Minutes of January 17, 2023

Present: Barry Zitser, Andrea Bryant, Margaret Gale, Julie Seely, Nancy Strand and Chris Jensen.

Minutes by Mr. Jensen

The meeting began at 6:30 p.m. at the town hall.

Nancy Strand recapped the meeting on January 14, on which firm to recommend to the select board for the engineering analysis. She noted that Aries Engineering was the TSC’s unanimous choice. At its meeting on January 16, the select board accepted that recommendation.

Mr. Jensen said on the 17th he contacted Rena Peck at USDA to inform her that the board is hiring an engineering firm and the town will be applying in April. He said Ms. Peck offered to set up a Zoom tutorial for any members of the transfer station committee. The committee members noted it is great to have so much help from Ms. Peck and the USDA.

The committee then moved to the formal agenda.

1. There was no public input.
2. Mr. Zitser said he has been reviewing federal regulations and it appears there is a pre-application process followed by the formal application. The committee agreed we should check these with Ms. Peck.
3. The committee reviewed Mr. Zitser’s latest draft of the annual report for the 2022 Bethlehem Town Report. The committee collaborated on a few edits and thanked Mr. Zitser for his work. Ms. Strand made a motion to approve the report as edited. Mr. Jensen seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
4. There was a discussion about whether to proceed with the transfer-station-needs list. The committee decided that it would be most efficient to hold off until the report from Aries Engineering is available. Margaret Gale wondered whether the town will be locked into the design that Aries Engineering provides. Ms. Strand and Mr. Jensen noted that the town can modify what Aries provides. The report is a starting point and is required before the town can apply for a USDA grant to help with funding. “We can tweak it,” said Ms. Strand.
5. There was a discussion of whether the site on Route 116 would require a new driveway permit. Ms. Seely said it was her understanding that a new permit would be required. Mr. Jensen said he would check the DOT in Lancaster on the process.
6. Mr. Zitser said he has not seen any updates or filings indicating what is happening with the appeal by the Conservation Law Foundation.
7. There was a brief discussion on the possibility of finding non-governmental grants to help offset the cost of the transfer station. It was noted that such efforts should begin sooner rather than later.
8. Mr. Zitser said Rachelle Lyons, a Bethlehem resident and research professor of Environmental Science and Policy at Plymouth State University contacted him. She wondered about the possibility of her environmental decision-making class working with Bethlehem on the new transfer station. Several possibilities were discussed – including help with research - and the committee expressed appreciation for her offer and agreed to explore the idea.
9. These was a discussion about the possibility of getting additional, more decorative/fun signs for the transfer station.

10) The committee noted Betsey Phillips is resigning and thanked her for her two years of service with the TSC. Ms. Phillips is joining the conservation commission.

1. There was a discussion about forming a sustainability group in Bethlehem. The idea was floated by Bruce Caplain, the chairman of the select board, Mr. Zitser said. The committee favorably viewed the concept and unanimously voted to notify Mr. Caplain that the committee would like to participate and would send a representative.
2. There was a discussion about getting out a new edition of Just Be Greener, including explaining that an engineering firm has been hired and progress is being made.
3. The minutes of Dec. 13, 2022 were approved as amended. Ms. Gale made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Jensen. Andrea Bryant did not attend the meeting and abstained.
4. The committee set the next meeting for February 21st at 6:30 pm, ideally at the library.
5. A motion to adjourn was made by Margaret Gale, seconded by Ms. Strand and unanimously approved.