

**TOWN OF GILFORD
SUMMER TOWN FORUM
AUGUST 15, 2007
7:00 P.M.**

The Summer Town Forum was held at the Gilford Town Hall, 47 Cherry Valley Road in Conference Rooms A & B.

Chairman Alice Boucher welcomed the persons in attendance and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Boucher then turned the meeting over to Facilitator John Cameron, who reviewed the rules for this evening's forum. Mr. Cameron then proceeded to introduce the various members of the Town's administration, as well as representatives of the Gilford School District. In attendance were Recreation Director Herb Greene, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Denise Morrissette, DPW Director Sheldon Morgan, Deputy Fire Chief John Beland, Assessor Wil Corcoran, Selectman Connie Grant, Administrative Secretary Sandra Bailey, Town Administrator Evans Juris, Assistant Town Administrator Debra Shackett, Police Chief John Markland, DPLU Director John Ayer, School Board Chairperson Sue Allen, Superintendent of Schools Paul DeMinico, Friends of Library President Kate Hamel and Library Trustee Polly Sanfacon.

- Chairman Boucher began the presentations by thanking members of the public and staff for their support throughout her tenure as Selectman. She then provided a brief review of accomplishments since the 2006 Summer Town Forum.
- Town Clerk/Tax Collector Denise Morrissette briefly reviewed the services that are available from her office. She also provided a sample of the Town Records that have recently been restored as a result of the Moose Plate Grants and updated the status of the mobile shelving for maintaining Town Records. In closing, TC/TC Morrissette stated that she will continue to pursue new programs that will provide greater customer service and urged residents to utilize the Town's website.
- Sheldon Morgan, Director of Public Works, began his presentation by reviewing the status of the Glendale Docks. He feels that Glendale has been functioning quite well this summer and advised the public that repairs are being made to Dock 1. Director Morgan also reviewed the Town's recycling program and reported success from the Hazardous Waste weekend that was held in July. He also pointed out the new e-waste program, where electronics can be taken to the Laconia Transfer Station for a small fee.

Director Morgan then focused on highway related issues. He advised

residents that the Town's roads have been cleaned up from the April storm and the paving and road maintenance is proceeding on schedule. He also stated that the Hoyt Road Bridge was re-opened today. Director Morgan thanked residents for their patience with Public Works issues.

- Police Chief John Markland reviewed some of the major cases that were handled by the Gilford Police Department this year. He also advised the public that a workshop on Identity Fraud would be held on Wednesday, October 3, 2007 at the Town Hall and they were welcome to attend it.

Chief Markland also reviewed some of the cases handled by the K-9 Unit (Agbar), a revitalization of the bicycle helmet program, personnel changes and the upcoming Timberman Triathlon.

- Deputy Fire Chief John Beland briefly reviewed personnel changes that have occurred during the past year, including the hiring of a part-time fire inspector. Deputy Beland also stated that the fire engine that was approved for purchase at the 2007 Town Meeting will be ready in January 2008. He advised the public of ongoing training within the Department and the first annual awards ceremony that was held in April 2007. Deputy Beland stated that the 1994 ambulance is scheduled to be replaced in 2008.
- Recreation Herb Greene stated that it has been a busy year for facility improvements. He cited various equipment purchases and re-paving that have taken place. He also reviewed the participation level in various summer programs. In closing, he stated that Old Home Day is August 25th and the Committee has been working hard in its preparations.
- Department of Planning and Land Use Director John Ayer updated residents in attendance of the major projects that have taken place this year in the Town of Gilford, including Lowe's, Franklin Savings Bank and two senior housing projects. Upcoming projects include a new post office, new library and Home Depot. Director Ayer also pointed out upcoming changes with NH Shoreland Protection Act, which will affect building activity along the shore of the lake.
- Library Trustee Polly Sanfacon introduced Kate Hamel, who provided an overview of the new library project. She advised residents that due to a generous donation, a new library is being constructed with a target date of June 2008 for occupancy. She explained that the Milo Bacon house has been moved to across the street, where it will remain within the Gilford Historic District.

Ms. Hamel stated that private fundraising will take care of furniture and

equipment for the new library. She also stated that the new building will have a meeting room with a capacity of 200 people.

- Town Appraiser Wil Corcoran briefly described the increasing market changes that occurred during the period from 1995 to 2005. In 2006, however, the market started to move downward. Mr. Corcoran then provided additional information on how the property assessments are determined by the market values, and as a result, he will not be doing a major update this year. Assessments for 2006 were at a 94% ratio, and they continue to be at 94% this year, indicating a stable market. In closing, Mr. Corcoran stated that for the benefit of the tax base, he would like to see more commercial properties, which increase the tax base but do not increase the need for services.
- Superintendent of Schools Paul DeMinico stated that he had two brochures at the rear of the conference room for the public's review. One of the brochures dealt with the goals of the School District and the other is a "report card" for the District. He reviewed the statistics provided in the report card, indicating Gilford having the lowest dropout rate in the state and at the same time, being near the top for post-secondary school acceptance. Dr. DeMinico also described their plan to decelerate spending so that it is less than the cost of living. He advised the public that the School District is sensitive to the taxpayers.

Public Input and Questions

John Cameron reviewed the rules of decorum for the public and reminded each speaker that they would be given three (3) minutes to speak.

Joe Hoffman questioned how the assessment for Fay's Boat Yard was lowered by \$300,000 and alleged a secret deal between Town Counsel and Fay's Counsel. He further questioned how Mr. Corcoran hid the abatement and asked to see a copy of the check. Mr. Corcoran attempted to respond but Mr. Hoffman kept interrupting him. Mr. Cameron had to advise Mr. Hoffman several times that his allotted time was up and he would need to relinquish the podium to someone else. Mr. Hoffman left the meeting.

Phil Nash of Lockes Island, who is President of the Gilford Island Association, commended the staff at the Glendale Docks. He also stated that the new system of having one liaison representing island residents with Glendale concerns has shown to be working quite well. Mr. Nash also stated that he has requested that the Glendale Committee have an island resident as a member.

Chan Eddy asked for an update on the proposed Cumberland Farms store on Route 11. John Ayer responded by advising Mr. Eddy that final approval will most likely take place at Monday night's Planning Board meeting.

Margie Knox asked Deputy Chief Beland what a realistic response time would be for one of the outer islands. Deputy Beland responded with a detailed explanation of the process and time involved for the fire boat to respond to an island, including Mutual Aid response. He also explained the amount of hose that would be available for fire suppression on an island.

Deputy Beland stressed the importance of fire prevention and fire safety with island properties. He urged island residents to have working smoke detectors. He also commended the Glendale Officers for their assistance in getting the fire boat ready to go, saving valuable time for the firefighters and EMT's.

Phil Nash asked Herb Greene why Gilford Beach was closed for a period of time. Director Greene responded with an explanation of the elevated level of E. coli bacteria that was present, necessitating the beach closure. Factors such as extremely hot days, heavy rain and heavy usage can contribute to this problem.

Deputy Beland encouraged island residents to make sure that both their cottages and docks are appropriately numbered, which will assist them in locating a property. He also advised them that the Fire Department will be partnering with the Marine Patrol during the off-season to offer navigation training.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Morrissette encouraged residents to continue to keep their boat registrations "local" by registering them at the Town Hall or a Gilford boat agent.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey
Administrative Secretary