

MINUTES of the
TOWN OF MARLBORO REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING

Thursday, July 9, 2020

Meeting via Zoom Call Online

5pm

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; Bob Audette, Member of the Press; Rachel Segal, executive director of the Peace and Justice Center; Zenzile Keith, former staff member at Democracy Prep; anonymous members of Black and Brown at Democracy Prep; Telling Truth, an anonymous alumni of Democracy Prep; Sarah Wiggins and Nadir Hashem, Windham County NAACP; Ariel Poster, Lisa Richardson, Cherrie Corey, Sally White, Mary Sargent, Jonathan Poldosky, Lauren Poster, Amy Tudor, Andy Horton, Dana Harris, Lissa Harris, members of the public

CALL TO ORDER: Jesse Kreitzer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

Jesse started the meeting with a moment of silence in honor of Marlboro Elementary School first grader Clara Belanger, who died in an accident on the 4th of July. Jesse shared that the school is collecting cards and items for Clara's family and hosting gatherings via Zoom. There is a GoFundMe for Clara's family under the name Clara Jean.

Unscheduled Open Public Comment

Comment time was extended by an additional 20 minutes.

Ariel Poster read a quote from a recent article posted on Medium.com by an anonymous former Democracy Prep employee and asked the selectboard to make a statement in response. Amy Tudor also asked the town representatives to make a public statement. Cherrie Corey asked the selectboard to make more opportunities to discuss the college sale. Andy Horton asked the Select Board to ask questions of Seth Andrews. Russ Horton asked if the sale of the college to Democracy Builders can be delayed so the town can get to the bottom of the story. Lauren Poster echoed concerns previously mentioned.

Representatives of the group Black and Brown at Democracy Prep spoke anonymously. They say they are a collective that is bringing voice to the voiceless. They have received over 350 stories about the "catastrophic legacy of Seth Andrew" in his time at Democracy Prep. They spoke of a lack of integrity and a toxic climate at Democracy Prep. Jonathan Podolsky reflected on the recent VT Digger article and questioned the lack of transparency regarding IRS documents from

Democracy Prep. Dana Harris asked the selectboard to issue a public statement. Rachel Siegel, executive director Peace and Justice Center, stated that she was in attendance in solidarity with Black and Brown at Democracy Prep and that the Peace and Justice Center are deeply concerned about the sale of the college to Democracy Builders.

Speaking as the community representative to the Marlboro College Campus Working Group, Jesse Kreitzer, said that in light of the new information regarding Seth Andrew's tenure at Democracy Prep, he will ask the MC Board of Trustees and Attorney General's Office to conduct a thorough investigation of the allegations made by the Black N Brown at Democracy Prep collective, and to be very transparent with the public in their findings. He also urges fellow members of the CWG, and any entities involved directly or indirectly with the sale of the MC campus, particularly those who recently issued public statements in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement, to make the same request of the Trustees and Attorney General.

Zenzile Keith, a former staff member at Democracy Prep, spoke of their time working with Seth Andrews and stated that they witnessed behavior from Mr. Andrews that echoes the stories that have been reported online.

Public comment was extended an additional 10 minutes. Lissa Harris shared some of the same concerns others had expressed. Telling Truth, an anonymous alumni of Democracy Prep, shared concerns about Seth Andrew. They stated that they have seen "both the positive and negative sides of Seth Andrew". They stated that their class began with 136 students, but graduated less than 40. They stated that they had been harassed by Seth Andrew, and felt that they were treated as a 'trophy' student and resented it. They believe that Seth Andrew has done much harm to Democracy Prep students and strongly feel like he should not work with black and brown students again. Aaron Betts stated that he appreciated hearing the first hand testimonies of the members of Black N Brown at Democracy Prep who had joined the meeting.

5:40 Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting on 6/25/20, Approval and Signature of Pay Orders, Approval and Signature of First and Third Class Liquor License from Ed Metcalfe at Vermont Distillers on Hogback (Kreitzer, Betts)

5:45 Marlboro College Closure/Democracy Builders Transition

Jesse said he reached out to Dick Saudek, chair of the Marlboro College board of trustees. Dick replied that the board is taking the Black N Brown at Democracy Prep allegations seriously and are conducting an investigation. Jesse stated that the Marlboro Selectboard has been advised by their attorney that they can not intervene in a private sale and that the Select Board is quite limited in what it can do. Jesse made a motion to call upon the College trustees to investigate the allegations and testimonies made by Black N Brown at Democracy Prep, and maintain full transparency. The motion passed (Kreitzer, VonRanson).

Jesse made a motion that the Select Board call upon the Marlboro Alliance to establish an ad-hoc committee tasked with addressing our community's well-being through guided forums,

mediations, and visioning exercises. The committee should be composed of a diverse coalition of members representing the many viewpoints and constituencies of our town, and should work to create a more inclusive, open-minded, and caring place for all who wish to call Marlboro home. The Select Board will ask the committee to organize a professionally-facilitated, inaugural forum to begin to address the collective grief, frustration, and confusion related to the closure of Marlboro College and the prospective new owner of the campus. Ideally, the forum would be held outdoors and in-person. The motion passed. (Kreitzer, Betts)

Lisa Richardson, member of the public, said she had not located a public statement from the College Board of Trustees. She suggested that the town push back on the sale of the college and get a second opinion on the legality of the Selectboard's role.

Muster Field Lease

The Select Board has signed a lease for the Muster Field with Jacob Hamilton and he'll take over the mowing duties. The Select Board thanks him!

(Kreitzer, VonRanson)

Animal Control Officer Hours

Peggy Tiffany is donating her pay to the Animal Rescue Fund. Peggy has already logged 21 hours for the year, which is twice the rate of last year. Peggy's guess as to why she has received more calls is that more people are at home due to COVID-19, and more dogs are out at large. She's also seen an uptick in dog fights, most are happening with unleashed dogs attacking leashed dogs. Peggy says the ARF funds are not being accessed much.

South Road Radar Signage

The Windham County Sheriff's department has placed a temporary smart radar sign on South Rd. It was originally next to the firehouse, now it has been moved further South. There is grant funding that will be accessed for a permanent sign. Jesse, Road Foreman David Elliot and the Sheriff Mark Anderson will meet and use data from the temporary sign to decide on the location of a permanent sign. In response to an email complaint about construction trucks speeding on South Rd., citizens are encouraged to log license plates and business names of construction trucks and call the businesses, or that information can be passed onto the selectboard. The Select Board will also ask the sheriff's department to patrol South Rd more often. There was discussion of the role of the town constable. The Select Board could consider expanding the duties of the constable to issuing speeding tickets, and/or hiring an additional constable. Mary Sargent expressed the need for clear supervision of the constable if duties are expanded. Julia expressed concern about expanding the constable's duties. Jesse noted that the installation of mirrors or speed bumps are also an option.

Racial Equity Membership-based Organizations

Some of the organizations that the Select Board is thinking of supporting are ACLU Vermont, Justice for All, Peace and Justice Center, NAACP VT, and The Root. There was discussion of

whether the Select Board should obtain a membership to one of these organizations, or if it should be brought to Town Meeting in March. Julia will check with Linda Peters and find out the best way to move forward.

INFORMATION ITEMS AND MAIL

Route 9 Marlboro Signage for Ski Areas

After receiving letters from the boards of Dover, Marlboro and Wilmington, Vtrans has said they will take our request for signage into consideration. They are organizing a meeting with all the selectboards.

The FY2021 Building Communities Grants

The Select Board received information for applying to **The FY2021 Building Communities Grants** for construction and capital improvements to public buildings. Pam will send the information on to the planning commission for review and ask them to report back to the Select Board. The deadline to submit applications for the Building Communities Grants is September 15, 2020.

The Select Board has been notified that the Education Tax Rates for Marlboro Fiscal Year 2021 are as follows:

The base homestead education tax rate for FY21 is \$1.542

The non homestead education tax rate for FY21 is \$1.628

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36pm. Respectfully Submitted, Pamela Burke, Assistant to the Select Board