

Strategic Planning Session
Hildreth House front porch
15 Elm Street
Thursday, July 9, 2020
9:00am

Town Meetings during Covid pandemic

The Select Board began by discussing the outdoor Annual Town Meeting (ATM) held in June. They decided an outdoor venue is preferable for the fall ATM instructing town administration to investigate other less expensive options. The fall ATM will be held in October either on the 3rd or 17th.

Fiscal 21 Budget

The FY21 budget will require action at the fall ATM. Town Administrator Tim Bragan advised the board to adjust the budget for the worst case scenario in anticipation of the state budgets trending down due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. They realize if local aid comes in lower than anticipated reductions in staff and hours will likely be necessary.

They discussed considering policies with respect to use of Free Cash and/or OPEB funds to assist with operating budget shortfalls especially during a financial crisis.

Delivery of Town Services

The Select Board members agreed Zoom Meetings actually provide greater access to meetings for members of the public. They continue to advocate for the ability of residents to purchase punch cards at the Transfer Station and brainstormed ideas to make purchasing of trash bags more accessible.

Revenue Generation

The Select Board will investigate how the town can generate revenue in unconventional ways. They will consider creation of a subcommittee to work on this.

Planning

A progress report on the Master Plan will be requested from the Town Planner to be completed prior to the September All Boards meeting. The Select Board will work with their liaison assignments to prioritize goals for the coming year such as the Planning Board focusing efforts on form based coding and mid-range/ downsize/starter housing. All agreed Select Board support is crucial in these areas.

Operational

For the Select Board annual appointment process the board revised their policy to read notification to the Select Board by February 1st of those positions up for reappointment, more liaison involvement in this process, a May 1st deadline for new volunteer applications and board/committee recommendations by June 1st for appointments. All involved will focus on agreed upon criteria blending institutional knowledge while encouraging new volunteers.

Additional items

Hildreth House Phase II: seek feedback from CoA as to next steps, consult with Facilities Manager, other locations in town they can use

Old library building: tarp roof for now, reassess future use of building, market analysis for possible sale of building

Bromfield ramp: school department will need to investigate less expensive options.

Bromfield House: sell for removal from location or destroy, town owned land to be used as a parking area to accommodate MBTA riders. On a Minar/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously for disposition of the Bromfield House for structure to be sold or removed and land kept for municipal purposes.

Devens: framework committee delayed will work with consultant for MOU, update in the fall

Police Department: more visibility for speeding, regular visits to dead-end (Still River-Depot Rd) and continued traffic monitoring.

The Select Board will revisit set goals in November. They updated their liaison assignments.

Board Reorganization

Rich Maiore nominated Alice von Loesecke for another term as Chair.

Lucy Wallace nominated Kara Minar for Vice Chair.

Stu Sklar nominated Rich Maiore as Clerk.

Von Loesecke nominated Rich Maiore for Vice Chair.

The board voted unanimously Alice von Loesecke as Chair.

The board voted Kara Minar as Vice Chair.

3-2 (Minar, Wallace, Sklar – aye, von Loesecke & Maiore – nay)

The board voted unanimously Rich Maiore as Clerk.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.