

**Ayer Board of Selectmen
Open Session Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2014**

Attendance: C. Hillman (Chair); G. Luca (Clerk); J. Livingston (Vice-Chair) [Absent]
R. Pontbriand (Town Administrator)

Call To Order: The Meeting was called to order in Open Session at 7pm by Chairman Hillman.

Agenda Amendments: The Town Administrator requested that the agenda be amended to add ZBA Appointments under the Town Administrator's Report.

Motion: G. Luca made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by C. Hillman. Motion Passes 2-0.

Announcements: C. Hillman announced the Town's Memorial Day Parade. C. Hillman thanked Nashoba Valley Hospital's President Sal Perla for their \$2,000 donation to the Ayer 4th of July Celebrations. G. Luca announced the success of the Post Office Food Drive.

Public Input:

Kathleen O'Connor presented the Board with an Ayer Rail Trail Petition sent to MassDOT Secretary Davey and discussed the commitment to a June 1st resolution to the Commuter Rail Platform access issue.

Mary Spinner mentioned the consideration of approval of a Town Flag for the Fall 2014 Town Meeting. She also mentioned the importance of the DPW Roads Program and having streets accepted as public ways for the Fall 2014 Town Meeting. Finally, she made the Board aware of new DEP water regulations to take effect in December 2014.

Harry Zane spoke in favor of the Commuter Rail Platform and stated that the argument of "People get off the train do not buy anything" is nothing more than a "Straw Man Argument". No one has ever said we need the train for economic development. We need the train station for people, commuters, mass transit. Put the silly arguments to rest and get this important project done.

Ellen Fitzpatrick spoke about the Commuter Rail Platform and that it is "difficult to ask people to change." This project needs to be done. In the midst of difficulty there is opportunity. Ayer is in survival mode. MBTA needs to step up and make a difference. It is a mystery as to why no coffee shop exists by the train station. I worked to get 300 signatures for the petition.

"Dave" (last name intelligible) spoke on the importance of the commuter rail issue. Train station is a huge benefit to the Town. Local Businesses are great and will benefit from it. People are coming to Ayer to live.

Selectman Hillman stated that when completed, the area and the Town will grow. The Board and Town Administrator are committed to this project and expediting its completion.

Old Business:

1. Improvement Plan for Old Groton Road

The Town Administrator provided an overview of the issues and actions to date regarding improvements to Old Groton Road.

C. Hillman state that the original plan to improve the road was “over the top”. We need to trim the trees and fix the drainage.

G. Luca stated that this should have been done a long time ago. The divots need to be removed and the road graded for safe access. In terms of plowing in the winter, the DPW is looking to hire some contractors this year for snow removal so this could alleviate the plowing issue. We need a long term solution.

Janet Gullatta stated that she appreciated that the Board was taking this issue seriously. DPW and Town were great this past winter and we are looking for an intermediate solution.

G. Luca asked how many driveways on the road.

Janet Gullatta stated 7 households and 14 abutters.

C. Hillman stated he lives on a dirt road and they need regular attention.

R. Pontbriand stated that the DPW Superintendent will present an improvement plan for Old Groton Road on June 17th to the Board to include resolution/options to any legal issues.

On –Going Rotary Beautification Efforts and Adopt an Island Program

C. Hillman stated that the Rotary looks good and that the Town is looking for more businesses to get involved with not only the Rotary beautification but the Adopt and Island Program.

G. Luca stated this may be an opportunity for Eagle Scout Projects.

2. Organization of Building Department

C. Hillman stated that the Plumbing Inspector should have Office hours every day i.e. the Littleton Inspector is in the Office 2 hours a day.

Town Administrator stated that with increased funding approved by Town Meeting to the Building Department that opportunity to organize the Department is now.

G. Luca stated and the Board concurred that there was no issue with Building Commissioner's performance.

Town Administrator advised that increasing to a full time Building Commissioner is subject to negotiation with the Union as the position is in the Union.

Focus on Economic Development

The Town Administrator provided an overview on the topic stressing a need for the Town to secure more grant funding in the areas of economic development. Additionally the Town needs a comprehensive economic development strategy and plan to include marketing the Town.

G. Luca agreed that we need to take an aggressive look at economic development.

C. Hillman stated that the Town has so much to offer including public utilities that many Town's do not have i.e. Sewer and Water.

G. Luca stated that the new high school project will also encourage business development.

The Board asked that the Economic Development Director appear before the Board on June 3, 2014 for a further discussion.

Town Administrator's Report

1. The Town Administrator reported out the terms of the Fire Contract MOA reached in Executive Session on May 6, 2014 per the Open Meeting Law.

2. HRA. The Town Administrator discussed with the Board the issue of the remaining funds in the Town's HRA and what the Board would like to do with them. A decision to be made on June 17, 2014.

3. The Town Administrator provided a brief oral update on the Administration's efforts with respect to Town-Wide on-line permitting and payment.

4. Appointments to ZBA:

Motion was made by C. Hillman and seconded by G. Luca to appoint Mr. Michael Gibbons to the ZBA for a three year term to expire on June 30, 2015. Motion Passed 2-0.

Motion was made by C. Hillman to appoint Pauline Conley to the ZBA. The Motion was not seconded by G. Luca. With no second, the motion failed.

JBOS Update:

G. Luca provided an update pertaining to the proposed Shirley Village Senior Housing and Development Proposal in Shirley. A Super Town Meeting would be needed to change the Zoning. The Board asked for more information on the subject before taking a position.

New Business / BOS Questions:

Designation of Custodian of OPEB Trust Funds: With the passage of Article 30 at Town Meeting.

Motion: A motion was made by G. Luca and seconded by C. Hillman to authorize the Town Administrator to send a letter on behalf of the Board to the Treasurer outlining her plan come July 1, 2014 with respect to the OPEB Trust Fund and verification procedure that funds have been properly deposited. Motion passed 2-0.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Jan. 7, 2014: Moved by G. Luca and Seconded by C. Hillman. Minutes accepted 2-0
Jan. 21, 2014: Moved by G. Luca and Seconded by C. Hillman. Minutes accepted 2-0
Mar. 25, 2014: Moved by G. Luca and Seconded by C. Hillman. Minutes accepted 2-0
April 15, 2014: Moved by G. Luca and Seconded by C. Hillman. Minutes accepted 2-0
May 6, 2014 – Hold off until next meeting


C. Hillman stated that when J. Livingston returned the Board should discuss its summer schedule.

Motion was made by G. Luca and seconded by C. Hillman to adjourn the Meeting. Motion passed 2-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:38pm

Recorded and Submitted by: R. Pontbriand, Town Administrator

Approved by the BOS: 6/17/14



Gary J. Luca, Clerk