

## Rink Feasibility Committee Minutes

5/23/24 5:30-6:30pm

In attendance: Carol Wills, Ann Steuernagel, Jan Cole, Karen Foss, Trevor Presby, Pete Gaudette, Rick Gaudette, Allen Clark

Regrets: Chris Dube, Stephen Schwartz

Meeting Convened: 5:33 PM

Business Discussed: Introductions- Members introduced themselves and explained their areas of expertise.

General Discussion of the concerns over proposed location.

Concerns raised to discuss: Parking, underground water and electric lines, proximity to state land (highway), Proximity to library –how it affects library currently and also how it affects libraries future plans, Solar needs (to be discussed with Chris Dube at next meeting), Budget concerns, Town Staff needed to maintain.

Business Discussed:

- Past experience in owning and maintaining a rink. Whoever maintains rink would need Hazmat certification because of the 100% ammonia used in chiller. Any leaks would affect the entire village of Franconia.
- Experience with fundraising for the Lyndon Rink- Talked about financials from that rink. Operates in the red – but it partners with nonprofit to raise funds to stay open.
- Most revenue for the Lyndon Rink is hockey- but that requires a rink larger than Franconia rink with larger facilities.
- Parking- It was mentioned that a business model that depends on neighboring businesses letting the town access their parking is not sustainable.
- It was shared that the library trustees expressed concerned about the impact of the rink proposal on the library
  - o The library has hopes for future expansion
  - o The library is in the process of getting a septic plan done- and needs to put in a septic system to be compliant.
  - o There is a moisture issue in the basement of the library which would be worsened by the roof proposed for the rink.

- The roof was discussed- a possible solution that the Opalinkis had mentioned was a shed roof that sloped away from the back of the library but that would make it impossible for solar to be on the roof.
- Without solar, the rink would generate a large cost to be raised through taxation.
- The committee discussed the idea that in lieu of solar, the town could just shut off the rink as the budget required. The committee discussed the negative impact that would have as all the people that had donated money to put in the refrigeration would be angry that the town wasn't using it and would put an undue burden on the town office and staff.
- Even with the refrigeration shut off, the equipment would still be maintained daily, weekly monthly and would continue to be a cost to the town.
- The committee discussed tax rate sensitivity and the upcoming needs of the town (aging infrastructure, buildings, ambulance contract commitment etc).
- Discussed the initial budget that the Opalinskis provided and found it to be inaccurate- especially given the information that the committee ascertained provided about staffing needs.
- Discussed the need for accurate financials to give a better picture for the Board of Selectmen
- Possible revenue ideas to offset cost for the proposed rink were discussed- It was concluded that due to the size of the rink, that revenue possibilities were limited- and also that if the rink was rented most of the time, that Franconia residents would not have access to the rink when they wanted to use it.
- All discussed the merits of the project and agreed it would be a welcomed addition to Franconia but that there were too many concerns over the current location and with the proposed town management.
- It was mentioned that the town "should not be in business to be in business".
- It was mentioned that the most other rinks researched are run by private entities/nonprofits but not by towns.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:40pm