

Select Board Minutes

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

6:30pm

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, Lucy Wallace

Town Department attendees:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, Police Chief Ed Denmark, DPW Director Tim Kilhart

Additional participants:

National Grid Rep. Javier Morales

By a roll call vote, Wallace – aye, Maiore – Aye, Minar – Aye, von Loesecke – Aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to enter into executive session at 6:30pm, as authorized by Chapter 30A, Section 21.4 to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto. The board will reconvene into open session.

National Grid Pole Hearing – Mass Ave & Pond Rd

Bragan noted he is working with National Grid on the pole located in the Bromfield driveway. He explained an easement will be necessary for the fall Annual Town Meeting.

The hearing was opened and National Grid Rep. Javier Morales explained the petitions are for several pole locations at the intersection of Pond Rd and Mass Ave. They are necessary to accommodate the driveway for the new Hildreth Elementary School. They discussed how the proposed pole locations may be impacted by the new stonewall and sidewalks in that same area. They decided prior to any approvals Morales will meet with the DPW Director again. They will also consult with the Town Planner and the Library Trustees. By a roll call vote, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, Maiore – aye, Wallace – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to continue the hearing so further information can be collected before approval of petitions.

Appointments

Historical Commission

By a roll call vote, Wallace –aye, von Loesecke – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Matthew McRae to the Historical Commission.

Commission on Disabilities

By a roll call vote, Wallace –aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to appoint Toni Spacciapoli to the Commission on Disabilities.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, Wallace –aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously approve minutes of 6/9 & 6/16, as presented Wallace.

Town Administrator Report

Bragan reported he is attending a meeting on state revenue figures tomorrow.

Bragan reported on the opening of Town Hall with just a few hours to start and then to regular hours on Monday, July 20th. He is confident the proper precautions are in place.

Bragan noted recent guidance from the Governor on youth sports has caused confusion therefore he is meeting with Park & Rec Chair Bob O'Shea.

Bragan reported the finance team is working on the year end closure. Lori team end of year closure. He asked the board to hold a short meeting next week to act on necessary department transfers.

Insurance Advisory Committee

Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Marie Sobalvarro said this committee is defined in Chapter 32B Section 3 as representatives from various employee groups that make recommendations on insurance plans. Sobalvarro has provided information to the Massachusetts Interlock Insurance Association (MIIA) and they responded favorably to being able to offer quotes. She noted two communities have recently moved out of the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group (MNHG) to MIIA for their health insurance needs. The board members agreed it is worth investigating. By a roll call vote, Wallace –aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to solicit health insurance quotes on behalf of the town. This committee will provide a formal recommendation on their findings to the Select Board.

Ayer Road construction project

DPW Director reported the 10% design meeting went well. Members of the public were able to ask questions and TEC Engineers gave a good presentation recommending alternative 3 as the best option. This option does not require easements or land takings and has little environmental impacts. Kara Minar and Stu Sklar continue to be perplexed about removal of the roundabout from this plan. They were able to speak with reps from the Department of Transportation (DOT) and went through prior understandings and presented certain pieces that were deliberated when the roundabout was previously negotiated into the plan. In addition, Minar and Sklar reminded the DOT of other challenges with the area around the post office. As far as a land swap with the Conservation Commission they were assured this would not be a big hurdle. Minar and Sklar emphasized the need for this project to provide long term viability, function and traffic calming. Wallace wondered if the design meeting just held would need to happen again if a roundabout is added. Kilhart said the 10% meeting is not required therefore any revisions can occur at the 25% design meeting. Everyone agreed this is an important project that must be done right. Kilhart will set up a conference call with DOT, Minar and Sklar in an effort to finalize the project. By a roll call vote, Wallace –aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Minar – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve alternative 3 with and understanding the specific plan type may include a roundabout.

Conservation Commission appointments

After multiple discussions with several people von Loesecke offered to make a motion to take no action on this item. She reminded the board that their appointment policy states a recommendation from the commission is required and since the Select Board has not received a formal recommendation from the commission no action should be taken. She suggested the Select Board defer to their August 4th meeting which allows time for the commission to provide their input. The Select Board members agreed.

By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, Wallace – aye, Sklar – aye, Minar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to extend current appointments on the Conservation Commission until August 4th pending recommendation from the Conservation Commission.

Select Board Reports

Von Loesecke reported the Budget Working Group is awaiting the state budget. They do have plans in place to cover a \$500,000 budget shortfall and will need additional input if this figure increases.

Sklar was pleased to report the data on the Save Money Reduce Trash (SMART) program indicates a decrease in solid waste disposal and an increase in recycling which is very encouraged. The downside is costs for recycling have increased causing a need to increase the Transfer Station sticker prices. He offered kudos to Harvard residents on their efforts to support recycling. Sklar reported along with Select Board member Rich Maiore they delivered bags to 421 senior households.

Bragan confirmed the board will not need to meet on July 21st but will need to have a quick meeting on July 14th to address department transfers.

Sklar reported the War Monument Restoration Committee will begin plans to restore the World War II Korean War monument near the Harvard General Store.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Documents referenced:

National Grid pole petition requests – dated 5.28.2020

McRae vol form – dated 6.5.2020

Spacciapoli vol form – dated 6.15.2020

Insurance Advisory Committee – dated 7.9.2020