

TOWN OF KENSINGTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
Kensington Town Hall
95 Amesbury Road
Kensington, NH 03833
MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023
Agenda – MINUTES - APPROVED
6:00PM

In Attendance: Joe Pace (chairperson), Bob Solomon, Bob Gustafson, and Owen Corcoran (Land Use Administrative Assistant)

The chairperson led all present in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

Public Comment-

AVITAR ASSOCIATES REPRESENTATIVE- REVALUATIONS

- Chad Roberge from Avitar Associates was present to address concerns from residents regarding recent revaluations. J. Pace introduced C. Roberge and invited the public to speak individually to express their concerns.
- C. Roberge explained the process of evaluations. He said that they drive through the town using previous sales and the visible condition of homes to develop valuations, and that Avitar relies on residents to present concerns so that valuations can be as accurate as possible.
- J. Pace clarified that in November, the board will set the tax rate for next year. The board will examine the town's budget that was approved by voters in March, the overall town valuation, the school tax rate, and the county tax rate. The board will then formulate a tax rate to send to the state. He estimated that the rate will drop significantly.
- Peter Ferguson of 96 Stumpfield Rd asked about the current tax rate. J. Pace stated that \$19.86 as an estimate, and that the rate is going to drop by a large margin.
- A resident of Kensington Place expressed concerns that some parts of town are being taxed at a higher rate than other parts. C. Roberge stated that location and demand can impact the tax rate. P. XXXXX asked if there was a list available for the parts of town with higher tax rates. C. Roberge stated that there is a neighborhood report that he can provide to the board. J. Pace asked C. Roberge to email the list to the town administrator.
- Diane Wood of 77 Amesbury Rd. asked when the new tax rates will be decided, and expressed concern about consistency, as well as the potential for tax bills to jump significantly in the future. She also expressed concerns with her 1 acre lot being taxed the same as a 2 acre lot. C. Roberge stated that should not be the case and will look at the issue. J. Pace stated that for tax rates to jump up significantly, the town's budget would have to also go up significantly. He stated that a small increase in tax rates is to be expected, as town employees will be paid more, roads will need to be repaired, etc. He explained that jumps in tax rates can also come with the desirability to live in the town. D. Wood expressed concerns with aging residents who have lived

here for a long time and plan on staying here being priced out due to rising tax rates. J. Pace reiterated that tax bills will not go up the same percentage as tax rates, and that the increase will most likely be a fraction of those valuations.

- Barabra Collins of 1 Palmer Dr. expressed concerns about residents being pushed out of town, specifically the town's seniors. She asked about senior tax reduction. J. Pace explained that there is an elderly tax exemption in place and stated that the community can bring these issues to the town meeting in March to determine what that feel is best for issues like senior tax exemptions.
- Elizabeth Weber of 6 Wild Pasture Rd expressed concerns regarding valuations of land based on features and disparities with regards to country vs. non-country roads. She stated that she is on the edge of not being able to afford the taxes, and expressed concerns about being pushed out of the town. J. Pace stated that everyone's equity is appropriate to their property, and advised residents to contact and work with Avitar Associates. J. Pace opined that the only thing that drives up tax bills is town spending. He emphasized the importance of equity in valuations, and stated that it is critical for the valuation of that asset to be as close as possible to its market value for a fair valuation. C. Roberge stated that residents can contact Avitar individually to work on their assessment issues.
- Randy Wood of 77 Amesbury Rd. asked C. Roberge if new development will impact the tax rate for everyone. J. Pace stated that new development does impact the rate for the entire town.
- Lauren Curtis of 81 Amesbury Rd. asked about Avitar assessing a quarter of the town every year. C. Roberge stated that it's only to verify if Avitar's information is accurate, and that they are not conducting valuations.
- J. Pace asked if there were additional comments or questions for C. Roberge. Seeing none, he encouraged residents to get in touch with Avitar Associates to express their concerns so that they can respond to the issue.
- The board took a 5 minute recess.

AGENDA:

DEPARTMENT HEADS:

- Police Department –Chief Scott Cain –
 - Chief Cain stated that if residents see something suspicious, to call immediately call 911 and not rely on posting on Facebook, as the police department does not monitor social media.
- Town Clerk – Sarah Wiggin – **ELECTION TEAM- BALLOT COUNTING DEVICE UPDATE**
 - S. Wiggin shared that she participated in the demonstration of voting devices on August 2nd in Concord. She stated that it was very well attended by town clerks from across the state and was open to the public. 3 ballot machines were presented from ESNS, Voting Works, and LHS (the town's current vendor). Those in attendance were able to use the machines as designed and gave feedback on each device. The state is aggregating all information from the demonstration. S. Wiggin explained that the Ballot Law Commission chose to move Voting Works and LHS4 head for further evaluations. The next demonstration will be held on Wednesday September 13th and they will decide on the next voting device. The current machines are 30 years old, and the manufacturer is not making parts to maintain them.
 - S. Wiggin Stated that a position for Deputy town clerk has been posted to the town website. There have been 2 inquiries, and 1 person has applied for the position.

NEW BUSINESS:

- ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS- GRANGE DONATION FOR \$4900 FOR INSULATION
 - J. Pace read the donation into the record.

MOTION: B. Solomon made a motion to accept the unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$4900. B. Gustafson seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

- KING CHALLENGE ROAD RACE FOR SATURDAY OCTOBER 21, 2023
 - Chief Cain stated that he has not had a chance to review the application and said that he's waiting to see the route of the bike ride.
 - J. Pace recommended the board vote to approve the application pending the police department's approval of the route.

MOTION: B. Gustafson motioned to approve the road race application pending the approval of the police chief. B. Solomon seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

- APPLICATION FROM KATHERINE GLEASON FOR THE USE OF ALCOHOL AT SAWYER PARK
 - J. Pace stated that the event is for about 50 people from 11am-1pm.
 - Chief Cain had no concerns.

MOTION: B. Solomon made a motion to approve the application for alcohol use at the park. B. Gustafson seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Approval of Board Minutes for **SEPTEMBER 6, 2023**
 - The board tabled the approval of minutes of September 6, 2023.
- **Next Meeting Date – October 2, 2023**
 - K. Felch and B. Solomon will not be able to attend the meeting on September 25th. The board will meet for their next regular meeting on October 2nd, and will come in as necessary to sign bills and payroll.

MOTION: B. Gustafson motioned to adjourn the meeting. B. Solomon seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Owen M. Corcoran
Land Use Administrative Assistant

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