

Special Town Meeting October 16, 2013

Donald Sitte called the Special Town Meeting to order at 7:00PM in the auditorium of the Town Hall. Present were Donald Sitte, Roberta Thelen, Peter Jacobs, Robert Schultz, Barbara Anschutz, Douglas Smith and 72 residents.

Clerk verified the notice was posted properly. The purpose of this meeting was to authorize the Town Board to purchase the property located at 8061 STH 57, currently known as the Red Geranium, formerly known as Emma Toft's house. Originally, the owners asked for \$185,000. However, the Town Board counter-offered at \$173,000 which the owners accepted. The building inspector looked at the property and he found it to be sound. Don read through a copy of his report, a copy of which is available upon request. He also gave debt comparisons with other municipalities. Baileys Harbor is currently at \$786,300.00. We can borrow up to \$22 million. Don then turned it over to Roberta Thelen as she is the liaison to the Historical Society.

Roberta explained that this has been talked about for a while and is also included in our Smart Growth plan. One concern if the Town didn't buy it was that if any other person bought it, there would really be no way of preserving it. From a historical standpoint, Emma Toft's parents purchased the property in 1892, when she was 1 year old. The family helped to preserve Toft Point and the Ridges Sanctuary. From a practical standpoint, the building has been inspected. It's 145 years old and in great shape for its age. She thanked everyone for coming.

Don then opened the meeting up for comments.

Ray Spangler, 8006 STH 57 – Opposes and feels that the McArdle property is better.

Bill Nelson, 7628 Elm Point Rd – Opposes and is concerned about removing property from the tax roll. Also feels it could be preserved by simply putting it on the historical register rather than having the Town buy it. Also feels a lot could be done with \$173,000.

The Baileys Harbor portion of the taxes is around \$447.

Loren Peil, 7254 STH 57 – Asked if it would have to be brought up to ADA compliance. Barb explained that since it's a historical building you don't have to do that until someone makes a complaint. Don explained that the long-range plan is to have donations made to the Historical Society to eventually have no costs to the Town. Loren asked what the main purpose was other than having it be a spot for the historical society and who was going to staff the location. There would be no other purpose and Roberta explained that we would have time to address the issues brought up. One idea was to work in conjunction with the BHCA/Visitor Bureau to staff it.

Kris Schorer, 8011 Solitude Ln. – Asked if the Town owns the property to the south of Red Geranium. The property is privately owned.

Kevin Egan, 2187 Ridges Rd – Kevin is the former Chair of the Plan Commission. He explained this is the third time he’s been to a meeting regarding a historical property and feels tonight’s decision is a no-brainer. He also feels it’s one of the last few opportunities we’ll have to buy a historical property. As for the McArdle property, he stated there were too many problems with it.

Jim Schorer, 8011 Solitude Ln. – Stated there are no problems with the McArdle property.

Lynn Mattke, 8101 School Street – Thanked the BHHS for doing the job they’ve done and stated they need visibility and need a place to put the artifacts they’re collecting.

Bryan Nelson, 8152 STH 57 – Feels it’s a great opportunity at the right price. Regarding the property off of the tax rolls, he stated the Town does get payment in lieu of taxes from the DNR.

Kathleen Nostvick, 8041 Ridges Rd – She lives near Toft Point and learned about Emma Toft at the Baileys Harbor Library. Is in favor of the purchase as she feels we need to hold on to history.

Sara Pellerin, 8241 Wild Flower Ct. Apt. 211 – Sara is the incoming President of the Baileys Harbor Community Association and she stated the BHCA is willing to work with the BHHS and is in favor of the purchase.

Susan Tishler, 7910 STH 57 – Asked if there was any research done as to the cost of maintaining the building and if grants were researched. As for maintaining the property, we don’t know at this point. The Vails have kept the property up very nicely. Obviously, there will be fixing up that has to be done in the future. Grants will be researched as needed. We’re also hopeful that donations will help.

Walter Vail, 9175 Sunset Dr. – Current owner of the Red Geranium. They bought it 20 years ago and have maintained the historic value. All of the historic pieces will remain there and become property of the Town. Also, the Red Geranium business will remain in Baileys Harbor, just at a different location.

Terry Connelly, 8862 Cana Cove Rd. – Encouraged everyone to support the purchase and feels the price is very reasonable. Also feels it’s an investment in the future of Baileys Harbor and pay dividends in generations to come.

Kris Schorer, 8011 Solitude Ln. – She is the Town representative on the Door County Coastal Byways Committee. They are in the process of dedicating the kiosks, one of which will be in front of the Town Hall. The kiosks contain information and history of the Town and encourage people to walk through the location. Feels the Toft House would be a great addition to the Town.

Bob Schultz spoke and stated the BHHS is doing a very nice job, but they're not going to raise enough money in the short term to buy any property. They're getting a lot of pictures and items and they need a place to store them. Bob felt that the Town should find them a place. We looked at three places, each of which were nice, but it came down to price. He is concerned that if we don't move on something now, all the major historic places will be sold.

Jim Schorer, 8011 Solitude Ln. – Asked if the Town Board considers this as more of a keystone for the BHHS and all of our artifacts to be utilized and placed in this building. Don stated that was correct.

Howard Williamson, 7501 S. Kangaroo Lake Dr. – Howard works in the Baileys Harbor Visitors Center and is amazed at the number of people who come in and ask about Emma Toft. Stated the artifacts they have need a place to be shown and feels the property is a good thing.

Motion made/second Lynn Mattke/Kevin Egan to approve the purchase of the Red Geranium property.

A recess was taken. Paper ballots were issued to everyone prior to the meeting and were collected and tabulated during the recess.

The motion carried, with 71 ayes and 7 nays. 78 paper ballots were issued and 78 paper ballots were returned.

Motion made/second Doug Smith/Mike Meulemans to adjourn at 8:04PM. Carried.

Douglas Smith
Town Clerk/Administrator