

TOWN OF CHINA

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6:45 P.M. – Howard Charles and Katie Cousins – Thurston Park Timber initiative – Discussion/Questions and Answers

The Select Board opened up discussion about Thurston Park. The item at hand at the meeting was whether or not to authorize a selective timber harvest in the approximate 400 acre Thurston Park. The Select Board Chairperson Irene L. Belanger started by commenting that the following discussion is not part of the formal Select Board agenda and therefore there would not be any voting included as part of the question and answer session. She went on to state that she felt the Select Board did already vote on a timber harvesting initiative; others felt differently. There was much discussion about the broader issue of what the park was intended for and how the management plan provided to the town by Vite Vitale fits into a long term vision for Thurston Park. Sappi Fine Paper Company representatives Howard Charles, a forester, and Katie Cousins, a wildlife biologist, were invited a second time to offer their advice for the Park. Their position was that the town should follow Mr. Vitale's prepared plan, calling for selective cutting throughout the Park to maintain a healthy forest and various wildlife habitat while considering recreational possibilities.

There was discussion about the need for wildlife management and what benefits result from selective harvesting. Wildlife biologist Phillip deMaynardier opined that broad statements about wildlife benefits from timber harvesting are not necessarily meaningful. He went on to note that there are many kinds of influences that may either help or harm different kinds of wildlife. Mr. deMaynardier noted that one needs to have a statement about what results are desired before an impact statement can be made.

Select board Chairperson Irene L. Belanger strongly advocated for a selective timber harvest and said it would accommodate access to the Park for residents. She noted the history of the harvesting of the forest over 30 years. Selectperson Joann C. Austin expressed reservations about harvesting in the immediate future and suggested leaving half of the Park untouched as a natural forest. She went on to ask that the Select Board not do anything until the Open Space Committee could make a recommendation on the subject.

Open Space Committee Chairperson Bill Seekins said that he feels the Committee should be give time to evaluate the Park, deciding whether the objectives in the Management Plan are good for the town and make a recommendation to the Select Board.

There was further discussion about whether or not the Select Board authorized a timber harvest in a previous meeting on January 21, 2010. Howard Charles advocated cutting throughout the

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Select Board Meeting

Monday – 01/04/2010 – Town Office Meeting Room

7:00 P.M.

Minutes

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7:00 pm. Board members present were Paul MacDonald, Peter Foote, Joann C. Austin, Neil Farrington, and Irene L. Belanger. Others present were H. David Cotta, Leslie R. French, Tim Basham, Howard Charles, Harold Charles, Phillip deMaynardier, John Collins, Al Althenn, Bill Seekins, Mary Grow, and the Town Manager. Those present were led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag by Neil Farrington.

The Chair began the meeting with moments of silence in recognition of missing snowmobiler Richard “Shaw” Jackson and the recent deaths of Erwin “Win” Wicke and Arthur “Al” Poulin.

On a motion by Selectperson Paul D. MacDonald and a second by Selectperson Neil Farrington, the Board voted 5-0 to accept the minutes of the 12/07/2009 and Select Board meeting as presented.

On a motion by Selectperson Joann C. Austin and a second by Selectperson Neil Farrington, the Board voted 5-0 to accept Warrant #29 (79) for \$20,806.32 and Warrant #30 (79) for \$75,564.32 as presented.

Manager’s Report:

- **Public Comment:** Mr. H. David Cotta initiated a discussion about the acceptance of credit cards at the town office.
- **Implementation Committee/Other Committees Meetings:** The Town Manager noted the next meeting dates, times, and places for the Implementation Committee, the Open Space Committee, and the Library Services Committee.

Unfinished Business:

- **Public Comment:** There was not any public comment at this time.
- **One Room School House Progress Report:** The Town Manager noted that Phase 1 of the reconstruction project is coming to an end. There has been a lot of progress in stabilizing the building and that there was a good deal of financial savings because the floor did not have to be redone. The funds saved will offset the cost of re-roofing the building.

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- **Recycling Coordinator:** It was noted that Kennebec County Jail inmates have been doing a good deal of work in China. They have been feeding the balers with plastics and cardboard. The market for cardboard and plastics has become more favorable recently.

New Business:

- **Public Comment:** There was not any public comment at this time.
- **2010-2011 Municipal Budget Deliberations – Town Meeting Articles:** The Town Manager distributed copies of the proposed 2010-2011 budget with supporting expenditure and revenue detail data from years past for comparative analyses. The town Manager made introductory remarks about the upcoming budget year, noting that the proposed budget will not affect the mil rate. He went on to say that the remuneration increase for town employees is one percent, subsidies from the State are down substantially, and expenses have been held to minimum increases or none at all as a result of economic considerations. The Board decided to take the budget and supporting materials home to look and to come to the next meeting with respective questions.

On a motion by Selectperson Neil Farrington and a second by Selectperson Paul MacDonald, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Joann C. Austin, Secretary
China Select Board