

Town of Stockton Springs  
Select Board – Morning Meeting and Workshop  
February 17, 2022  
Minutes

1. Roll Call: Call to Order

Ms. Bradley called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Present: Betsy Bradley, Marsha Shute, Darren Shute.

Also Present: Mac Smith – Town Manager.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

Mr. Smith asked for two items to be placed on the agenda: Signature of three Quit Claim Deeds for the three town-owned properties that had been sold through the bid process, and consideration of a tax abatement for one of those pieces of land, on which taxes had incorrectly accrued after the land became a possession of the Town.

3. Short-Term Rental Status Update

Mr. Smith explained the purpose of the agenda item, which, he said was to determine if conditions had deteriorated to such a state that an ordinance would have to be put together before Town Meeting in June. Mr. Shute and others said their recollection was the purpose of the meeting was to determine the status of the voluntary short-term rental registration. {A check of the minutes of the October 7, 2021 Select Board Meeting in fact confirmed that the purpose of this meeting was to check the status of the voluntary registration.}

Paul Barclay spoke of the status of the voluntary registration. He said he had checked advertisements for short-term rentals, and he determined there were 12 active STRs which were not homeowner-occupied, 2 places rented just one room with the owners there, and one place wanted to become a STR. There were questions about houses that had sold recently and whether they would become STRs. There was discussion of the need for housing for young people and the negative effect that STRs have on that housing.

Mr. Vallely said that if a person cannot afford to purchase a house without renting it out to help pay the taxes, that person should not buy the house. Mrs. Benjamin said she agreed. She said that some people did not have the option of renting out their homes to help pay taxes.

There was discussion of the success of the voluntary registry. Mr. Barclay said there had been concerns regarding privacy issues. Mr. Smith said Mr. Barclay had given him a list just of STR owners in Stockton just before the meeting began.

There was discussion of a possible moratorium on the number of houses that can be sold for use as a short-term rental.

Ms. Bradley said she felt that STR owners had made efforts since the previous incidents that prompted the series of hearings. Mr. Shute said he felt problems could be resolved with a good-neighbor policy, but that policy has to have some backbone to it. He said people must feel safe in their home.

There was discussion of traffic on Lighthouse Road, both vehicular and pedestrian. There was discussion of the need of residents to document any problems they encountered with STRs. Ms. Bradley said she would like to see the STR owners be the ones to work on solving the problems.

Ms. Bradley said that homeowners had the option to draw up their own ordinance language and to have the item placed on Town Meeting Warrant via the petition process. Mr. Vallely asked why he should have to do the job of the Select Board. Ms. Bradley said the Board needed to look at all sides.

There was discussion of having information available at the Town Office regarding the contact information of STR owners. Mr. Barclay talked about privacy concerns. Mr. Barclay said he would continue to compile the registration regardless of whether it was open to the public at the Town Office.

Mr. Barclay said there was a closed Facebook group for STR owners in Stockton. He said they had thought about making the group public, but social media discussions seemed to devolve quickly into arguing. He asked about having a link to the group put in the Town's newsletter. Concerns regarding using municipal resources for private business were expressed.

Mr. Barclay said he would compile a list to be provided to the Town Office, and that the people on that list would be made aware that whatever contact information they provide will be considered public information.

Mr. Shute said that the Board did have to look at the issue of housing for young people in the Town, and that perhaps looking at a moratorium on the number of STRs might be necessary to help assure non-STR housing is available. He said he supports homeowners who have problems with STRs to document the problems they are having.

The Select Board asked for a workshop on short-term rentals, to be held in April. They asked to look at ordinances used by other towns, and how towns without STR ordinances deal with the issue, as well as grandfathering. They asked to have the Stockton Springs Planning Board invited to that workshop.

4. Town Office Heat Pump Bid Award

Mr. Shute told the Board that grants were not yet available from the Nature Conservancy but were expected before too long. The Board decided to hold off on issuing the award for the heat pumps until more information was available regarding the Nature Conservancy grant.

5. Minutes: February 3, 2022 Morning Minutes and Workshop

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2022 minutes as presented.**

6. Accounts Payable/Payroll Accounts Payable #53/Payroll Warrant #52

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve Accounts Payable #53 and Payroll Warrant #52.**

7. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Smith presented the Treasurer's Report.

8. Review of Foreclosure Policy

Mr. Smith presented the Town's current foreclosure policy, with proposed changes. Mr. Smith said the policy was necessary so that the Town could offer 30 days past the real estate tax deadline for residents to pay the entirety of their taxes in order to save their homes. The Board asked for time to review the changes and asked for the item to be placed on the agenda for their next meeting.

9. Planning Board Nomination: Bonnie Jean Brooks

The Select Board considered the nomination of Bonnie Jean Brooks as an Alternate on the Planning Board.

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to appoint Bonnie Jean Brooks as an Alternate to the Stockton Springs Planning Board, with a term to expire 6/30/23.**

10. New Copier

Mr. Smith presented updated information for the purchase of a new copier for the Town Office. He explained the need for the copier, the fact that the oldest of the two copiers no longer has replacement parts made for it, and the older age of the newer copier.

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to purchase the new Toshiba e-4515 outright, as well as the entering into a one-year service contract for the new copier and the older of the two current copiers.**

11. Public Storage Use Policy – Stockton Harbor

Mr. Smith presented an updated version of the proposed Stockton Harbor Public Storage Policy. There was discussion of the need to make clear that the requirements for an entity to be classified as 501 (c) (3), and that the use be harbor-related. Mr. Smith said he would make the changes and present the updated version at the next Select Board meeting.

12. Public Comment – Any Topic

There was no public comment.

13. Abatement

Mr. Smith explained that when the Town acquired Map and Lot R2-158-1, something was not changed in the computer and taxes had accrued on the property incorrectly. He said those taxes, though accidental, needed to be abated.

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to abate the total accrued taxes on Map and Lot R2/158-1.**

14. Quit Claim Deeds

Mr. Smith presented the Board with three quit claim deeds, one for each of the town-owned properties that had been sold by sealed bid the previous month.

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to sign the Quit-Claim Deed for R2, Lot 158-1.**

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to sign the Quit-Claim Deed for R2, Lot 1.**

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to sign the Quit-Claim Deed for R3, Lot 18.**

15. Adjourn to Workshop

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to adjourn to workshop.**

The Board adjourned to workshop at 10:22 a.m.

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1. Select Board Member Concerns and Comments

Mr. Shute asked if the second ambulance was in service yet. Mr. Smith said he believed that it was.

Mr. Shute asked about the status of various issues that had been presented to the Board. He spoke of the need to make sure the people are followed up with even if their various situations are still pending.

2. Town Manager Concerns and Comments

Mr. Smith told the Board that he and Ambulance Director Amy Drinkwater had been invited to the Budget Committee of the Town of Prospect the following Wednesday.

Mr. Smith told the Board that he would be taking a day off the following week, and that under his contract he had to inform the Board of time off.

Mr. Smith updated the Board regarding a portion of Harding Road.

3. Adjournment

**Motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to adjourn the workshop.**

The workshop was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.