**TOWN OF ENFIELD**

**JOHNSTON PROPERTY USE COMMITTEE**

**JOINT MEETING WITH THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**April 27, 2023**

**Johnston Property Use Committee (JPUC) Members in Attendance:** Nate Miller, Alice Kennedy, Julie Eckert, Franklin (Bud) Lynch, Jr (online), and Nancy L. Smith

**JPUC Members Absent:** Bradley Rich, Affrille Degoma

**Ex Officio Members in Attendance:** Ed Morris, Town Manager and Kevin Marker

**Ex Officio Members in Absent:** N/A

Called to order at 5:31 PM

**BUSINESS**

Nate Miller started the meeting by welcoming the attendees and with introductions of the committee.

**Overview of the JPUC Process**

* The purpose of the JPUC is to develop a recommendation to the Selectboard about whether the Town should retain its property on Johnston Drive, and if so, what the future use of the property should be.
* The JPUC has been meeting since December. To date, the JPUC has met with:
  + Town Planning and Zoning Staff
  + Master Plan Task Force
  + Mascoma Lake Association
  + Conservation Commission
  + Recreation Commission
  + Abutters to the Property
* There are two public forums scheduled to hear feedback from the public about the Johnston Drive property:
  + Tonight (virtually via Microsoft Teams)
  + Thursday, May 11th at 5:30 PM (in-person at the Enfield Community Building)
* To maximize the time allotted for public comments this evening, we are not doing an introductory PowerPoint presentation about the property. However, is there anyone attending this evening who is unfamiliar with the town-owned property on Johnston Drive and would like to be oriented to its location?

**Ground Rules for the Evening**

* Anyone speaking tonight is free to share any thoughts you have about the Johnston Drive property. That said, the JPUC is particularly interested in hearing public feedback about two key questions:
  + What is your vision for the Town-owned property on Johnston Drive?
  + What concerns do you have about the Town-owned property on Johnston Drive?
* To ensure everyone who wishes to speak has an opportunity to do so, comments are limited to three (3) minutes per person.
* Everyone who wishes to speak will have the opportunity to speak before anyone speaks for a second time.
* As tonight’s meeting is specifically encouraging virtual participation, those participating on Microsoft Teams will have speaking priority. Everyone participating via Microsoft Teams will be provided an opportunity to speak before anyone participating in person is provided an opportunity to speak.
* Everyone will have an opportunity to speak at least once tonight. When everyone who wishes to speak has spoken at least once, the meeting will be limited to two hours, ending 7:30 PM, for anyone wishing to speak multiple times.
* For virtual participants, please use the “Raise Hand” feature on Microsoft Teams. You will be called upon based on the order you appear on our screen. When you are finished speaking, please “Lower your Hand” in Microsoft Teams.
* Please be respectful of each other’s viewpoints. It’s OK for people to see things differently, and everyone here has important insights. Please don’t talk over people or disparage anyone.

Nate asked if everyone was familiar with the property. Jo Ellen Courtney raised her hand that she was not. Ed Morris shared a map of the area and gave a brief history of the properties and how they moved from Railroad property to the State, and ultimately were given to the Town of Enfield. He also explained the long term lease option that was signed over last year for the final property on Lot 5, which opened the 3 lots in the current discussion.

**The meeting was then opened to public for comment:**

**David Beaufait** – Would like to keep the property as natural as possible and work with a group of volunteers for maintenance to reduce Town costs.

**Jean Patten** -feels property should be sold because if we keep it, it will cost more money. “Enfield does not need to be in the land business.”

**Kurt Gotthardt** – Feels the Town should keep the property as natural as possible for walk, bike, paddle in access. Feel vehicles and the road would be an issue. We have missed a few opportunities for lakeside property and this may be the last parcel the Town has access to, and it is already cleared and ready for access. Another option would be to lease the A frame and parcel to a business that could cater to the rail trail. We could always sell it in the future if necessary.

**Terri Lynch** – Feels the property is valuable and precious. The Town should keep it as natural as possible and remove the structures.

**Tom Lockitt –** Feels the Town should keep ownership of the property and leave it as it is right now. The Town currently has too many projects going and there is no need to start another one.

**Steve Patten** – Thinks the land should be sold because of the confusion with the right of way issues. Feels the next owner should deal with them. The property should be returned to the tax rolls.

**Dawna Pidgeon** – wants to echo the sentiment that it should be kept as natural as possible, with walk, bike, and paddle access only. Maybe add a few picnic tables.

**Kurt Gotthardt** – Wanted to comment on the discussion about selling the land. He feels the Town should focus on selling other land that it owns like Shedd Street or the Parcel on Lockhaven Road but would like to keep this one.

**Julie Herman –** Agrees with keeping the property as it is now, with walk, bike, paddle in access.

**Jean Patten** – Voiced liability concerns of possibly not having a lifeguard down there. Ed Morris stated that he learned while in Claremont that liability for public land is low when it is open land for public use. IF we charged for access that would be different, but if it was decided he would double check with our insurance carrier.

**David Beaufait** – Stated he had approached the board of the Mascoma Lake Association about caring for the property and could also ask the friends of the rail trail. He also stated that maybe the neighbors like Barbara Jones would like to continue caring for the property.

**Barbara Jones** – Thanked David for volunteering her but stated she would be happy to help.

**Steve Patten** – Was concerned that if porta potties would be placed down there thy would have to be maintained, which means the road would need to be maintained. Also agreed with the increased liability concerns.

**Barbara Jones** – Stated there was no need for porta potties.

**Tom Lockitt** – Asked if the land could be leased to a group to be managed as a beach. This would give the Town some revenue, and still allow access. Nate Miller asked if he knew of an example like this. Tom stated he did not but was just brainstorming ideas.

Nate asked if there were comments from the board and Julie Eckert thanked the public for sharing their thoughts. This sentiment was shared by the entire committee.

Nate Miller gave one last opportunity for thoughts.

Dave Beaufait shared he was open to questions on his ideas.

Kurt Gotthardt shared some concerns with the advertising for this meeting and said it was hard for him to find. It was addressed that the event was advertised on Listserve, Facebook, the Towns website, the electronic sign in front of the Community Building, and posters were hung in Jakes, Georges, Proctors and in multiple Town buildings. Alice Kennedy thanked Kurt for his concern and asked if there was another way the Town could be communicating. David Beaufait stated it should be in the newsletter.

Jo Ellen Courtney wanted to add that she did not like the ideas of porta potties.

Nate Miller announced that the next meeting would be a public forum at the Community Building on May 11, 2023, at 5:30. Following the public hearing the committee would have three working sessions in which to craft a recommendation to the Select Board to meet their June goal.

Ed Morris, brought up the thought for the committee to decide if they were going to take public comment during deliberation. He stated that it could be taken, but as decisions are being made some of the comments may become more direct in an effort to persuade the final decision.

David Beaufait voiced concerns that this was against RSA 91-A. Ed Morris shared that the meetings would need to be public and deliberation would need to be held in public, but the RSA does not require public participation at every meeting, but the committee. Ed Morris further stated that this would be the committee’s decision and he was not stating they should not take comments, but that it was an option. The committee decided to think about it before making a decision. Ed Morris stated he just brought it up, so if that was the committee’s decision, they would have time to voice that to the public to ensure final comments were taken.

**Upcoming meetings:**

May 11, 2023, In Person Public Information Session

Julie Eckert Made a motion to Adjourn seconded by Nancy Smith, the meeting adjourned at 6:30.