

TOWN OF ST. GERMAIN

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

P.O. BOX 7

ST. GERMAIN, WISCONSIN 54558

townofstgermain.org

MINUTES SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING: MAY 22, 2008

- 1. Call To Order:** The chairman noted that this was a duly called meeting in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.
- 2. Roll Call:** Peggy Nimz, Todd Wiese, Lee Christensen, Fred Radtke, John Vojta, Marion Janssen, Town Treasurer and Tom Martens, Town Clerk.
- 3. Approval of Agenda:** Motion Christensen seconded Wiese that the agenda be approved in any order at the discretion of the chairman. Approved.

4. Items for Consideration (Approve, Disapprove, Table):

Patty Van Den Elzen – Manager of Real Estate, Wisconsin Public Service Property Development:

Ms. Van Den Elzen stated that as part of its continuing Real Estate Asset Management strategy to divest itself of property it doesn't need, Integrys Energy Group, parent company of Wisconsin Public Service, will look to divest about 350 acres of about 410 acres it owns on Lake Content in Sections 28 & Section 29 in St. Germain, Vilas County, Wisconsin. Ms. Van Den Elzen also stated that the company would like to keep the property in its present state by using conservation easements or other means. The company had contacted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources about purchasing the property, but the DNR decided that such a purchase didn't fit its goals.

Ms. Van Den Elzen informed the town board that the company would like to sell the property as a whole. Kyle Zastrow, from Appraisal North has appraised the property at \$5,700,000. The company would consider selling the property in two portions. One portion (approximately 10% of the property) would be four 8 to 10 acre parcels along eastern shore of Lake Content for approximately \$2,500,000. Each lot would have 700 ft. to 800 ft. of shoreline. The deeds would state that only one single family home could be built per lot. The town board asked if someone could use the lots for a condominium development. Ms. Van Den Elzen stated that there could be a condo development, but that there still could only be one unit per lot. The second portion (approximately 90% of the property) would be sold as a nature conservancy for \$3,000,000. No structures could be built on the second portion of the property. Ms. Van Den Elzen added that Kyle Zastrow had placed a value of \$1,700,000 to \$1,900,000 of an easement through the property. The company will keep approximately 60 of land along with Awassa Lodge.

Mr. Wiese asked what use the property would be to the town since it is to be kept in its natural state. Ms. Van Den Elzen noted that the company is willing to work with whomever purchases the property. There could be special conditions in the deed allowing for the town's needs.

In 1991 or 1992, at the time that the town board was looking into condemning the WPS property for a golf course, WPS offered to donate 20 acres to the Town of St. Germain for park along with \$35,000 if the town would not use its power of eminent domain. At that time, WPS also agreed to provide a two to three mile, hiking trail adjacent to the 20 acres. The hiking trail utilizes approximately 100 acres of the property. The town board was concerned about losing the hiking trail. The Bo-Boen Snowmobile Trail also runs through the property from Half Mile Road. Ms. Van Den Elzen stated that it was the intention of the company to keep both the hiking trail and snowmobile trail on the property, although, there was no guarantee that the new owner of the property would go along with that..

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Brian Pierce, the Executive Director of the Northwoods Land Trust, noted that there would be grants available to the town should the town board decide to purchase all or part of the property. If, however, the town applied for and received a Stewardship Grant from the State of Wisconsin, it would be a 50% grant, and the property would have to be open to the public. The town board would have to come up with the rest of the money. Mr. Wiese asked the clerk how the town could obtain the money. The clerk noted that the town board would probably have to take out a 20-year note, which would require the electors' approval through a referendum election.

Mr. Radtke stated that he thought that the town needed a public beach. Ms. Van Den Elzen stated that the company did not want to be in the development business. They did not want to do any dividing of the property other than to set aside the four 8 to 10 acre lots. She did say, however, that the company would be willing to look at a town proposal. Mr. Vojta added that the slope to the lake was very steep. It would be difficult to find an area suitable for a beach. The entire bay on the southern end of the lake is surrounded by a wetland.

Ms. Janssen that in 1991 or 1992 there had been very strong feelings in town about the condemnation of the WPS land for the golf course. At that time, the town board was going to offer \$150,000 for the property. WPS thought that it was worth \$350,000. WPS offered the \$35,000 and 20 acres as a concession so that the town would not condemn the land. Ms. Janssen thought that the town had basically given WPS \$5,000,000 and that WPS should now be willing to make a better offer to the town. Ms. Van Den Elzen stated that the company had discussed that situation and is not willing to donate any of the property to the town.

Mr. Wiese thought that the town board should hire a professional to investigate what opportunities might be available to the town. Ms. Nimz stated that, with board approval, she would call Attorney William O'Conner tomorrow. Motion Wiese seconded Vojta to allow the town chair to contact Attorney William O'Conner to see if with all of the restrictions WPS is placing on the property if there would be any benefit to the town to purchase all or part of the property. Motion carried by a voice vote. Mr. Radtke voted against.

5. Citizens Concerns:

5A. Tim Ebert: Mr. Ebert asked if WPS had a time limit for the town board to make a decision. Ms. Van Den Elzen stated that the company wanted to complete the transaction in 2008. If something came up of their end, Ms. Van Den Elzen stated that she would let the town board know

Ellen Allen: Ms. Allen noted that the Friends of the Old School had received its first check from their recent mailing for \$50.00.

6. Board Concerns:

Fred Radtke: Mr. Radtke thought that a nature preserve, the property was of little value to the town. He felt that the town needed a swimming beach, but that was not part of the company's plan. Mr. Radtke stated that he would be against borrowing any money for the property.

John Vojta: Mr. Vojta stated that he felt that the board needed to get expert advice.

Peggy Nimz: Ms. Nimz noted that a Stewardship Grant could help pay for one-half of the property. If

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there was a concern about the property being open to the public, then perhaps the grant could only be for a portion of the property so that it would not all have to be open.

Lee Christensen: Mr. Christensen also thought that the board needed more information.

Marion Janssen: Ms. Janssen stated that she was disappointed with WPS not offering more to the town since the town had not condemned the property in 1992.

Tom Martens: Mr. Martens thought that instead of spending money on an attorney it might be a better idea to ask a local developer such as Don Eliason about the property. Ms. Nimz stated that Brian Eliason had been one of the people that had already called WPS about the property.

Mr. Martens also noted that the town board was going to have to make a decision concerning a liquor license at the June meeting. Presently the business is not meeting the requirements of the Licensing Ordinance.

7. **Adjournment:** Motion Wiese seconded Vojta that the meeting be adjourned. Approved. Meeting adjourned 8:44 P.M.

Town Clerk

Chairman

Supervisor

Supervisor

Supervisor

Supervisor