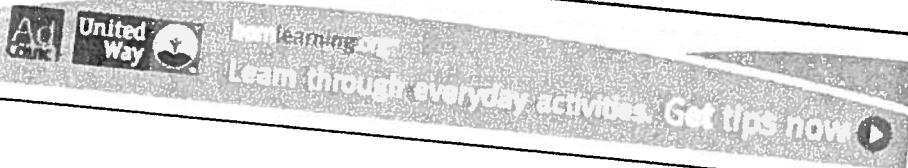




Monday, August 15, 2005



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You can't take the police chief out of the selectman

Atkinson Notes

Margo Sullivan

It took just a week for Selectmen Chairman **Philip V. Consentino** to grab his police chief's hat during a selectmen's meeting.

Consentino, who is also director of Elderly Affairs, is under a court order to avoid conflicts of interest and recuse himself when selectmen deal with the departments he leads. Rockingham Superior Judge Kenneth McHugh issued the order May 10.

Consentino has maintained the judge's order would not alter the way the selectmen do official business. His lawyer, **Sumner Kalman**, who is also the town's attorney, did not return telephone calls asking for a comment about the judge's action.

At Monday's regular selectmen's meeting, Consentino dutifully stayed silent when the selectmen held a public hearing to withdraw money from the police donation account.

But Thursday, at a special selectmen's meeting called about the library parking lot repair job, Consentino had the police department on his mind. Once the selectmen settled the library job, he let Road Agent **Edward Stewart** know he was amazed about remarks Stewart made at a Planning Board meeting the night before.

Stewart is also an alternate member of the Planning Board. He and Consentino both were at the Wednesday night Planning Board meeting, for a "discussion" about Winslow Drive, the subdivision former selectmen Chairman **Brian Boyle**, who is a home builder, owns.

Boyle was not on the agenda. But he and developer **Peter**

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HOMES

Kathy DeLorenzo
Participating Agent

Lewis, who was acting as the owner of the Hampstead Area Water Company, asked for some direction about an idea they have been developing.

Lewis said they propose eliminating an emergency access road at the end of Winslow Drive, and compensating for the loss of the road by installing a fire hydrant near the top of Woodlawn Road.

Consentino said he was on the Planning Board when the subdivision plan won approval, and part of the deal was the safety road. This road opened the area for police, rescue and fire, he said.

Stewart riled Consentino on Wednesday night when he supported the swap with the fire hydrant and went on to say it would benefit the town to put a hydrant near the elementary school.

Consentino said there was a "fire hole" behind the Town Hall right next to Atkinson Academy, implying it was absurd for Stewart to imply the school gained any advantage from a fire hydrant on Woodlawn Avenue.

"The fire hydrant isn't going to do squat for me," said Consentino. His point was, the road was not just for the Fire Department. It was also for police and rescue, Consentino said. Police might need to use it if a felled tree and power lines, for instance, cut off regular access, he said.

Stewart said there was no doubt Boyle would gain if he could get rid of the road because his house lots would be more valuable on a cul-de-sac than on a common road. Nonetheless, he believes the town ultimately would end up getting both the safety road and the new hydrant, he said.

Consentino also vowed the police department would have a say in an upcoming hearing on Winslow Drive at the Planning Board next month.

Hitting the road

The seniors have stepped up their trips to the doctor. According to Officer **JoAnne Consentino**, who is the chief's wife, the Elderly Affairs Department logged 58 trips and two runs to the pharmacist in January, 46 rides in February, 72 in March, 78 in April and 32 in the first nine days of May. The ride program's popularity should not surprise anyone, the chief implied.

"It's more like an outing than a trip to the doctor's office," Consentino said, thanking the community service officers for their nice "way" with the seniors.

Week at a glance

Selectmen meet tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. in Town Hall.

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