

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Large Program Room of the Simsbury Public Library. In attendance were: First Selectman Lisa Heavner; Board members Michael Paine, Cheryl Cook, Sean Askham, Christopher Kelly, and Elaine Lang. Others in attendance included: Thomas Cooke, Director of Administrative Services, Tom Roy, Director of Public Works and other interested parties.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING

To receive public comment concerning a proposal to lease land at the Town’s closed landfill site to Ameresco, Inc. for the purpose of installing a Community Shared Solar Array in connection with a Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection pilot program.

Ms. Heavner reminded everyone that they can speak for 5 minutes each on this issue. If there is time left, they may come back to speak again.

Joan Coe, 26 Whitcomb Drive, said she was against this solar project at the landfill. She said the Town was given the land by Eno Trust to help the poor of Simsbury and it is too close to the Airport. She doesn’t feel this project will be viable in the future.

Robert Kalechman, 971 Hopmeadow Street, said he has heard a lot of talk about solar panels and most of it has been complaints. He spoke about using 100 acres of land and cutting down trees. He feels the project isn’t even approved by the State so the Board doesn’t really know what they are voting on.

Bradford Griswold, the Manager of Simsbury Airport, said he is a huge fan of solar. However, he cannot endorse or recommend this project. He feels this is a great reflecting hazard to the airport approach at the Simsbury Airport. He showed everyone a simulation of the issue. The pilots will be “flash blind” for at least 15 seconds and this would be a huge hazard, which could result in death. More information is needed on this project before he could possibly endorse it.

Bill Holling, 16 Wood Haven Drive, had concerns when he read the article on this solar issue. He said the dollar amount of savings is incorrect. He thinks the amount should be \$70/year not \$700/year.

Bob Beinstein, Fairview Street, and on the Clean Energy Task Force, said there have been conversations with the Airport, and they all agree that more information is needed. This is not a “done deal.” He said this is a State pilot program, which is all done on spec and Ameresco is doing this at no cost to the Town. We need to learn how to reduce energy consumption now. He is in favor of this project, but knows there are a lot of variables.

Mark Scully also on the Clean Energy Task Force, said he is proud that Simsbury is in the position to be able to bid on this pilot program. A lot of work was done on this. He feels this is a wonderful service to offer to the Town. He does understand the airport issues are of concern and knows the FAA will require a study before any approval can be made. This would be a great opportunity for the Town.

Mr. Griswold reiterated that his only concern on this project is the safety at the Airport and he just feels more details are needed before approving it. He has no other issues about this project, but the safety concerns.

Mr. Kalechman feels the solar panels can be a danger to life if put there. He wants to make sure the State approves this before we move forward. Also, he doesn’t feel that the savings are really there.

Mr. Beinstein reminded everyone that the Board is not voting on the actual solar panels, just on the land issue. If safety issues are met and the State doesn’t approve this then the project won’t go through.

Ms. Coe said she heard a lot tonight and doesn’t feel the Board should go forward with this without more information.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Askham made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing at 6:35 p.m. Ms. Lang seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Tavin Matthew read a Chinese proverb about teenagers and how they can succeed if given a chance. He said this is what the Simsbury ABC House has done for the past 40 years and over 80 graduates. He said they gave a new meaning to an old proverb. He spoke about where he came from and what the program has done for him, including leadership skills. He invited everyone to stop by and say hello.

Joan Coe, 26 Whitcomb Drive, spoke about the final Charter revisions being voting on in November, some issues at concerts, a sign she created, the new lightbulb changes, hours at the Town offices, and other issues.

Robert Kalechman, 971 Hopmeadow Street, spoke about feeling it is his responsibility and duty to speak at public audience and try to help the Town, street lights and sidewalks, solar panels, and other issues.

Bradford Griswold thanked the Board, Tom Roy and the Municipal Services for their help with the solar panel issues. He reminded everyone about the Simsbury Fly-in and Car Show on September 18th. He reminded everyone that is only concern is safety at the Airport.

FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT

Ms. Heavner said the first day of school is August 31st for Simsbury. She said to check out the Simsbury Public School website at <http://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/page.cfm?p=4076> for more information.

Ms. Heavner said Simsbury is participating in the National Bike Challenge through September 30th. Simsbury is currently ranked #2 in the U.S. and we are trying to reach #1. For more information, please visit the website at www.simsbury.bike.

Ms. Heavner congratulated the Simsbury Police Cadets who received an award for the highest overall GPA for the academic portion of the Connecticut Cadet Academy. Well done!

Ms. Heavner said there is a back to school program for eligible families, where they will receive a Walmart gift card to help purchase school supplies or clothes for their children. For further information, please contact the Social Services Department at (860) 658-3283.

Ms. Heavner the Annual Police Senior Citizen Picnic is being held on September 7th at the Simsbury Farms Ice Skating Rink. You can call the Senior Center at 860-658-3273 to add your name to the wait list.

Ms. Heavner said Septemberfest will be held on September 9th, 10th and 11th with a \$5 admission for the entire weekend. For more information visit: <http://simsburymeadowsmusic.com/events/septemberfest-2016>.

Ms. Heavner said the Simsbury Recycling Committee will be hosting a composting event at the Simsbury Community Farm on September 17th from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Thanks to Signature Marketing for sponsoring this event.

September 17th and 18th from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Admission is free!

Ms. Heavner inviting everyone to join the Simsbury Grange on September 17th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for a celebration of the plentiful agriculture offerings in the Town and the surrounding area. For more information visit:

<http://www.simsburygrange.org/grangeagfair.asp>

Ms. Heavner said the 31st Annual Simsbury Fly-In and Car Show will be held on September 18th from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. For more information visit: www.simsburyflyin.com.

Ms. Heavner said the Friends of the Simsbury Library will be hosting their 2016 Giant Used Book Sale on September 24th and 25th at the Simsbury High School. For more information call Charmaine Glew (860) 651-4192 or Annie Wallack (860) 658-7781 or visit the website at: <http://www.simsburylibrary.info/friends-of-the-library/book-sale>.

Ms. Heavner said the Senior Center is hosting a special luncheon in honor of all Veterans on September 29th from 12:00 pm. To 1:30 p.m. at Eno Memorial Hall. Please call the Senior Center at (860) 658-3273 to make a reservation.

Ms. Heavner thanked all the volunteers who make all these events so special.

Ms. Heavner reminded everyone to sign-up for all three emergency alerts again.

Ms. Heavner said the construction of the new Ice Rink Warming Room at Simsbury Farms is still underway. She said everyone's patience and cooperation is much appreciated during this time.

Ms. Heavner said there is a Social Media Revolution Seminar for Simsbury Businesses on September 15th at 5:30 p.m. Reservations are required. For more information visit: <http://www.libraryinsight.com/eventdetails.asp?ix=scp&lmx-818151&y=3>.

Ms. Heavner said Present Company is now open. They are located at The Mill at 2T. She welcomed them to Simsbury.

Ms. Heavner congratulated Rana Morton who opened a State Farm Insurance office at 1243 Hopmeadow Street. There will be a ribbon cutting on September 14th at 4:00 p.m. and everyone is welcome.

Ms. Heavner asked everyone to come to the ribbon cutting for The Old Well Tavern, with a date to come, after their renovations are completed.

Ms. Heavner congratulated the Simsbury ABC House on their new sign. Since 1973, 80 plus students have graduated from this program. For more information visit: www.sisburyabetterchance.org.

Ms. Heavner said Luis Valentin will be opening Sabor Olive Oli Co. and Art Gallery in mid-September, in the Simsbury Town Shops.

Ms. Heavner said the Simsbury Public Library’s Maker-Space is nearing the end of construction and should open at the end of September or early October.

Ms. Heavner said Benny’s, which is located at 562 Hopmeadow Street, is undergoing a new dining room expansion and other improvements. They will remain open during this construction.

Ms. Heavner said Berkshire Bank is still waiting on interior fit-out and is not yet open.

SELECTMEN ACTION

- a) Possible Action regarding proposed to lease land at the Town’s closed landfill site to Ameresco, Inc. for the purpose of installing a Community Shared Solar Array in connection with a Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection pilot program**

Mr. Roy gave key points on this proposal. He said this is a pilot program that the DEEP is offering. This was first brought before the Board back in January. It is a competitive process. There isn’t a lot else that can be one with the landfill property. He said Ameresco has dealt with airport issues before and no one will risk lives.

Mike Zimmer from Ameresco, Inc. said his math was incorrect and it is a \$70 savings not \$700 savings. He said this project allows utility customers to promote solar at no risk. He does feel the Airport issues are of concern and will be looked at further. If the issues aren’t corrected and approved by the FAA then the project won’t go forward.

He said this meeting is just about obtaining the lease option to go into the pilot program at no cost to the Town. He showed a presentation with key points and where they have done approximately the same type of project in Lowell MA. Ameresco will be leasing land from the Town for 20 years and selling 100% of solar output to Eversource. Ameresco cannot enter a bid without the lease option. Every other issue must be resolved and approved before the project can move forward.

There were questions and discussion from the Board on safety issues, the site, possible issues if Ameresco defaults, and approvals that still need to be made. Attorney DeCrescenzo noted that the DEEP requires a letter of intent, which is not binding by either party.

Ms. Heavner said she spoke to Attorney DeCrescenzo about giving back to the poor, which was the intent of the Eno Trust. There isn’t a lot that can be done with this landfill site and the

savings received would go to the poor of Simsbury. Tonight is just about starting the process, but a lot of other approvals need to be completed before the project can actually move forward.

Mr. Askham made a motion to approve the option agreement for the possible lease of 6± acres of Town owned land to Ameresco, Inc. subject to the changes to the draft option agreement as discussed by the Board of Selectmen and to approve the execution of the final option agreement with final approval by the Town Attorney. The changes discussed by the Board of Selectmen include the following:

- 1) Right of refusal on the assignment
- 2) Favorable review and recommendation of FAA to the satisfaction of the Board of Selectmen
- 3) Approval of site plans by the Board of Selectmen
- 4) Adequate indemnity to protect the Town for the landfill cap

Ms. Lang seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

ADJOURN

Ms. Lang made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Radocchio
Clerk