



**Select Board
Minutes
Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room, Harvard, MA**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Vice Chair Rich Maiore in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Select Board members Lucy Wallace and Stu Sklar were in attendance as well as Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet. Board members Alice von Loesecke, Kara Minar and Town Administrator Tim Bragan were absent.

Harvard Conservation Trust (HCT) Restriction

Attorney Ray Lyons attended the meeting on behalf of the trust. He presented the restriction being donated by Mark & Hillary Finnegan for land located on Oak Hill Road. Lyons reported the Conservation Commission has approved the restriction. On a Sklar/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the foregoing conservation restriction from Mark & Hillary Finnegan to the HCT in the public interest pursuant to Section 32 of Chapter 184 of the General Laws of Massachusetts.

Commission on Disabilities

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro provided a draft mission for consideration. On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve mission, tasks, membership and applicable laws for the Commission on Disabilities in accordance with MGL Chapter 40, Section 8J. Openings will be advertised.

Housing @ Hildreth House

Committee Chair Rick Maiore came to answer any questions or hear any comments from their final report. He explained the report included a history of the project, their findings and a recommendation to create a Senior Housing Committee to be charged with exploring sites within the Town Center that could be served by the existing infrastructure and developed with clusters of moderately priced duplexes suitable for seniors wishing to downsize. Given the complexity and cost of developing the Hildreth site, the Committee was recommending against housing on this site at this time. Wallace, the Select Board member on the committee, said the committee members were reluctant to see the Town abandon efforts to provide senior housing, especially in the Town Center.. Maiore admitted senior housing can include a multitude of desires therefore satisfying the needs for all is difficult. However, it is important for the town to provide housing options for seniors wishing to downsize. Wallace offered to draft a charge for a senior housing committee for the Select Board to consider at the second meeting in December.

Athletic Field Subcommittee Interim Report (Park & Recreation subcommittee)

Committee members Dan Daley, Joe Reynolds and Sharlene Cronin (School Dept. Rep.) came to go over their interim report. The report included a brief history along with a summary of key findings, recommendations and actions. They researched field inventory and began analysis of field conditions. They learned the majority of the scheduling requests are for daytime hours after school during the school year. Cronin explained most fields exceed the 20 hours/week usage guideline for natural turf. They worked to gather data for weekly hours of sport usage. In addition, they are totaling hours of use for special events such as camps and clinics. It is obvious the fields are overused resulting in most being in fair to poor condition. They outlined their next steps in preparation of a final report to the Select Board. They look forward to feedback from the Select Board and continued support, collaboration and leadership.

Public Communication

Resident Bob O'Shea, Old Littleton Rd., currently serves as Harbormaster and was a member on the Park & Recreation Commission. O'Shea said he reluctantly joined the commission and has sat through many meetings.

He feels the Commission is treated with disrespect by the town administration and Select Board. He said residents have told him directly they are very hesitant to join the commission. O'Shea made reference to situations that have arisen over the years such as negotiation of the contract with the Bare Hill Rowing Group and fees charged during the Little Women filming. O'Shea said jurisdiction over town owned parcels of land is a point of confusion and needs to be cleared up. He was surprised to learn the property in between the General Store and the Congo Church actually falls under the control of the Select Board and not the Commission as previously thought. O'Shea has volunteered his time to set up of civic rec (online payment system), worked on a kiosk for the beach and has worked on the center patio project. He gave the information he has compiled for the project to the board members. He also does not agree with access to Town Counsel having to be approved by town administration. He suggested a mockup of the proposed sidewalk plan and the idea of closing off the exit onto Mass Ave all together by continuing the sidewalk.

Scott Hayward, Harvard General Store owner, distributed a photo from another community showing what the proposed corner sidewalk on the common across from the General Store may look like. He agreed with O'Shea that a mockup of the design on Still River Rd. in front of the store and church is a good way to provide a clear idea of the effectiveness of this approach. He is in agreement tactics of the town administration are not in keeping with the democratic nature of town and seeks to disenfranchise positive feedback. Hayward expects the Select Board members to be sensitive to the concerns of residents by offering a significant modification to the plan.

Carlene Phillips, Oak Hill Road, reiterated the same sentiments as O'Shea and Hayward. She is unhappy to suddenly have a full blown plan with little opportunity for community discussion. Phillips feels the process is backwards, decisions are being made for the town in isolation and with little to no communication between boards. She said this is too important to be decided lightly and will affect the historic character of our town Phillips thinks limiting access to parking at the General Store will only create a bottleneck and will negatively impact business. She is hopeful the board will hear their concerns and research ideas.

Assistant Town Administrator Report

Sobalvarro gave an update on the following items:

Open Space Committee: Executive Assistant Julie Doucet has been in contact with all boards/organizations which will have a member or designee serving on the Committee, requesting that they designate their participant for appointment by the Select Board. A gentle reminder also that the Select Board is requested to identify their member or designee.

Tax Classification Hearing: Will occur at the next Select Board meeting.

Auditor's report, Management Letter: As mentioned earlier, the audit for FY19 is complete. The Management Letter cites two areas, network security and maximizing investment returns. The Town is undergoing a cybersecurity assessment (slated to be completed by 12/20/19) which has highlighted gaps in our current vendor agreements and our policies; staff will be updated on the results, as well as attend the training this Thursday, and complete 2 online trainings through our insurer, MIIA. Maximizing investment returns has already occurred via the efforts of our Treasurer and Finance Director.

ZEO/Facility Manager Update: Tim Kilhart, Tim Bragan, and Sobalvarro will be interviewing a very experienced candidate on Friday. The position has been posted online via the Lowell Sun (and other job boards) for a few weeks; responses have not been numerous.

Scenic Road By-Law Violation Investigation: Tim Bragan has met with Tom Cotton to discuss the preliminary results of Tim B's investigation, and will present a full report to the Select Board at their next meeting.

Carlson Orchards: We received notice that Carlson Orchards has withdrawn their application from the ABCC for the Farmer Series Pouring Permit. This does not affect Carlson's ability to refile a future application.

UU Upcoming Events: Sobalvarro read aloud December events.

Old Library Front Entrance: The certificate of final completion is attached, as well as the final requisition (#9) for \$27,142; this was finalized yesterday by Abacus. She encouraged the Board to approve, as we can then file for the release of the retainage from MassDevelopment (the MCC grant administrator). Outstanding bills are Abacus' final construction administration payment, Ramos Electrical, and Jasonics installation.

Old Library Roof: Gale Associates' report indicates that the primary cause of the leaking in the Old Library is due to degraded gutters, which caused water infiltration into the second (interior) with of the brick supporting the gutters. Replacement of the gutters and downspouts will require removal of a few (~4) courses of slate. Preliminary costs for gutter and downspout replacement plus brick/mortar repair is \$569k; gutter/downspout/mortar/full slate roof replacement is \$1M. Summary sheet enclosed; full assessment is available. This will be discussed at the PBC tomorrow morning. As the ballot vote authorized \$480k, she has filed a notice of interest with the Mass Cultural Council Capital Fund requesting \$600k. (Complete grant package due January 10, 2020; applicants will be notified June 2020 regarding whether their project is funded.)

Town Hall Landscaping: Work started today on the Town Hall landscaping plan, which encompasses some hardscaping to delineate/reinforce the traffic pattern, removal of invasive trees on the Town Hall campus, and of course, the amazing planting plan. The inclusion of more greenery, and the four-season plantings will be a very welcome change.

Complete Streets Update: Last night the Planning Board approved the site plan application; summary by Chris Ryan is attached.

Cultural Council Resignations

On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board voted to recognize Cultural Council resignations from Anne Butterfield and Rich Marcello. Thank you letters for their service will be sent. Liaison to the council Rich Maiore was troubled to hear of two co-chairs resigning at the same time. He was reluctant to accept the resignations and decided to investigate the matter further. He will report back to the board at their December 3rd meeting.

Complete Streets proposal and next steps

Sobalvarro distributed a larger copy of the proposed plan. She also provided a copy of the septic system easement that was granted to the General Store for the parcel of land in between the General Store and Congregational Church. The Select Board discussed making the exit onto Mass Ave a mandatory right turn only and allowing left turns off of Park Street (formally the no name street) and changing the sidewalk width from 5' to 4'. They agreed to discuss the plan in more detail at their December 3rd meeting and take a final vote at that time. Maiore asked for clarity on what type of modifications to the plan are allowable. Von Loesecke said the traffic plan itself cannot be changed however there can be tweaks to the design and aesthetics such as tint of the concrete. Wallace liked the mock up idea suggested during public comment. Sklar said as volunteers themselves the Select Board members understand some may not like the proposed plan however to insinuate this was done behind closed doors is incorrect. He pointed out many committees have discussed such improvements in the town center and the Master Plan clearly states the need and desire as well. Community and Economic Development Director Chris Ryan was not present but did provide a Complete Streets Project chronology that dates back to 2005. The board members are mindful of comments made by those for and against the proposed plan.

Hildreth House Phase II

Committee Chair Guy Olivia and COA Co-Chair Beth Williams came to give an update. Olivia reported the Council on Aging board voted unanimously to support the plan as submitted to capital. He indicated If the Select Board decides to seek estimates on the cost of having a fully enclosed connection between the new building and Hildreth House and, therefore, the cost of bringing the Hildreth House into full compliance such information may be helpful at the Annual Town Meeting. However they do not want it included in the warrant article for the phase II project they are proposing. Olivia suggested the town meeting warrant have two separate articles; one for the project they are proposing and one for upgrades to the Hildreth House.

They are confident if the two are tied together the article will not pass due to the increase in cost. On a Wallace/Sklar motion, the board authorized the withdrawal of up to \$10,000 from the Rantoul Municipal Trust to obtain an assessment of the work to be done on the Hildreth House and estimated cost.

Select board reports

Wallace reported the Council on Aging served 89 thanksgiving meals at St. Theresa's. She mentioned it took the staff two days to pack everything they needed to take there. She cited this as another example of how much the additional space is needed for the senior center.

Wallace reported the Harvard Devens Jurisdiction Committee is meeting next week and the framework group has also met. She admitted they are moving slowly on how best to proceed.

Maiores announced the Agricultural Advisory Commission is hosting an agricultural gathering at Fivesparks on November 20th from 7pm to 8:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Documents referenced:

Conservation Restriction – dated 11.13.2019

Draft Commission on Disabilities – dated 11.19.2019

Housing @ Hildreth House final report – dated 10.24.2019

Athletic Field Sub Committee: interim report – dated 9.17.2019, updated & usage/conditions dated 11.19.2019

Resignations: Butterfield & Marcello – dated 11.8.2019

Complete Streets Chronology – dated 11.6.2019

Hildreth House Phase II cost estimates – dated 11.7.2019