



Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, April 26, 2022
7:00pm

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:

Stu Sklar, Rich Maiore, Erin McBee, Alice von Loesecke

Town Department attendees:

Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro, Executive Assistant Julie Doucet

Additional participants:

Open Space Chair Peter Dorward, Fivesparks Rep. Mark Mikitarian

Open Space Committee (OSC)

Membership

OSC Chair Peter Dorward came on behalf of his committee to request the Select Board address two issues, the future of the OSC and budget/funding sources for open space acquisition. Dorward reported while the OSC has made progress but their work is not finished. They are requesting the SB modify the original charter to make the OSC a standing committee. The SB members agreed this request makes sense.

Dorward confirmed the Conservation Commission is supportive of this request as well.

By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, McBee – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to make the Open Space Committee a standing committee with staggered terms.

In addition, he asked the DPW Director be replaced by the Director of Community Education & Recreation. By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, McBee – aye, von Loesecke – aye, the board voted unanimously to replace the DPW Director by the Director of Community Education & Recreation.

Budget/Funding

Peter Dorward asked what is the best way for the OSC to fund their endeavors and if there are other mechanisms available for funding. Alice von Loesecke explained the Community Preservation Fund (CPA) and/or Capital Plan as the best approaches and recommends having possible projects added to the que in anticipation. Erin McBee mentioned the idea of increasing the CPA percentage as another mechanism to increase available funding.

Minutes

By a roll call vote, Sklar – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 3/29 and 4/5, as presented.

Annual Appointments

Board members will follow up with their liaison assignments with those volunteers who have not yet responded.

Public Communication

Dan Daley, member on various sub committees, asked the Select Board to not forget about the land swap idea and the capital request to accommodate current/future demand for athletic fields.

He admitted this will take continued collaboration for this to come to fruition.

Wade Holtzman, Bolton Road, thanked the public safety department for their increase in presence on Bolton Road to provide traffic mitigation.

Kara Minar entered the meeting at this time.

Staff Report/Updates (Attachment A)

Ayer Road Project/Update

Stu Sklar reported he along with Tim Bragan and DPW Director Tim Kilhart met with the Dept of Transportation (DOT) and TEC to discuss possible ramifications to making changes to the project with respect to delays and prioritization of the project/being removed from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) altogether. He explained there were no assurances made on how delays may impact the overall project however they did agree to conduct another traffic study. Sklar said they explained to DOT Harvard's focus on Ayer Road is to provide traffic calming measures and learned DOT strives to move traffic along. The board members agreed public support for the project is crucial. Alice von Loesecke encouraged her fellow board members to remember a vast majority of town residents rely on their elected officials to act financially responsible and for the greater good of the town especially with a project of this magnitude. They decided on sending letters to DOT and MRPC outlining possible changes the town would like to see made to the project including a roundabout and if an increase can be made to the project budget to accommodate this. In addition, they decided to wait until the traffic count is completed before making a final decision on adding a roundabout. The board members understand a roundabout may jeopardize TIP ranking and therefore will need to make further decisions on that piece of the project at their next meeting. Sklar will work with Tim Bragan to draft the letters.

Fivesparks Lease

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Stu Sklar discussed a longer-term lease option however Fivesparks is not prepared to enter into a lease of that length at this time. They discussed in length various points related to the lease including the slow start they have had due to the pandemic and their assistance in helping the town attain grant funds for capital improvements. They decided \$450 per month for the first three years and \$600 in years four and five was reasonable all things considered. Rich Maiore attempted to make a motion to include nullifying the current addendum of the lease however there was some confusion. Alice von Loesecke requested the lease include a clause relative to the elevator in the event it was to breakdown that the town would not be responsible to fix it instead limiting use of the building if need be. By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – abstain, the board voted to approve a five-year lease for Fivesparks contingent upon review/approval by Town Counsel and to be signed by the Chair.

Carlson Entertainment license

The board decided to act on the requested dates once rain dates are also provided.

Kara Minar exited the meeting due to illness.

Town Meeting Warrant

The board reviewed the warrant deciding on who will speak to which articles. They are supportive of the ATM articles and voted on their approval. By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, McBee – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve all articles for the May 14, 2022 town meeting.

Select Board Reports

Erin McBee reported there has been no response yet from the probate court on the petition file for the Bromfield House.

Announcement: town beach is in need of Beach Director.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.

Documents referenced:

OSC docs – dated 4.22.2022

FY23 – annual appointment lists

Staff Report April 26, 2022

1. We need two volunteer Board members to review and make decisions regarding the Ginny Thurston Scholarship Applications. The deadline for applications is this Friday the 29th of April.
2. The Lion's Club is looking to pull an Entertainment License for an event to be held at Carlson's Orchard, not in the barn or on the patio, but on the grassy area(?). If allowed we will be having a hearing for this on the 17th.
3. The Fire Department received a thank you from the Devens Fire Chief for the mutual aid help Harvard Fire Department provided in fighting the South Post fire last month (see attached).
4. Mosquito Spraying:
 - a. The BOH is working on this and will have communication for the SB on the 17th.
5. State Updates: (See SHN articles attached)
 - a. The House budget is being debated this week and the plan that is on the floor of the House adds \$1.398 billion to the Governor's proposed budget. This makes the total budget, to be debated, \$49.629 billion.
 - b. The State's PFAS Interagency Task Force has filed a report that will produce legislation, in the next legislative session, to restrict the sale of consumer products that contain PFAS and will also increase public awareness about the dangers of these chemicals. (See attached article as well as electronic PDF of report)
 - c. The Senate will be voting on their version of legalized sports betting which is different from the version already passed by the House. Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island have already legalized sports betting and Connecticut is working to pass legislation as well. If this passes then there will be a joint committee assembled to work out the differences between the two pieces of legislation.
 - d. Here is a link to the Mass Taxpayers Foundation overview of the House Budget.
<https://www.masstaxpayers.org/sites/default/files/publications/2022-04/MTF%20Summary%20FY%202023%20HWM%20Budget.pdf>
 - e. The House has rejected a number of tax relief amendments offered during the budget process by republicans. (See attached).

6. Police Department:

- a. Chief Babu completed the Sergeant's selection process. We are happy to announce that the new Sergeant, Sergeant Dirienzo, brings over 27 years of full-time police experience and knowledge and will continue to lead our officers in striving to do their best. He will be attending FBI LEEDA Training (Law Enforcement Executive Development Association) and MPTC required training for all new supervisors, including suicide prevention, wellness and leadership training.
- b. The new camera system has been installed and is fully operational. The system added 16 digital cameras inside and outside the public safety building. We now have full compliance with the state in regards to recording interviews and booking room video with audio. This replaced the 20+ year old one that had died recently. Thank you to the Finance Committee for the RFT.
- c. The Police Department took delivery of its newest police vehicle. This will be their second hybrid vehicle in the fleet and the Chief is hoping to replace the whole fleet with hybrid vehicles. He is currently evaluating a full electric vehicle which would be an administrative vehicle. Chief Babu says numerous police chiefs are evaluating this platform and it's a great vehicle for administrative and detective functions. He is working with Peter Joseph Kelly and Mr. Fay on obtaining grant funding for the next hybrid or electric vehicle.
- d. The Jail Diversion (JD Associates) has been a great new program that they are using and it is paramount in providing follow up services to citizens with mental health issues. Interviews are being conducted weekly and he is hoping to have our full-time Harvard-Stow member soon. In order to be more successful at attracting candidates, Stow reposted the job with a Monday through Friday schedule and a \$3,000 sign-on bonus. Just to reiterate, all benefits and salaries are paid for directly by JD Associates through a four-year grant from Department of Mental Health.
- e. The Chief partnered with the Worcester County DA office and CIMS Critical Incident Management Services to provide follow-up services for people that overdose on opioids. GAAMHA was selected as one of the subcontractors for the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP). This project is supported by Award No. 2020- ARBX-0073 provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Department of Justice in collaboration with the office of District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr. They provide coverage for 32 cities and towns located in the Northern Region of Worcester County. They will be providing follow up recovery coaching services to those who have experienced a non-fatal overdose.
- f. The department continues its traffic enforcement efforts especially on Ayer Rd., Bolton Rd., Still River Rd., and Mass Avenue. The last month saw six citations totaling \$1,620. with twenty-three warnings being issued as well.

7. Notice and Reminders:

- a. Town wide Clean Up Day and Garlic Mustard pull is happening this Thursday April 28, 2022 at 8 AM to Sunday, May 1, 2022 at 12:00pm. If you have questions, you can email Harvard.cleanup@gmail.com.
- b. Earth Day Show and Tell Around Town will be happening on Saturday, April 30, 2022 from 11am to 4pm, with a rain date on Sunday May 1, 2022. You can register at <https://tinyurl.com/3w4efcky>
- c. Shade Tree Hearings reminder: There are two hearings that will be held by the Tree Warden on the following dates and times.
 - i. May 10th (Underpin Hill Road) at 9 AM, and
 - ii. May 12th (Slough Road) at 9 AM.