

**TOWN OF BROOKFIELD**  
**SELECTMEN'S MEETING**  
**TOWN HALL, SELECTMEN'S OFFICE**

**MINUTES OF MARCH 21, 2006**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Joseph J. Klimavich called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Other members present: Beverly A. Lund and James W. Allen.

Others Present: Ronald Couture, resident of Brookfield and Larry Wright of Nelson Tree Service, a contractor of NationalGrid.

Chairman Klimavich led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Mr. Klimavich thanked both Mr. Couture and Mr. Wright for attending the meeting. The Board introduced themselves to Mr. Wright.

Mr. Klimavich explained that Mr. Wright had asked for an Executive Session to discuss a telephone conversation that he had with Mr. Couture over proposed tree work on Lake Road. Proper notice of the Executive Session was given Mr. Couture and was called under the following:

M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B, Part 1: To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health – rather than the professional competence – of an individual

Mr. Wright explained that he works for Nelson Tree Service, are contracted through NationalGrid and are currently working on Rice Corner Road. Lake Road was the next scheduled project. The procedure is for him to first contact the Tree Warden, look at the work (they do regular maintenance trimming every three to four years), get approval from the Tree Warden and then notify the property owners. This is what he did.

Mr. Klimavich explained that Lake Road is a Scenic Road and comes under different guidelines. He acknowledged that the Board of Selectmen and the Tree Warden have agreed that no work can be done until the criteria for Scenic Roads and Shade Tree Laws have been met. This procedure was not done correctly to begin with but all concerned are trying to make sure that all proper steps are now done.

Mr. Klimavich said that he believed that Mr. Wright's primary concern was how he was treated by Mr. Couture during the telephone conversation when Mr. Couture called him to protest the tree cutting on Lake Road.

Mr. Wright said that no tree cutting will be done by Nelson Tree; they are only doing "maintenance" but will assist the Town at a later time with the dangerous trees.

Mr. Klimavich said that many people are concerned that trees are cut for wires in a way that isn't appealing to the eye.

Mr. Couture said that his telephone conversation with Mr. Wright was a private conversation. He understands that the Selectmen are concerned that he overstepped his bounds as a member of the Historical Commission. He denied using his position.

Mr. Wright claimed he was contacted by telephone and that Mr. Couture identified himself as Chairman of the Historical Commission for the Town of Brookfield. Mr. Wright said that he was accused of being unprofessional and "destroying the town". He said that he tried to explain that he was just following established procedure but Mr. Couture was "very insulting", "using his weight", "unprofessional", and "threatening". He also claimed that threats were made against his men and equipment; he takes that kind of threat seriously. He said that he chose to come to the Selectmen with his complaint rather than to go to the Police as was his right.

Mr. Couture responded that he "never threatened any equipment" and was shocked by the claim. He had written a statement with his version of the telephone conversation and presented it to the Board.

After the Board and Mr. Wright reviewed the statement, Mr. Allen asked Mr. Wright what could be done to bring this to a reasonable conclusion. Mr. Wright said he sympathized with Mr. Couture's feeling about the tree trimming but he felt he was "treated poorly", Mr. Couture showed a "lack of respect" and his behavior was "uncalled for".

Mr. Couture said that he "apologized to Mr. Wright if he was rude to him; if he was rude then he was rude to the situation not to Mr. Wright". He further said that Mr. Wright "shouldn't have been quiet" as it "upset him more". Mr. Wright said he was just letting Mr. Couture "vent" and he couldn't get in a word.

Mr. Couture claimed he never said he would destroy Mr. Wright's equipment; as a private citizen, he has a right to complain. Mr. Wright said that if Mr. Couture hadn't brought up his position in Town, he (Wright) would have let the matter drop.

Ms. Lund said that it sounded like anger on both sides, in the heat of the moment.

Mr. Couture said that he came home and saw big X's on his trees and that upset him. He knows that some must come down but didn't like the work that was done last year.

Mr. Wright left the meeting upset and believing he didn't get a proper apology.

Mr. Allen said that the details of the conversation are in dispute and that he feels that fault lies at both ends.

Mr. Couture said that he was resigning as Chairman of the Historical Commission and the Selectmen asked him to reconsider this.

Ms. Lund moved to adjourn the Executive Session and return to the Regular Meeting; Mr. Allen seconded. Ms. Lund voted aye, Mr. Allen voted aye, Mr. Klimavich voted aye. The Executive Session was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Neylon  
Administrative Assistant

Date Approved by Board: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE RELEASED: 10/30/12