

TOWN OF MARLBORO REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING

Thursday, June 25, 2020

Meeting Via Zoom Call Online

5:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Present: *In attendance via Zoom, due to COVID-19 precautions:* Jesse Kreitzer, Select Board Chair; Julia von Ranson, Vice Chair; Aaron Betts, Member; Pam Burke, Select Board Assistant; Sheriff Mark Anderson; Bob Audette, member of the press; Seth Andrew, Democracy Builders, Founder and CEO; Mr. Duncan Democracy Builders; Susanne Shapiro, Marlboro Town Health Officer; Adrian Segar, Jonathon Podolsky, Bruce Hain, Jonathan Morse, Matt & Lucy Tell, Lauren Poster, Bradley Poster, Susan O'Hara, Vivienne Coutant, Stephanie Sopka, Lindy Corman, C.B. Hall, Jennifer Howard,, Lynn Perna, Mary Sargent, James Meade, Jamie McCoy, Amy Tudor, Lucy Gratwick, Tara Gorman, Justin Chandler, Lyne Lundsted, Residents and Martin Heck, Director of Save Marlboro College Corporation

CALL TO ORDER: Jesse Kreitzer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Changes to the Agenda: South Road Incident

Unscheduled Open Public Comment

Residents expressed that they were mostly there to listen, some wanted to speak to Seth Andrew and were given time to ask questions during his segment of the meeting.

Seth Andrew, Democracy Builders, Founder and CEO

Seth had just come from the Marlboro School Board meeting to discuss their interest in relocating to the former Marlboro College campus. Seth and his family are now living here on Marlboro's campus. Seth stated that he was open to questions from the public, but would not be able to speak to certain items because of legal action that has been threatened against Democracy Builders, some of whom were in attendance at the meeting.

Seth introduced himself and shared that he was born and raised in NY, but has spent much time in our area and has a deep passion for Vermont. He was a teacher in NY public schools. Technology, democracy, and education are his focus.

Seth stated that Democracy Builders hopes to close on the campus property very soon. They are waiting for the Attorney General's review. Democracy Builders will not be assuming the college endowment or faculty, those are being transferred to Emerson College as part of their merger. The current name of the program is "Degrees of Freedom", they hope to become "Freedom

College” over the next few months, contingent on accreditation.

Degrees of Freedom plans on having 100 students in the first rotation who will arrive on campus in September 2020. Students will be quarantined on campus. They won't have cars, will arrive in Brattleboro in a dedicated Amtrak, and will be driven to campus. Students will stay on the Marlboro campus for two weeks per trimester and then go home where they will finish the rest of their trimester online. They will work with faculty from many different institutions. The faculty will also be on campus for those two weeks and will have faculty housing on campus. There will be 20 - 40 full time staff on campus while in-session.

Seth spoke to Democracy Builders' approach of honoring the past and building for the future. Degrees of Freedom will provide flexible, inclusive and career preparatory education to primarily low income and first generation students.

Jesse iterated that sale of the college campus is a private transaction and that the Select Board's purview is very limited in this matter. He asked Seth to speak to any implications for the Marlboro taxpayer: Seth stated that since Democracy Builders are a nonprofit, the tax implications for the town do not change. Seth also stated that Marlboro students may have the opportunity to attend the high school program at a lower price than the town currently pays for students to attend other schools in the area. Degrees of Freedom will only offer courses to 11th and 12th graders.

Seth shared that the Marlboro Elementary School Board submitted a proposal to Democracy Builders to move the elementary school to the campus. They had wanted to use the library building, but Democracy Builders rejected that idea. However, they did have a discussion about the elementary school moving to the College's former arts buildings. The school could purchase or lease those buildings. There is a possibility that the school could move to the campus this September 2020. Discussions between Democracy Builders and the Elementary School are ongoing.

Seth discussed some on-campus partnerships. The Music festival has a 97 year lease and they will be coming back next summer. There will be no students on campus during the music festival. Seth shared that there have been preliminary discussions for the Nordic Outdoor Program, and a garden and ceramics partnership. Democracy Builders has no development planned for the foreseeable future. The campus is the right size for them, and they have no need to build additional facilities.

Health Officer Susanne Shapiro shared that some townsfolk have contacted her with concerns about public health, since there will be local staff working at the college who are coming into contact with the students who have come from other parts of the country. Seth answered that Democracy Builders will follow the Governor's guidelines and do the best they can to minimize risk. Students will be tested before getting on the train. They will hike the trails, but otherwise stay on campus for the two weeks that they are in Marlboro. Health and temperature checks will

happen daily. Faculty will also be tested for COVID-19 before coming to campus. Due to COVID-19, some faculty may teach remotely while the students are on campus. Democracy Builders are in regular contact with Emergency Management Director Jay Sparks concerning health considerations in the state. Seth invited Susanne to join an upcoming meeting between him, the Vermont Dept. of Health, and Jay Sparks.

Seth shared that Democracy Builders are currently interviewing for the Degrees of Freedom program but they can't post jobs until the sale of the campus closes. If anyone local is looking for a role, they should reach out through Democracy Builders' website. Democracy Builders will interview everyone who is transitioning out of Marlboro College and interested in a position with them.

Adrian Segar & Amy Tudor both indicated they have not been able to find all of Democracy Builders' tax returns for recent years. Seth replied that because of name changes in the past, paperwork might be hard to find in public records, but all paperwork was filed properly. Adrian asked about the origins of Democracy Builders' assets. Seth said their funding comes from a combination of philanthropy, grants, and tuition revenue.

There is a possibility that the Select Board will host a public forum to welcome Seth and Democracy Builders to town and provide an additional opportunity for residents to ask questions in the early or mid-July.

Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting on 6/11/20, Approval and Signature of Pay Orders, Signing of Dog Warrant (Kreitzer, VonRanson)

Approval and Signature of Pay Orders - Because of COVID-19 precautions, Jesse went to the Town Office on 6/11 to approve and sign pay orders and a dog warrant. (Kreitzer, von Ranson)

OLD BUSINESS

Marlboro College Closure/Democracy Builders Transition

Martin Heck of Putney stated that he was concerned that the town and school are talking about using the campus when the sale to Democracy Builders has not yet been finalized. Jesse responded that the Select Board wanted to meet with Seth to learn more about Democracy Builders' vision for the campus and understands that they are still only prospective tenants.

Formal Response to Select Board Resolution Requesting Route 9 Signage, Vermont Agency of Transportation

The VT Department of Transportation will not be installing the additional signage along VT-9 at the intersections of Auger Hole Road and Hughes Road to encourage motorists to stay on the State Highway that the town requested. Jesse will be in conversation with the bi-town economic

development committee and they'll talk about next collective steps. There is a potential to install additional signage on town roads.

Sheriff Mark Anderson's op-ed in the Reformer and Commons this week discussing the protests and calls for police reform.

Jesse thanked the Sheriff for attending and asked about the Sheriff Department's newly proposed advisory council. The sheriff replied that the work to create one is underway. There was some discussion about bills regarding law enforcement currently moving through state government and the sheriff's testimony before the state legislature. The Sheriff stated that many of the practices that have resulted in death in other states are not used here in Vermont, for example, choke holds are not used by the Windham County Sheriff's Department. Body cameras have been in use for three years in Windham County but there is no state-wide mandate yet. Jesse encouraged the sheriff to continue to keep the public involved in what's happening in law enforcement in Vermont. The Sheriff stated that he was happy to hear that all local law enforcement departments in our area know they can do better and are trying to do so. The Sheriff included in the text chat from the meeting: "If anyone wants to have a further conversation, I'd be happy to talk 802-365-4942 or manderso@windhamcountylvt.gov". The Selectboard will continue to research local, regional, and national membership-based organizations dedicated to fighting systemic racism and police brutality, with the intention of making a contribution and joining as members.

Beaver Deceiver Installation on North Pond Road

After a brief discussion, the Select Board voted to reimburse Skip Lisle the amount of \$140 for travel expenses incurred during the installation and dismantling of the North Pond beaver deceiver. Payment will be made once all materials are moved from the site. (Kreitzer, Betts)

NEW BUSINESS

Google Docs/Searchable Committee Minutes Archive

Pam has made progress on this project, but is not yet public. Searchable folders of past minutes should be public by July.

INFORMATION ITEMS AND MAIL

- Muster Field Lease - no change
- DRB Zoom Meeting Recordings - Pam is downloading them from Zoom and storing them for the committee.
- Act 250 Submission: Marlboro College - Nordic Trail Improvement Project - the Select Board acknowledged receipt.
- South Rd. Incident - The Select Board has received multiple communications regarding an incident involving two Marlboro residents and the State police on South Rd. on June 21, 2020. This is now a criminal matter that is being handled by the VT State Police. The

Select Board is in communication with State's Attorney Tracy Shriver concerning the town's role in this matter. Jesse stated that if anyone sees a person behaving erratically on South Rd., they should not engage directly but contact the Vermont State Police on their non-emergency phone number 802-722-4600.

There was discussion of speeding on South Rd. Jesse stated that there is funding for radar signs and the Select Board will look into installing some.

ADJOURN 7:21 pm