

**MINUTES**  
**SELECT BOARD**  
**TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH**  
Tuesday, September 27, 2011 – 5:00pm  
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

**Present:** Joe Byk, Barbara Miller, Elizabeth Thomas

**Also Present:** Pamela Brenner, Rodney Bartlett, Carol Ogilvie, Jeff King, Chief Lenox, Chief Guinard, Michael Price, Nancie Vaihinger, Linda Guyette, Nicole MacStay

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**Chair Miller** called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

**Chair Miller** welcomed everyone and explained that we are here today to have a meet the Select Board and meet the Department Directors forum, as there are many people who have not had the opportunity to do so. We also hope to get volunteers for one of our thirty boards and commissions. She added that the Board recently received the results of the Citizen Satisfaction Survey - we were glad to hear that people were overly satisfied with life in Peterborough, with their elected and appointed officials. We recently filmed the first in a series of programs answering frequently asked questions - Leo Smith & Wil Corcoran spoke about how property is assessed and how the tax rate is set. People will have an opportunity to see it on Channel 22 and on our website. The recently completed upgrades to the cable broadcast system will also allow us to rebroadcast our meetings more often than we have in the past.

**Carol Ogilvie**, Director of the Office of Community Development said that her department provides staff support to Planning Board, Zoning Board, Economic Development Authority, two TIF advisory boards and several other committees and subcommittees. We have a staff of four employees spend a lot of time helping people through the planning office and helping to inform the public about what is happening in the planning world. The Planning Board is shy two members and four alternates, Economic Development Authority and Master Plan Steering Committee are also looking for members.

**Jeff King**, Recreation Director said that his department is run by one other full time staff person, Lisa Betz, the Program coordinator, and part time assistant, and upwards of 35 seasonal staff, most of whom work in the summer. We provide a lot of first jobs for local kids. We have been lucky to have a very good staff over the years. I have been here for 8 years now - over those 8 years we have put a great emphasis on upgrading our facilities. We run most of the youth sports, as well as adult sports in town, and also other programs for people of all ages and all interests. I am most proud of the summer teen challenge for those kids in their in between years - we have been lucky to have excellent staff for that program. We are very excited about what the future brings. **Chair Miller** asked where can people go to find out about your programs; **Mr. King** replied the Peterborough Press both in print and on the Town's website, we also have a department Facebook page, and we are pretty accessible at the playground. **Mr. Byk** asked if any of the Recreation Department's grounds workers are full-time; **Mr. King** said no, they are all seasonal employees.

**Chief Lenox**, Fire Chief, Emergency Management Director and Health Inspector said that he has about 50 on call volunteer firefighters and EMTs who respond to 1200 EMS calls and 500 fire calls, and 8,000 non-emergency 911 calls a year. We do have a new Fire Pumper truck - thank you to the town for buying that for us - it is outside now for people to see.

**Michael Price**, Library Director, said that Peterborough has the distinction to have the oldest public library in the nation - open to the community, funded by taxes and governed by elected trustees. We have public access computers, Wi-Fi capability, over 70k items in our collection, books, audio books, eBooks and e-audio books, DVDs, VHS, and in the basement some Jazz LPs. We have three fulltime and three part time employees, circulating 80,000 items a year.

**Chief Guinard** said that this month marks his 26<sup>th</sup> year with the Peterborough Police Department. The PPD offers emergency, non-emergency and prosecution services with eleven full-time and four part time officers. He explained that it takes a minimum of six officers to staff a 24 hour period. As of this past Monday the PPD had responded to over 7,000 calls for service this year making 2011 a very busy year. Regarding the recent citizen survey, the PPD was pleased to get that feedback, and were glad to hear that people were very satisfied; over 90% responded positively. He added that citizens feel free to stop by or call to give us feedback. **Chair Miller** said it is great that you are so approachable. Mr. Byk said we had a hearing once where people were talking about Putnam park people largely feel safe. You guys do a really good job, and make us all feel safe. **Chief Guinard** thanked the Board, and said that is good to hear, we really try.

**Nancie Vaihinger**, Finance Director said our Finance Department handles taxes, utilities receipts, payroll, debt services and accounts payable. Linda Paris and Beth Marsh are out front and were rated highly in the survey as courteous and knowledgeable. Laurie May is also full-time, and handles payroll and benefits. And Clarissa is our new part time person who handles fixed assets. **Mr. Byk** said that you are our professional full-time worrier, and there is no one in the Monadnock Region who can touch you for your professional service; you do an incredible job.

**Mr. Bartlett**, Public Works Director, said that he has been with the town for five and a half years. Public Works is responsible for highways buildings & grounds, recycling and utilities. We provide engineering services and maintain infrastructure. The new wastewater treatment plant is about 75% complete and will be full online for next spring. Winter is around the corner, so please be patient with the plow drivers next winter.

**Linda Guyette**, Town Clerk, said her office has a staff of two part-time deputy town clerks. The Town Clerk's office processes motor vehicle registrations, organizes the town house for elections, and keep the records for the town. One of my biggest successes was to get boat registrations back, and I am happy to report I was recertified last Thursday.

**Chair Miller** thanked the department directors for coming. This is being taped and recorded, and shown repeatedly on Comcast channel 22. **Ms. Brenner** said that she been here sixteen years this month. I very proud of this staff I think we have one of the best in the state. **Mr. Byk** said **Ms. Brenner** has done a great job team building, and added that folks here don't bicker with each other; you never hear about that here.

As there was no further business, **Chair Miller** called a recess at 5:36pm.

#### **6:00pm – Public Hearing – Future of the Monadnock Country Club**

**Chair Miller** opened the public hearing at 6:03pm, and stated that last month the Monadnock Country Club approached the town regarding the financial situation of the club. The club is important to the town, and any plan to safeguard the club would have to be approved of by both the Select Board and the Monadnock Country Club Board. If we were to move forward it would have to be approved of by Town Meeting next May. We will begin with Rodney Bartlett, who will give us

an overview of everything we have learned to date. I will ask you not to ask questions during the presentation, then we would like to hear from all of you - we have no other items on our agenda. All we will do today is consider your comments.

**Mr. Bartlett** then made his presentation, beginning with an overview of the history of the Country Club. He then reviewed the zoning of the property, and what role the Town might play at the site in the future: year-round recreational uses including golfing, hospitality, education and open space. Mr. Bartlett then reviewed the current status, saying that MCC came to the Town and after determining that the Town was unable to assist further with MCC's property taxes or water bill, began discussions based on a potential transfer the property to the town. He noted that the cell tower lease income is greater than the property taxes paid by the property. Town staff is working on a financial analysis and planning. **Mr. Bartlett** noted the alternatives to Town ownership of the property include potential third party interests; MCC could sell the property; bank intervention and sale, or do nothing. He closed his presentation by stating that the purpose of the public hearing was to get citizen input; thoughts, questions, comments on present uses, possible new uses, and to get a general feel for whether the Town and MCC are on the right track in their efforts to safeguard the facility.

**Jim Orr** said that retaining the country club is important to the town - it sits above the aquifer, and if it were developed, that may be lost. I am not in favor of the town owning another property, but it should be protected.

**Richard Clark** said I enjoy the course, but I don't think the town should own it period. Governments serve their purpose, but this is not one of them - maybe we could find a third party.

**Brad Cox** said I played today, I came with an open mind, I think we should have a golf course in town.

**Mr. Byk** said I think there are two questions - one, should the town acquire the property; without getting into the details, the members have given us a good price; it's just figuring the details. We could give it to a management company or conservation - we should not put it out for development and I would oppose the idea if it got any traction. We are looking to preserve the property as a golf course, hopefully to make money.

**Chair Miller** asked Mr. Clark if he had ever played at a muni golf course. **Mr. Clark** said I don't have a problem with those courses, but what is the cost. **Chair Miller** said we are in the process of due diligence and Mr. Bartlett might be able to elaborate more, but we are looking to see if we can generate income for the town. We are also looking to see what other uses there are for the facility. We also have some well qualified Recreation Department, and there are some things we might do in the winter.

A citizen who did not identify himself said that the well dug by the country club never drew anything. **Mr. Orr** said the well I was referring to is on Summer Street, but the land the golf course sits on is a recharge area. The development rights could be bought by the town, and it could continue.

**Fran Chapman** said I sensed that this is a very emotional, caring situation - it's not numbers, it's feeling. The crowd here tonight reflects that. **Mr. Chapman** then read from a prepared statement, which in sum said that the property could be used for many other uses, and should not be owned and operated by the town as a golf course.

**Jim MacInnes**, President of the MCC Board of Directors, said that Mr. Bartlett did an excellent job, and we agree whole heartedly with what he presented. We want to keep it open space and as a golf course. We have given the town the first option, and we hope you will support this - where can you get something that you could take over for less than half of its value. We don't want to see the bank take it over and sell it for house lots. Other things are going on up there - A Place to Go would be locked out; part of the deal we would have is that would continue - there are few things for kids in this town - Club Cannon closed, and we want to see this going. Hopefully you will support the town.

**Jane Blanchard** said my question is, where in this process will it be known to this entrepreneur who wants to purchase this club? When will we know if the town will take it over? When will this 3rd opportunity be presented for outside persons?

**Mr. Byk** said it is a two-step process - assuming we sign a purchase and sales agreement which seems highly probably, it will be subject to Town Meeting next May. I am confident that the Town will support the purchase - then we will move on to what to do with it - hopefully we can find a management company and if not, we put it into conservation. I personally do not want to see 100 house lots up there.

**Chair Miller** said that the Board does have some next steps already planned.

**Ellen Derby**, neighbor of the golf course said my experience with the town getting involved in land has not been a good one. MCC purchased land and got permission from the Select Board and the town when land that abuts my property was turned down for school building. At Town Meeting it said it should go to the country club - the land that was supposed to go to MCC, and then because of their financial plans, they were then able to sell it, and it will be developed, and if the development goes through it will be highly developed land. As someone in town who if feeling the tax problem, to add something else that might not help the tax burden it is not right. I ask what is this going to end up costing? As far as I am concerned, the property that is going to be heavily developed is going to come back to bite us. Not everyone in this town can keep affording these lovely things that you want to do.

**Phyllis Porter** said I would like to see the club maintained because I am a golfer - for new people it is a place to make friends, learn about the town, and a place to interact. The people there could not have been nicer and more supportive. I am also on a limited income, but I believe we should maintain our assets. I supported the pool not as a swimmer I don't swim, but because it is an asset. The club is a gem - people should drive out there. You should take a look at it before you make a judgment. Times are hard and money is tight, but we should think and not be short sighted.

**David Macy** said I have been impressed with how much common ground there is in the room. It seems that Golf like every other sport is cyclical, as is the economy, but if this course is gone, it is gone forever. It wouldn't be there as that public service. Not to mention all the other functions, the clubs that meet there, the weddings - it is a common asset. The other area of common ground - if it cannot be maintained as a course, it can be open space and recreation land. Hopefully it can be sustained. Is there anything that the town can do to intervene at a critical juncture in something that has been a public asset for 111 years.

**Mr. Byk** said everyone here is a caretaker of Peterborough - if we subdivide it, that's it as far as history is concerned.

**Gordon Kemp** it seems that there are two concerns - one to maintain open space, and the second to maintain a club that is viable. 41:14A gave the Board authority to buy and sell land after a public hearing, and we passed an article to establish an open space fund - there is \$400,000 - the board has the authority to buy this land - it can be done in a two-step process, and if you did use open space money, it wouldn't cost the taxpayer's money.

**Charles Lovet** of Harrisville said he has been an MCC member for a number of years, and asked has anyone considered if any of the expenses are from the town? Are there easements? I think the town could be a party to the operation if they could give the course an easement and some expense

**Susan Blanchette**, President of A Place to Go said this program needs the country club - we have met there for a number of years, 35-40 children attend the afterschool program - these children are latchkey kids - they learn community service and community functions - it is a perfect location. We hope that the town can work with the country club to keep this function open. We do pay rent, we do help with the upkeep in the back.

**Maude Salinger** said my question is, has the club looked at a capital campaign or other means of trying to sustain itself to create an endowment so that during slow membership time so that they can maintain their expenses. She then asked if MCC had engaged in any marketing or publicity to raise money. **Mr. MacInnes** said no we have not had a capital campaign - members have a limit on what they can spend. We do expect that if we get a favorable P&S they will honor our memberships. We will be asking the membership for additional funds. We had a raffle recently, but when you are faced with things we can't control. The town can buy fuel and electricity for cheaper we can, other supplies. Town has first option, and we do not want to see it turn into house lots. If we wanted to make money, and we have the right to do that, we could sell it for 1m or more - we want to keep it as a golf club for as long as possible.

**Dave Riley** said I do know a lot of people who are members there and are concerned about the club's future - I haven't heard anything about offering it for sale to a developer to someone who would take it over, preserve what it is, and improve it. **Mr. MacInnes** said no, because we gave the town the first option.

A citizen who identified herself as Gretchen said I want Ms. Salinger to know that so much of the work is done by volunteers - the members do the work, and we enjoy it.

**Greg Connelly** said I love having the country club there - it is basically a failed business - whether this is ever viable again, this may be one of them. It has proven that it cannot pay its bills, and a lot of people don't come to this golf course because there are better ones in the area. But what is the real business model in this? What is the plan? Coming to the town and saying "here, take it over" because it's not working is a good indication of its future as a course.

**Kathleen Allen** said someone said that there is no reason why it couldn't be marketed, so I'm wondering why it hasn't been done already.

**Joanne Carr** said I appreciate what some have been saying - I feel I have a lack of info on a business plan and the sustainability as a course - I feel that MCC and the community should have a better handle on that. But I feel that we are premature in that discussion without investigating other alternatives that have been mentioned tonight. If MCC is intent on protecting this as open space and as a golf course, and then put it on the market. I think there are some discussions, and we could

benefit from a mutual discussion. I am concerned by some comments by the Select Board that they intend to go forward with a purchase and sales agreement.

**Jamie Trowbridge** said I have a procedural question: Mr. Byk, you seemed confident that you could get a two-thirds vote, but we have seen a lot of things fail - we may not need to go to town meeting according to Mr. Kemp, but if it fails in May, what happens? **Chair Miller** said it would be null and void; **Mr. Byk** added that they would be free to go forward. **Mr. Trowbridge** then asked then how does MCC feel about waiting until May; Mr. MacInnes replied that it is a long way to wait. I cannot speak for the Board, but we could put that open space restriction on.

**Mr. Bartlett** said the next step is to compile the info we have tonight, take a look at it, we will be making comments to the board - we are working on some modifications to a draft agreement. Once the Select Board has seen it, and if they are ok it goes to the MCC board, if they are ok it goes to the membership. If they approve, the effort to do all the due diligence relevant to the MCC, what we have heard tonight, financial plans, business modeling, and all the alternatives in the presentation, including 3rd party. Then we enter into the capital improvements plan program and that committee, assess the financial impact of the town, go on to Budget Committee process, if there is a bond issue there could be another public hearing, and then in May 2012 it will be voted on in Town Meeting. It is a very long process, there is a lot of info that will need to be looked at and developed. There are options for funding from outside agencies, all of that is on the table, funding from conservancy. But until we are sure that both boards and the membership are on board, we are on hold. The information tonight and the next few decisions tell us where to go.

**Ms. Salinger** asked how much will the due diligence cost and where will that funding come from. **Mr. Bartlett** said that Town staff will do that work.

**Ms. Blanchette** said what I am hearing is that if the P&S comes to vote in May, and the town turns it down, then I am concerned that someone out there who might have wanted to purchase it - there are people with a lot of money who might be philanthropic will miss out. I would like to see the board put it on the market now. Maybe that's naive, but we are losing time.

**Donna Burt** said I agree with Jane, I think they should put the easements on it, but I think they should market it. We don't need to be in the business of a golf course.

**Ms. Porter** said I don't know if I would be in favor of the town purchasing all the property dirt cheap just to leave it there - why should MCC let that happen? I don't think that is a good deal for the club. Otherwise it should go to developers for condos.

**John Patterson** asked if the club gets sold, who gets the money? **Mr. MacInnes** replied that the profit would be divided amongst the current members. The members own the country club. They could, in their good judgment do what is necessary, but I think we have pretty well convinced them that we would like to keep it open as a golf course first, and as conservancy after that. The members will take their vote soon.

**Francie Von Mertens** said I am so appreciative to the Board of MCC for inviting the Town to be a partner in deciding something very important. It is important, land, its views, its history - give us time to make the decision the right one. I am so appreciative, and I think it took a lot of meetings on your part - thank you very much.

**Ms. Burt** asked what can the town do to help send business towards the golf course for renting out the hall more - recreation in the winter, is that something they could reimburse the club for?

**Loretta Laurenitis** said I just wanted to say that I support what you the Board are doing. I think it is a really valuable piece of property - can that be opened up to non-golfing members? **Mr. MacInnes** said there is a social membership.

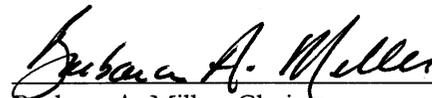
**David Macy** said I also wanted to thank the Town's administration for taking the challenge to sort all this out - I know it is difficult to sort through all the opinions and the facts.

**Chair Miller** closed the public hearing, saying that I assure everyone in this room that we will do our due diligence - this is just the beginning of a very long process. We need some time to see if we can develop a business plan to make the course viable. We have heard the importance of open space, - thank you for coming out this evening.

As there was no further business, **Chair Miller** made a motion to adjourn; **Mr. Byk** seconded. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Nicole MacStay, Assistant to the Town Administrator

PETERBOROUGH  
SELECT BOARD:

  
Barbara A. Miller, Chair

  
Joe Byk

  
Elizabeth M. Thomas

**ACTION ITEM PENDING LIST**

- 1.

