

**PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING WITH VILLAGE TRUSTEES
EHS LIBRARY
2 EDUCATIONAL DRIVE, ESSEX JUNCTION, VT
September 7, 2011**

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Charlee Day, Michael Smith, Marla Durham (John Gazo and David Riester was absent)

VILLAGE TRUSTEES PRESENT: George Tyler, Dan Kerin, Lori Houghton, Mary Morris (John Lajza was absent)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Mike Deweese, Judy DeNova, Grant Geisler, Vince Gonillo, Brad Luck

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Public to be Heard

Cathy Shearer of Essex Junction described the duties of the crossing guard at the intersection of Central Street and Route 2A. She said maintaining order and safety require significant effort and skill. She urged the school district to be mindful of the importance of the position when deliberating over the possible resignation of the current guard or assigning a new person to the position.

Village-Wide WiFi

Mike Deweese and Vince Gonillo gave a presentation describing the school district's interest in providing wireless internet access throughout the Village. Mike said online technology is a fact of life for 21st century students, and not just within the classroom. He said the district has a responsibility to ensure students are facile with online technology. The fact that some students do not have internet access at home puts them at a disadvantage.

He said all Village schools presently offer wireless internet on-site. The system uses the internet server at Essex High School, which has extensive capacity. He said a concept would be to extend the capacity to create wireless internet for the entire Village. He suggested that, in addition to enhancing the educational opportunities for Village students, Village-wide WiFi would provide quality of life and economic development benefits to all Village residents. For that reason, the Village municipal government may have an interest in collaborating with the school district to develop the project.

Vince listed several organizations that might provide guidance and assistance with this effort, including the VT Council on Rural Development, the e-VT Project, and Summit Technologies in Williston, VT. Mike said there are many questions to be addressed before moving ahead with the project and proposed creating a joint, ad hoc committee consisting of members of the Prudential Committee and the Village Board of Trustees, plus district and Village government staff. The committee would define the parameters that need to be studied and resolved for moving ahead with the project. Both boards agreed to put this issue on their respective agendas for consideration.

Stevens Park Discussion

Discussion occurred about possible changes in use at Stevens Park. Dan Kerin noted that the park has become densely wooded and recounted an incident of an alleged stabbing in the park. Mary Morris recalled bringing her children to the playground at the park and noted that it has become overgrown and uninviting.. Marla recalled that neighbors resisted earlier efforts to improve the park because they did not want bright lights shining into their yards at night. Lori Houghton said that improving the park for the benefit of the community presented an opportunity for both boards to work together on a positive project. Grant noted that vehicle access to the park is very limited and could present a challenge. Brad Luck suggested that the Recreation Advisory Council (RAC) should initiate the discussion about the park. Further collaboration between the two boards could occur, if necessary, after the RAC made some recommendations.

Board Appointments to the Recreation Advisory Council (RAC)

Discussion occurred about Prudential Committee and Board of Trustee appointments to the RAC. The Memorandum of Agreement signed by both boards in March, 2011 describes the process for each board to alternate appointing new members to the RAC as the terms of the present members begin to expire in two years. However, there is no process described for the event of an RAC member leaving during the interim period. Specifically, if a member were to resign within the next two years, it is not clear which board would have the responsibility of filling the position. After much discussion, it was agreed that, in the event of an early resignation, the RAC would have the responsibility of filling the position, and their appointment would be relayed and reviewed by both boards.

Other Business

A discussion occurred about the terms of the memorandum defining the agreement between the School District and the Village for the operation of the Village recreation department. There was some suggestion that the three-year limit outlining the terms of the agreement might create some uncertainty for governance of the recreation department. It was noted, however, that the three-year term is “self-renewing” and continues to extend unless one party signifies an intent to discontinue the agreement. Both parties would then have two years to renegotiate the agreement. It was generally agreed that the time frame would provide ample opportunity for both parties to make appropriate adjustments and to allow the Village community to weigh in and influence the decision of whether to continue the agreement.

Setting the agenda

The respective board chairs noted that there had been some confusion in setting the agenda for this first joint meeting. Specifically, although the memorandum requires that both boards meet twice per year, it does not specify which party sets the agenda. Both board chairs agreed that they would meet several weeks prior to the next joint meeting in March to develop the agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Marla Durham, Clerk