

APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING SPECIAL MEETING
December 20, 2021

PRESENT: Gary Daniels, Chairman John Shannon, Town Administrator excused
Paul Dargie, Vice Chairman Andrew Kouropoulos, Videographer
Laura Dudziak, Member
Chris Labonte, Member
David Freel, Member

1. CALL TO ORDER, BOARD OF SELECTMEN INTRODUCTIONS & PUBLIC SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS:

Chairman Daniels called the public meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., introduced Board members, and then led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Daniels indicated that those people in the audience who want to speak or add to the discussion should please use a microphone to be heard on the PEG Access live broadcast.

2. APPOINTMENT: (Approximate times)

6:30 p.m. 127 Elm Street Warrant Article Discussion – In summary: At the November 22, 2021 Board of Selectmen's meeting, the Board voted 5/0 to remove 127 Elm Street Building from the 2022 warrants.

The Budget Advisory Committee wrote a letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting that the warrant article to Raze and Remove 127 Elm Street Building for \$400,000 be placed back on the warrants. They feel that this year will be "somewhat" lean year money-wise because there is no dispatch center or new library on the docket as in previous years. They feel that it would also be a good year because are also aware of major "big ticket" Water Utilities items coming in 2023 and 2024. If it isn't put on the warrants, they feel that another possibility is to put it in the budget and allow the townspeople to make that decision.

Paul Bartolomucci, a Milford resident reminded the Board that 127 Elm Street was purchased through fundraising, individual donations, and funding from non-governmental organizations. We do little to support senior citizens and youths both socially and through physical activities. A committee was formed to review the property and a 10-year plan was developed. Razing this property would be one of the first steps in this plan. He is asking the Board to support the removal of 127 Elm Street and let the community begin making the proposed improvements to this property.

Claudia Lemaire, a Milford resident is concerned about the exercise equipment that is supposed to be placed around the park, being stored in the old building. There isn't any money in the capital reserve for any improvements. A lot of time and effort went into purchasing the building and it's always on the back burner. Mr. Bartolomucci echo's Ms. Lemaire's concerns about the equipment being stored. He explained where and what it would be used for. He stressed the need for people to get outside and do physical activity. A path along the river for walking would be great. Ms. Lemaire said taking the building down would allow for a larger parking lot to help with state swim meets and other functions that may bring additional revenue into the town.

Selectman Labonte asked how come the path can't be put in now. Mr. Bartolomucci said a partial path could be put in now. Taking down the building would allow us to put the path at the end. He is embarrassed parking out of town people next to a dilapidated old building. Ms. Lemaire is concerned that it will end up like BROX, with nothing being done with the property for over 20 years. There was more discussion about the walking path.

Selectman Freel wanted a real number to raise the building, not a \$400,000 number just thrown out there. Mr. Bartolomucci said all the information for the Keyes proposal submitted to the Board is on the towns web site under Recreation. He is in favor of that one, not the one that was presented recently. Selectman Freel said we still need to get 3 bids for a more accurate number. If the number comes in less, he may support it.

Chairman Daniels said the building was bought with the intent to use it. It was only later that the committee decided to raze it. We are looking at a 30% increase in the tax rate and seniors are now having to pay taxes on properties that they didn't have to before due to the revaluation. Administrator Shannon clarified that if everything on the warrants passes, the tax rate goes from \$4.03 to \$5.23 for the town's portion of the taxes. There was some discussion about the tax rate.

Selectman Dargie would like to vote to put 127 Elm Street on the warrants and then have another vote as to if they will support it or not. He is guessing that there will be a petition warrant if we don't do this. We can put it on for \$400,000 and try to get quotes. The number can be changed by the deliberative session. There was discussion about the Keyes Capital Reserve account which will be at zero when the next payment for the study is paid. Selectman Freel would rather see a \$50,000 capital reserve warrant rather than a \$400,000 one. There was also a discussion about DPW doing the work in-house. Administrator Shannon said they can't do it, they don't have the insurance or equipment to do it. Other members of

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the Budget Advisory Committee also expressed their displeasure about removing the warrant article for 127 Elm Street and the lack of Selectman support. Selectman Labonte still feels that we have better areas to use the money right now.

Selectman Dudziak moved to call the question. The motion failed for lack of a second. Selectman Dargie feels that this deserves to be put on the warrants and allow the voters to decide. He feels that petition warrant articles don't do well.

Selectman Freel said the town purchase the property then found out it is unsafe. He doesn't understand why we need a warrant article to remove it, why can't we just remove it without a warrant article.

Paul Bartolomucci thanked the Board for their consideration and discussion tonight.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to put 127 Elm Street Razing on the warrants using a placeholder of \$400,000. Seconded by Selectman Dudziak. Selectman Dargie, yes. Selectman Labonte, no. Selectman Dudziak, yes. Selectman Freel, no. Chairman Daniels, no. The motion failed 2/3 with Selectman's Labonte, Freel and Daniels opposed.

Selectman Labonte moved to approve the consent calendar. Seconded by Selectman Freel. Selectmen Dargie yes, Selectman Dudziak yes, Selectman Labonte yes, Chairman Daniels yes and Selectman Freel yes. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

3. DECISIONS

a. CONSENT CALENDAR

- 1) Approval of Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber, Map 9, Lot 2 and Map 9, Lot 3.
- 2) Approval of Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber, Map 40 Lot 14

4. APPROVAL OF FINAL MINUTES – N/A

5. NOTICES

6. NON-PUBLIC SESSION – N/A

7. ADJOURNMENT: Selectman Freel moved to adjourn at 7:50. Seconded by Selectman Labonte. All were in favor. A roll call vote was taken with Selectman Dargie yes, Selectman Dudziak yes, Selectman Labonte yes, Selectman Freel yes, and Chairman Daniels yes. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.

Gary Daniels, Chairman

Paul Dargie, Member

Chris Labonte, Vice Chairman

David Freel, Member

Laura Dudziak, Member