requirements

Residents have complained about the sightline

Direct abutter Keith Larson said it is right next to his driveway and blocks the sight of on coming traffic. It is a dangerous situation.

Val Coleman reviewed his history with SARC and his involvement in placing the signs.

Hilde Weisert explained that they have always attached the sign to the guardrail because it is all ledge and cannot stand alone. She explained the position is necessary for visibility.

Brian responded that they could indeed put posts in the ledge by drilling or lagging to the ledge.

Val Coleman said he put a sign up with movable letters about 15 years ago and that they have it connected to the guardrail. Brian explained that by states standards they cannot attach it to the guardrail. He went on to explain that no one has an issue with the arts center, the issue is with the size of the sign and the fact that it is attached to the guardrail. The guardrail is within the town's right of way and does not belong to the SARC. There are bylaws in place to address this issue.

John Skrip wants it to pass, he stated that there are many signs in town that don't include the posts and frames in the size of the sign. He has driven by the SARC sign many times and in his opinion the sight lines are fine.

Jean Atwater Williams suggested a possible compromise with relocating the sign.

Susie Crofut has also reviewed the sight lines and doesn't see any problem.

Bogart Muller feels the sign is crucial to finding the art center.

Kathy Burrows would like a compromise regarding size and location.

Brian asked Keith about the placement of the sign. Keith would not have a problem if they move it back a bit.

Larry Dwyer feels the arts center is important to the town but he would also like to see a compromise.

Barbara Cormier supports the SARC but wants the bylaws to be followed.

Steve Kopiec feels the bylaw is gray and needs clarification.

Brian reiterated that the placement is an issue. The town and state have a right of way and the sign is on a town owned guardrail not on SARC property.

Dolores reviewed that the first special permit that was issued was done incorrectly. The special permit process was not followed. There was no public hearing held. John Skrip disputed this.

Dolores responded that she did indeed inform John Skrip who was the chair of the selectboard

at the time and also a member of SARC that a special permit was needed. In order to grant a special permit a hearing needed to be held and all abutters notified. John did not agree or remember this. Brian read the minutes of that meeting and pointed out to John that he approved and signed the minutes of meeting explaining all of this. Therefore the public was never notified or granted the opportunity to express their concerns.

Jean suggested a compromise of moving it minimally away from the guardrail by perhaps 10 feet off the road and free standing.

Brian stated that his personal opinion is the issue is not so much with the size but with the location. He confirms that when the abutter pulls out of his driveway the sight line is obstructed. He wants to do a site visit at the SARC property. George stands by the bylaws which states clearly that it is the Board of Selectmen that is allowed to grant a special permit. He also agrees with a site visit. Brian stated that if the sign company cannot drill the ledge he will help them find a company that can. We will adjourn the public hearing to allow a site visit tomorrow, Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. Val Coleman and John Skrip want a vote taken now. Brian responded that it would turn out to be a negative vote, they cannot give permission to attach a sign to property that the SARC doesn't own.

Motion by Mark, second by Brian, passed unanimously to adjourn the public hearing until Monday, July 29, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Hearing adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Discussed the Public Safety Officer position. Mark asked Ralph Morrison to respond. Ralph said they only have one applicant. The other two did not apply because of the pay and relocation.

Ralph recommends Mike Johnson. Discussed whether the Town of Tolland was going to continue ambulance service with Sandisfield. Ralph stated that they are meeting tonight to decide.

Brian would like to set up an interview with Mike Johnson. Ralph did not feel it is necessary and would like him hired tonight. The board agreed to an interview. They would like to have interviewed the other two applicants just to see if we were in the ball park with the job description and salary. It could have been a learning experience. Ralph asked them to hire Mike Johnson temporarily until the interview. The selectmen responded that they want the interview first. Discussed the advertisement, it was placed in the Berkshire Record and on the town's website. George would like to have advertised to a larger area. We will post the interview for this Thursday, July 18, 2019 during a work session at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex. Ron Pachulski would like to see the position re advertised.

Reviewed and signed purchase orders.

Selectmen's updates:

Reviewed the Broadband meeting and licensing application.

Brian reviewed the Mass Works Grant process to do a portion of Route 57. They will apply in conjunction with the town of New Marlborough. The Highway Admin. Asst. will help with the grant application process.

George reviewed the negotiations he took over for energy aggregation. He has signed up with Colonial Power and locked in for 36 months at a lower rate than we are currently getting.

Reviewed and signed warrants

Topics not reasonably anticipated:

Larry Dwyer supplied an update on the Green Team progress. Discussed solar panels.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Mark Newman

Brian O'Rourke

George Riley