Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, March 29, 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, Erin McBee, Rich Maiore
Kara Minar and Alice von Loesecke was absent
Town Department attendees:
Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet
Additional participants:
National Grid Rep. Javier Morales, Tree Warden JC Ferguson, American Diabetes Association Rep. Tim Wilson

The board had a moment of silence to recognize the passing of longtime resident and dedicated town employee and volunteer Peter E. Warren.

National Grid Pole Petition Hearing – Under Pin Hill Road
Stu Sklar opened the hearing inviting National Grid representative Javier Morales to review the details. He explained two utility poles are necessary to provide electricity to the new home being built at 46 Under Pin Hill Road. He said the existing pole 15 will be moved to a new location across the street approximately 125ft in the northeast direction. He explained the power lines will crisscross over the roadway. Morales has met with the neighboring homeowner and the Tree Warden to go over the various details.

Property owner Emil Rhodin explained there is a request to have one tree removed and some limited trimming of trees to accommodate the poles. He along with the Tree Warden and National Grid decided this was the best course of action to minimize the impact to the trees in the area. He is aware a hearing is required for the removal of a shade tree. Tree Warden JC Ferguson entered the meeting and reiterated what had been explained by Rhodin. Rhodin is interested in having electricity connected as soon as possible. He plans for the property construction to be completed by the fall of this year.

Public comment
Cindy Allen, 43 Under Pin Hill Road, a direct abutter and has been involved in discussions with National Grid, the Tree Warden and owner about the proposed work to be done. She asked for clarification on the pole location as the stakes had moved from the weight of the snow this winter. She was concerned about the crisscrossing of power lines over the roadway but after further reassurance from everyone involved that this is the best course of action she was satisfied.

In addition to this pole hearing a hearing is necessary to remove one shade tree. This hearing will be conducted by the Tree Warden either in conjunction with the Planning Board or Select Board. held by the Tree Warden to remove the shade tree. He will work on the details on that.

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to conditionally approve the pole installation on Under Pin Hill Road pending hearing for the removal of a shade tree.

New England Tour de Cure – American Diabetes Association
Associate Director Tim Wilson came seeking permission for their cycling event to pass through Harvard and locate one of their rest stops in the ballfield parking lot on Depot Road. He explained this event is part of the Tour de Cure series of fundraising cycling events around the country that benefit the American Diabetes Association. The New England Tour takes place on Sunday, August 21st with a start/finish in Lexington. Wilson said the route has been carefully planned to bring riders through historic parts of New England and the views on Prospect Hill Road near Fruitland's Museum are a desired route for many riders from the area. The board members were supportive of the event noting use of the parking lot would need approval from the Park & Recreation Commission. Executive Assistant Julie Doucet will coordinate this additional approval along with notifying the public safety department of the event. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Maiore - aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the event for August 21st pending further approval from park & Rec for use of their parking area for a rest stop.

Minutes
By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes from 3/1 & 3/7, as presented.

Staff Report/Updates (Attachment A)

Public Communication
Jennifer Finch, Codman Hill Road, was excited and pleased the board approved the Cure de Tour to come through town.

Town Meeting warrant and discuss town election hours
Town Administrator Tim Bragan reported the warrant has been reviewed by town counsel, the Finance Director and the Finance Committee Chair. There are a total of 32 articles on the warrant. They discussed hours for the town election.

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to have the election poles open from 12:00pm to 8:00pm on Tuesday, May 17th. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, von Loesecke – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to close the town meeting warrant.

Meeting on April 5
The board will hold a daytime meeting on Tuesday, April 5th at 3 pm to approve the town meeting warrant and to take a time sensitive vote to approve the sale of bonds

Act on 179D Energy Efficient Commercial Buildings Deduction Allocation form
Stu Sklar explained this item is a request from the School Committee. A vote by the Select Board will enable the architect/design firm for the new school to receive a tax deduction that municipalities are not entitled to. By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve tax deduction form 179d be signed by the Town Administrator.

Carlson Orchards one-day entertainment license requests
Stu Sklar presented draft conditions for entertainment at the Carlson Orchards Cider Barn. Erin McBee offered an edit to the conditions as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan. Owner Frank Carlson has requested one-day entertainment licenses for 25 dates beginning in April through October. Sklar suggested the board approve dates in April and May at this meeting and act on the other requested dates when the entire board is present. He believes the conditions as drafted address much of the concerns brought up by abutters to the

property. By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, McBee – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the entertainment license conditions for Carlson Orchards as presented with 11 items.
By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, McBee – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve dates of April 2nd, April 26th, May 7th and May 14th.

Revenue Ideation Committee
Stu Sklar reported the SB rep. Kara Minar requested their charge be revised to extend the deadline for their report until June of 2022 instead of March. By a roll call vote, Maiore – aye, McBee – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the change to their charge through June instead of March.

Select Board Reports
Erin McBee reported the Personnel Board is discussing adding Juneteenth to the observed holidays for town staff.

Rich Maiore reported the Open Space Committee is working with Park &Rec to identify parcels with potential for playing fields.

McBee added the Bromfield house petition has been file with the courts.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm

Documents referenced:
Pole Petition request from National Grid – dated 2.25.2022
American Diabetes Association event request – dated March 2022
Section 179D allocation form – dated 3.15.2022
Carlson Orchards dates for entertainment – dated 3.24.2022
Carlson Orchards draft conditions – dated March 2022

Attachment A

Staff Report
March 29, 2022

1. Happy to report that Jared informed me that he has been informed by Bond Counsel that the Town has retained its AAA rating from Standard and Poor's and our rate for the $4million+ borrowing is a net 2.77%

2. As the Board is aware, the DPW contract is settled and we have placed an article to fund the retro wages on the warrant with funds coming from Stabilization as we have done in the past.

3. Natural Gas:

    a. Contract approved for 3-year supply of Natural Gas for municipal (and school) buildings, commencing April 2022. The new gas supplier is Direct Energy, and their price per MMBtu will be $5.19 (versus UGI, which is $5.48); the most notable change will be that users will receive a separate supply invoice, versus having both supply and distribution combined in one National Grid invoice.

4. Budget

    a. I have attached a copy of the budget document that will be printed in the Book. Marie, Jared and I have reviewed it and have given it to the Finance Committee.

    b. During the past month the State House News has had articles that are worth noting, such as the following:

        i. The first article was is the 4th of March where State Revenue for February came in $293 million above projections and $94 million below last February tax receipts. This means the total surplus, year-to-date through February, is $1.083 billion above benchmark.
        ii. The second articles are from the 3rd of March whereby the Governor submission to the legislature for tax relief was kicked down the road and has a deadline after the House budget debate.
        iii. The final articles from the 7th and 10th of March relates to Connector Care Design and MassHealth Calculations. The officials at the Health Connector put forward plans to change the design and increase benefits. This could pose an issue in future years but not now as the second article discusses decisions by the Federal Government will boost the State's bottom line with respect to MassHealth. The State will see a multimillion dollar increase in cost but the State share will decline. This will help in the short-term.

5. State Auditor:
    a. The State Auditor has come out with a report which finds 29 different laws with financial impact on municipalities as reported by the MMA.

6. Road Funding is being Eroded:
    a. The attached two articles from the State House News Service on March 9th and 10th. As you can see, the amount of road funding has been stagnant for years and

inflation has eaten away at what communities are able to do. The pending Federal funds will help blunt this erosion but when those funds are gone we will still need to address this funding issue as a State.

7. Gas Tax Relief through the month of March:
   a. Attached are SHNS articles that will help you follow the rollercoaster that is the idea of gas tax relief. We have to wait and see what happens as other States continue to adopt these tax relief measures.

8. Police Department:

   a. The Harvard and Stow Police Departments were recognized in the SHNS article of March 24, 2022 for work together on a Jail Diversion program. This program intends on helping connect people experiencing mental health or substance abuse issues with needed services. This is done in coordination with the Advocates out of Framingham.

9. Fruitland's Museum was named as one of the top three history museums in the country by USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards.

10. The Select Board will again offer financial assistance to Bromfield seniors through the Ginny Thurston Scholarship fund. Interested students should visit the Select Board page on the town website for more details. Letters of interest are due no later than Friday, April 29th.

11. Please run this press release in this week's issue 4/1 and 4/15

12. Reminders:

   a. MassDOT is holding the Ayer Road 25% Design Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 30, 2022 at 6:30PM. This is a virtual hearing and can be accessed on March 30th at www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings

   b. Townwide Clean Up Day and Garlic Mustard pull is happening on Thursday April 28, 2022 at 8Am to Sunday, May 1, 2022 at 12:00pm. If you have questions, you can email Harvard.cleanup@gmail.com.

   c. 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