

**Waitsfield**

# Select board votes to buy former Birke Studio

By Lisa Loomis

The Waitsfield Select Board, by a 3-2 vote, voted to purchase the former Birke Studio property on Bridge Street.

At its January 14 meeting, board members Sal Spinoza, Charlie Hosford and Bill Parker voted to purchase the property while board members Paul Hartshorn and Logan Cooke voted against the purchase.

The town has funds for the purchase in its conservation fund. After this week's meeting, town administrator Valerie Capels is beginning the process of setting up a closing, having the necessary legal work done and preparing the payment to owners Caroline Bargerstock and Derek Moretz.

In December, the town received an offer to purchase the Bridge Street property from Bargerstock and Moretz for \$20,000. The tiny parcel is located on the north side of Bridge Street between the building that houses Peasant Restaurant and the Waitsfield covered bridge.

Formerly a photography studio, it was destroyed during flooding from Tropical Storm Irene on August 28,

2011. Floodwaters lifted the building off its foundation and smashed it into the blue building. In the months following the flood, the building was deconstructed and removed from the site. The cement slab has been the site of lawn chairs over the summer and fall, as people sit and view the river and the bridge.

The select board, at a December 17 meeting, expressed a great deal of interest in and enthusiasm for the offer, with the exception of one member.

The owners of the property have permits to rebuild but told the select board that they are aware that rebuilding in a floodplain is not always the best idea, and they are also aware that the town is working on storm drains, covered bridge improvements and protecting the riverbank on the west side of the Mad River behind Bridge Street Market-place.

The offer to sell the property for \$20,000 is only for the town, although at least one private property owner had expressed interest in owning the property.

Among the ideas discussed at that meeting were creating a pop-up park in the space as well as reconfiguring the

space so that the covered bridge abutment could be moved back, allowing more water to flow under the bridge during the next flood.

### For the Record

At the Moretown Select Board meeting that took place on Monday, January 7, Martha Douglass and her husband, Tom, suggested changes to Moretown's host-town agreement with Moretown Landfill, speaking for themselves and not for the neighborhood coalition, Citizens for Landfill Environmental Accountability and Responsibility (CLEAR).

### Moretown —

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has submitted an application for aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), for which "there are two possible approaches," Amadon explained. Either the town can apply for money to repair and update infrastructure on the existing site, or it can apply for money to build a replacement building on a different site.

The "art of the process," Amadon said, will be building an office that meets the town's needs but is not so elaborate that it doesn't qualify for federal reimbursement.

Unfortunately, FEMA recently ruled that Moretown's town offices are not a "critical facility," which will substantially affect the amount of money the committee can receive. "We will mostly likely be appealing that," Amadon said.

The committee is also applying for funding from the state of Vermont's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is part of an ongoing effort to lessen the impact of natural disasters on people and property.

#### TOWN OF WARREN PUBLIC NOTICE Warren Development Review Board

The Warren Development Review Board has scheduled public hearings at 7:00 PM, Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Warren Municipal Building to consider the following matter.

Application 2013-02-ZP/CU, Conditional Use Review, for the construction of an Accessory Structure (Deck) in the Flood Hazard Overlay District (FHO). The Zoning Administrator has referred the application of Gary & Debora Johannesen for the re-construction of a deck and adjacent retaining wall on their property located at 59 Main Street, parcel id #004000-200. The property is located in the Warren Village Historic Residential and Flood Hazard Overlay Districts. This application requires review under Article 2, table 2.2 & 2.14 (3); and Article 5, § 5.3 of the Warren Land Use and Development Regulations as adopted by the Warren Select Board on March 25, 2008 and last amended November 11, 2012.

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 4464(a)(1)(C) and 4471(a), participation in this local proceeding is a prerequisite site to the right to take any subsequent appeal. Plans for these projects are available for public review at the Planning and Zoning/Warren Town Clerk's Office during regular office hours. If you have any questions regarding this application/hearing, please do not hesitate to contact the Planning and Zoning Office located in the Conference Room (old library) of the Warren Municipal Building at 42 Cemetery Road in Warren Village.

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