



**Select Board
Minutes**
Thursday, March 26, 2020
11:30am

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.c.30A. S.20.

Select Board participants:

Chair Alice von Loesecke, Rich Maiore, Kara Minar, Stu Sklar, and Lucy Wallace

Town Staff participants:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Meeting Host/Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, Police Chief Ed Denmark. Fire Chief Rick Sicard and DPW Director Tim Kilhart

Chair Alice von Loesecke opened the meeting by reading the recent legislation passed by the Governor authorizing virtual meetings amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. She asked her fellow board members and town staff to acknowledge their attendance.

Von Loesecke said the main goal for the meeting today is to discuss the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. She reiterated the critical need for social distancing and asked Town Administrator Tim Bragan to report on issues that are arising throughout town.

Bragan reported the public safety department is continuing to encounter residents on public land even though playing fields were closed last week. He has been in contact with Park & Recreation Chair Doug Thornton and the commission held a meeting to discuss this matter. Based on the Governors orders closing playgrounds, fields and parks is necessary. Police Officers continue to find residents in close proximity to each other on fields, at the track and at the overlook on Prospect Hill Road. Signs were placed at the overlook and at the track where people actually took them down. Bragan said people were also found to be congregating at the town beach. He explained the town is simply trying to enforce the Governors orders with respect to social distancing for the protection of everyone.

Lucy Wallace received an email from Board of Health (BoH) member Libby Levison stating the BoH voted to support access to the track for senior citizens in town. They understand the importance of residents being able to get exercise and fresh air during this time. Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director Rich Sicard strongly advised against this. He is concerned this sends a mixed message to residents. His message is for everyone to Stay Home, Stop the Spread and Save Lives. Sicard believes strongly this is the best way to stop the spread and there can be no exceptions. He realizes this creates an inconvenience but it is also important to minimizing the risk to our public safety officials. Kara Minar supports finding a way to allow only senior citizens access to the track. Sicard said what happens when the rules are not followed? Who is responsible for enforcement? Police Chief Ed Denmark agrees with closing the track to reduce the risk of contamination for residents and public safety officials. He appreciates the need for exercise however it should not be more important than protecting public safety. Wallace and Sklar hear the concerns being raised by both the Chiefs but want to find a solution to allow this activity for seniors in town. Wallace asked if specific hours could be offered such as 11am-1pm. Bragan added

Council on Aging Director Debbie Thompson thinks it is best to close the track in an effort to maintain appropriate social distancing.

Von Loesecke thinks the senior citizen hours at the track are manageable but only if the Chiefs are amenable. Chief Denmark reiterated his position especially considering any moves now to reopen areas are premature. He expects we will have a better idea of how the situation will evolve over the next two weeks. Chief Sicard asked to have the Board of Health offer ideas with respect to enforcement as it this is their jurisdiction. The board members remained adamant about finding a way to keep the track open for senior citizens. They decided to consult with the Board of Health and discuss further at the April 7th meeting if need be.

The board discussed the Meals on Wheels program and wrapping of equipment at the playgrounds to deter use. Von Loesecke said the Harvard Lions Club and Park & Recreation Commission have offered to help in these areas.

Bragan announced the businesses that are still open and offering Transfer Station bag sales. This information will be posted on the town website.

Bragan reported town administration is working with labor counsel on workplace issues related to Covid-19. He said town hall staff is working remotely and staggering shifts. He asked to have one board member assist in this area. Von Loesecke volunteered.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50pm.

