2010

Town of Northport Special Town Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2010

Northport, Me.

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Town Clerk, Barbara O’Leary, called the meeting to order on May 4, 2010 at 6:40pm, at which time the following articles were acted upon.

Ballot Clerks: Alismarie Parsloe; Toupie Rooney; Robin Coombs; Barbara O’Leary

Attendance: 31

Art. 1 To choose a Moderator.
Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Nominations for moderator: Joseph Moser was nominated, second received, nominations ceased. Three votes were cast for Joseph Moser. Moser was elected and sworn in by Town Clerk Barbara O’Leary.

Art. 2 Shall an ordinance entitled “Town of Northport Dog Control Ordinance” be enacted?
Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Discussion followed. A resident asked why the ordinance was before the Town. Paul Rooney stated over the past year there have been several issues with dangerous dogs and dogs at large. This ordinance will address those problems. Discussion ceased. Moved to vote the question. Article approved.

Art. 3 Shall an ordinance entitled “Town of Northport Building Permit Ordinance” be enacted?
Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Drexell White moved to table the article for further review. Second by Paul Rooney. Discussion followed. The Board recommended tabling the ordinance since an earlier ordinance from 1967 has been located. Further review of the ordinance is in order. Discussion ceased. Article tabled.

Art. 4 Shall an ordinance entitled “Town of Northport Wind Energy Ordinance” be enacted?
Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Discussion followed. Bruce Grant spoke as being opposed to the ordinance. He has a small farm on Beech Hill Road and hopes to put up a small residential wind turbine. He felt the tone of the ordinance is to halt all wind power in Northport and would not allow any kind of wind facility. Paul Rooney disagreed stating the ordinance would set guidelines for wind energy more specifically for commercial ones and would allow residential turbines through the building permit process.

Mr. Grant expressed concern or disapproval with the following sections of the ordinance:
8.1& 2 Mr. Grant did not like the use of “may” in regards to the CEO and Planning Board approving applications and permits. He felt it gave them the right to deny an application and permit without any recourse. John Dykstra, Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman, stated a denial would follow the appeals process as stated on pg 11, section 8.11, just like any other appeal. If the ZBA should uphold the Planning Board denial, the resident could then appeal to the Maine Superior Court.

8.7 Professional Services to be born by the applicant. Mr. Grant did not feel the applicant should pay the cost of additional review requested by the Planning Board.

Section 10 MET Towers. Mr. Grant put up an MET tower six months ago and felt he should be able to leave it up longer if he felt more studies were needed. Denise Lindahl stated the ordinance allows an MET tower to be up for two years and two months and the CEO may allow one or more one-year extensions. This would allow extra time for further studies.

Section 11.9 Structure Type. Mr. Grant stated bird diverters on guy wires should not be necessary if birds are not being killed.

Section 12.1.1 Sound levels. Mr. Grant felt the sound limits for noise were too restrictive. He has been to other towns with wind turbines and did not feel the sound was obtrusive. He also questioned the reference to “protected locations” and suggested the table on pg 20 ‘Sound Level Limits’ should be looked at if high enough.

Mr. Grant closed in saying the proposed Northport ordinance penalizes the person who would like to put up a small windmill.

Bruce Morehouse asked where the ordinance originated. Paul Rooney stated the Code Officer adapted it from the State model for wind turbines, which has been available for the past six months or so.

Jim Nealey moved to vote by secret ballot. Second given, the vote will be by secret ballot.

Jennifer McFarland stated she has high sensitivity to noise and is very concerned with the noise levels of a wind turbine. She also expressed concern with the lack of information on negative effects from the turbines on continuous noise and the flicker.

Chris Drinkwater stated last year the Board was trying to encourage turbines to come into Northport and now they want to restrict them. He felt the ordinance was only a way for the Town to set a fee. Paul Rooney stated the ordinance is a result of the hearings and meeting from last year where residents expressed concern with commercial wind turbines coming into Northport with no guidelines. This ordinance puts the question before the residents to decide.
Also asked was if the ordinance would apply to battery operated windmills? They would and would go through the permit process. Discussion ended. Moved to vote the question.

Ballots were cast and counted with the following result:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
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Article 4 approved.

Art. 5 Shall the Town of Northport vote to release funds up to $20,500.00 from the Sand & Salt Shed Fund to purchase land on Route 1 for a sand and salt garage?

Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Discussion followed.
Paul Rooney stated the Board has been trying to relocate the present sand and salt pile out of the residential area it is in. Prior Board member Craig Poulin has tried to form an agreement with the DOT to allow the Town to co-locate on their property on Route 1 in Northport. They did not agree to this. They are now willing to sell 1.05 acres of that property to the Town. This property has power already and better access for the plow trucks. If approved, the Board may come before the Town next year with building estimates.

Bruce Morehouse stated he lives right next to the current sand-salt pile and has concerns his well will be contaminated. He also stated the run-off from the pile into the ditch is so high it cannot be measured. He questioned the liability to the Town if contamination happens.

Mr. Mushlit asked what the cost to build a garage would be. David Lindahl researched this question for the Board and stated the cost will depend on the size of the garage. The larger the garage, the more expensive. He stated it could run anywhere from $150,000 to $300,000.00.

Paul Rooney stated the State was going to mandate all sand and salt piles be covered but they have not done so yet. Jim Hanson asked if the present site is a buildable lot. It is, but again the problem is having this in a residential area. The entrance is such that it makes it difficult to see trucks entering or leaving, when coming down the hill. If a garage were to be built there, the pile would have to be moved out of the way in order to put down a foundation.

It was asked how much money is in the fund. Town Clerk Barbara O’Leary reported there is presently $33,238.00 in the fund. Discussion ended. Moved to vote the question.

Art 5 approved.

Art. 6 Shall the Town of Northport vote to approve a Community Development Block Grant application for the following program and dollar amounts:
Program: Atlantic Blanket Company d.b.a. Swans Island Blankets, expand manufacturing production capacity in the natural dyeing process and create a minimum of 7 new jobs.

Amount: $200,000.00

And to submit same to the Department of Economic and Community Development and if said program is approved, to authorize the municipal officers to accept said grant funds, to make such assurances, assume such responsibilities, and exercise such authority as are necessary and reasonable to implement such programs. Furthermore, the Town of Northport is cognizant of the requirement that should the intended national Objective of the CDBG program not be met, all CDBG funds must be repaid to the State of Maine CDBG program.

Moved to accept the article as read. Second. Paul Rooney asked that Bill Laurita of Swans Island Blankets be allowed to speak since he is not a resident of Northport. Voters approved.

Mr. Laurita gave background information on the company. They produce hand woven blankets made from natural hand dyed yarns. When Mr. Laurita bought the company with his partners, they had two employees and now six years later, have 10-12 employees depending on the project. They are looking to expand their natural dyed knitting yarns and the dye house.

They have gone through a complete review process and have been approved for a dyeing process that will produce one unnatural chemical, potassium aluminum. This will be held in a settling tank and hauled away to a waste facility. There may be 12lbs produced during a year.

The grant will allow Swans Island Blankets to grow. They will expand the dye house for the knitting yarns and hire seven employees from Waldo County. If approved, they will be required to match the $200,000.00 in grant funds. The risk to the town is if they do not hire all seven employees, the Town would be liable for $30,000.00 for each employee not hired, which would need to be paid back to the CDBG. Swans Island Blankets have complete confidence they will be able to hire the seven employees.

If the application is approved, the funds will be released to the Town. Swans Island Blankets will hire a Grant Administrator to pay bills. Receipts will be sent to the Town, logged in and the Grant Administrator will be responsible and liable, that the funds are then spent according to the grant guidelines. A benefit to the Town will be the increase in property valuation and the tax base. It was estimated the value of the property would double, as well as the taxes.

In order to safeguard the Town should for reasons unknown the seven employees not be hired, the Town will place a lien on the property. Mr. Morehouse asked how SIB felt about the risk the town would take on. Mr. Laurita stated he was confident the employees would be hired and understood the risk to the Town and the residents. Paul
Rooney said the Board felt the risk was worth the new business and increase to the tax base. They too felt SIB would be able to hire the employees from within Waldo County. The lien on the property does give the Town recourse. Mr. Laurita also stated he felt the only way employees would not be hired would be if the funds were used for something else and the Grant Administrator would prevent that from happening. The funds can only be used for what the invoice states. The funds will be for the new dye house and the seven employees.

John Dykstra asked how long the Town would be liable for the new employee positions. Mr. Laurita explained the jobs must be filled within two years of the grant approval. Once the jobs are filled it will not matter if the employee does not work out and is released at a later date. The guidelines state once the job is filled, the liability of the Town is released.

Jim Nealey asked if the property is already leveraged. Mr. Laurita stated he is trying not to use the property as collateral. He is also looking for investors and has a very promising backer. He also stated if he does not have his $200,000.00 share, he will not be able to go forward even if awarded the grant.

Mr. Laurita ended stating if any business in Northport were thinking of applying for a CDBG grant, he would be more than willing to help in the process.

Moved to vote the question. Second.

Article 6 approved.

Moved to adjourn meeting. Second. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara O’Leary
Town Clerk