

BAKER HILL ROAD DISTRICT
PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE
WILLIAM PRENDERGAST, CHAIR

20 Bridge Street, Lanesborough, MA
February 9, 2022– 12:00 P.M

Attending: William Prendergast (Chairman), Hank Sayers, John Goerlach, Linda Pruyne, Mark Siegars, Lorna Gayle, Kristen Tool (Website), Josh Lang (Town Administrator), Rob Derksen (Police Chief)

Meeting called to order: 12:02 PM

Public Comment: None forthcoming

Minutes: Minutes for January 12, 2022 will be held over to the March 9th meeting.

Road Maintenance Report

The Road Maintenance report is held over to the March 9th meeting, as Mr. Decelles has not returned to work from having surgery.

Legal Issues

Expression of Interest Projects with the Town.

Mr. Siegars reported that he and Mr. Lang, have been working together on preparing Expression of Interest documentation for the State's Community One Stop Funding program. Currently they are waiting for a proposal to prepare a feasibility study for redoing the water utilities on the property. This is part of the redevelopment plan for the property. Mr. Siegars anticipates that the feasibility study will be done by May.

Although the Town will submit the Expressions of Interest the Road District will provide services as needed to complete the projects, as they did last when we worked with Mike Murphy on the sewer capacity projects for which with Town was awarded \$50,000 by the State.

Mr. Siegars also reported a call from the lawyer for Target regarding their belief that homeless people are living in the Mall property and using propane heaters, which are concern as there has been no fire suppression system lately. Mr. Siegars believes that whoever is at the Mall is part of the Security that has been hired.

Chief Derksen confirmed that there is someone living there with their dog claiming to be security. This was reported to Thomas Rathbun of the Fire Department. Allegedly this is the Security that has been hired.

Mr. Goerlach reported Jeff Blake, the Town's attorney, had spoken to Mr. Durga's representative, Mantu, who stated that they could not get anybody to provide security for the Mall. Mr. Blake suggests that the BHRD should make it a point to keep on top of them about this.

The Special Act legislation prepared by the Mall owner would strip the BHRD of any jurisdiction over the District except to collect the actual expense of the Police Department and Public Safety, without any ability to collect fees or to go to Court if these taxes are not paid. It would also erase all the back taxes owned by Durga Property Holdings, Inc.

After a lengthy discussion of the effect of this Special Act on the Police, Fire and Highway Departments in Town, Mr. Siegars and Mr. Blake suggested that the Town Administrator, Town Selectmen and the Road District Committee Members prepare a unified response to this proposed legislation and schedule a face-to-face public meeting with Senator Hinds to open up the discussion beyond the perspective of one taxpayer to explore the fallout affects for the entire Community.

Board Member Items

Mr. Siegars and Ms. Pruyne requested that going forward the Town acknowledge more clearly that they receive monies from the Road District rather than raise money for the Road District. This has caused a great deal of confusion among Town residents who think that the Town is supporting the Road District, when in truth the Road District gives money every year to the Police Department, the Fire Department and the Highway Department. Ms. Baumgartner said she would research it and make the necessary changes. Mr. Lang agreed.

Ms. Pruyne also discussed the refund the Road District receives from the Police Department, and whether that should be part of the Highway contract, or just turned over to free cash for the Town.

Also, based on a recent audit, Ms. Pruyne asked the Town for invoices for the monthly funds they receive from the BHRD as directed by the Auditor.

Next Steps

Mr. Blake will go back to the Town Selectmen to plan how to work together to respond to the Special Act. Mr. Siegars announced that the Committee will go back to having working lunches and the Police Chief and Town Administrator were invited to join.

Also, the Police Chief was asked to continue the monthly reporting of accidents on the Road that Chief Sorrell had provided. Mr. Prendergast requested that the Highway Department keep supplying the monthly report begun by Mr. Decelles regarding the plowing, monitoring and repair of the road. Also, Mr. Siegars explained to Mr. Lang that the Highway Department coordinates with warden at the House of Correction for cleaning crews to tidy the Connector Road from the Summer through Autumn and they would like to see that continue.

Motion to Adjourn the meeting moved by Mr. Sayers, seconded by Mr. Prendergast. All in favor.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:15 PM

Future Meeting: February 9,2022 at 12 PM. Water District Office, Bridge Street.