

**Finance Committee Meeting
September 21, 2009
7:30 PM**

Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

Present: Vice-Chairman, Thomas DeLuca; Pasquale Barletta; Jackie Desrochers; Paul Helmreich; Cheryl McFaun; Lee Tarantino; Philip Zawasky.

Absent: Wayne Graf; Robert Bouchard; Lynn Regan; Michael Thomas.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to approve the September 16, 2009 Finance Committee minutes as amended. Seconded by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: All in favor, with Ms. McFaun and Mr. Zawasky abstaining.
Motion carries.

II. New Business

Article 8 – land parcels for Habitat For Humanity

Mr. Robert Kimball, from the Board of Selectmen, addressed the FinCom regarding Article 8. He explained some of the details and noted the benefits to the various parties who would be involved. He said that the final costs of the houses would be between \$92K and \$118K and that the families would get 20-year mortgages through Habitat For Humanity.

Mr. Helmreich expressed his support of this article.

Mr. Kimball said that Habitat For Humanity has a list of abutters who they will contact and get feedback from.

Article 11 – Wetlands Protection Bylaw

Ms. Jennifer Carlino, of the Norton Conservation Commission, addressed the FinCom providing the 3 pamphlets that the Conservation Commission has been distributing to various places in town, describing the proposed Wetlands Protection Bylaw. She said that they looked at the bylaws of many local towns and drew from them desirable language they wanted included. Ms. Carlino said that the primary goal of the proposed bylaw is water protection. She said that another important goal of the bylaw is to turn current policies, constructed by the state, into regulations that could impose consequences on offenders. She said that the Conservation Commission plans to evaluate each wetland on a case-by-case basis, based on what is in the best interest of the wetland. She noted that more than half of Norton is covered by wetlands and water bodies.

Mr. Tarantino expressed his concern with how the proposed bylaw is written to say that, if passed, this bylaw would give the Conservation Commission the authority to create laws at their discretion, without any input from the town.

Attorney Matthew Watsky, addressed the FinCom on behalf of Mr. Fred Bottomley, a landowner in town. He provided the FinCom with a summary of questions and concerns involving the proposed bylaw, including the following: How the bylaw will affect existing developed property; what the 'real' costs are going to be to the town's residents and how this will affect property values; the protection zone around any wetland is 100 feet therefore prohibiting any development in that zone, unless a waiver is granted; and why the Norton Conservation Commission needs more control over this. Attn. Watsky said that by the definitions in the proposed bylaw even a puddle from a storm would be subject for regulation. He recommends that the town boards and residents request more specific information before making a decision on whether or not to support this article.

Mr. Bottomley reiterated some of the same concerns that Attn. Watsky stated as well as questioning why there was never a public hearing.

Ms. Carlino responded to some of the questions and concerns raised by both Attn. Watsky and Mr. Bottomley. She said that there would not be any costs besides a \$25 fee for permits. Ms. Carlino also said that this bylaw is to address new construction, not existing. She said that the Conservation Commission would be looking at undeveloped areas, not existing, established areas. She said that the effective date for these regulations would be the date the bylaw is adopted and that it would not be retroactive.

Ms. Carlino pointed out that the Conservation Commission is not responsible for deciding if something is a buildable lot; rather that it is the Planning Board's duty. She said that the 'no disturbance' zone of 25 feet has been policy for years and is nothing new. Ms. Carlino said that she asked the Selectmen whether or not the Conservation Commission needed to hold a public hearing on the article and was told no. She also noted that Conservation Commission meetings are public and that the proposed bylaw has been on the agenda since February.

Mr. Scott Goddard, a town property owner, whom is also a professional Wetland Scientist as well as Wetland Consultant, made some additional comments regarding the article. He said he feels that through the bylaw, the Conservation Commission is trying to regulate increasingly smaller areas. He pointed out that, in the proposed bylaw, the definition of an isolated vegetative wetland includes a wetland area OR wetland vegetation. He said that, for example, if a property owner had poison ivy on their property, because it is a wetland plant, he/she would be restricted from any development within the 100-foot buffer zone surrounding that area. He feels that this proposed bylaw is very impractical and will prove to be very expensive for both the town as well as town landowners.

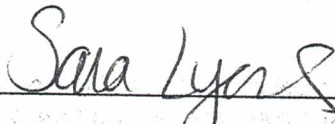
Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2009 at 7:30pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Zawasky to adjourn at 9:15 pm. Seconded by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: Unanimous.
Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted by: _____



Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary