

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ON MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION  
MINUTES  
December 19, 2012**

**PRESENT:** SEAN STANTON  
DEBORAH PHILLIPS  
STEPHEN C. BANNON  
ALANA CHERNILA  
ANDREW BLECHMAN  
TOWN MANAGER KEVIN O'DONNELL

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting came to order at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

**2. SELECTMEN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Chernila read a draft resolution in support of the Newtown, Conn., community. On a motion by Ms. Phillips, seconded by Mr. Bannon, the Board unanimously approved the wording, and asked that a cover letter make reference to a House of Representatives resolution and mention the shootings at Simon's Rock College 20 years ago.

Mr. Blechman urged the Board to create a resolution in support of limiting access to semi-automatic weapons and large-capacity weapon clips. There was brief discussion as to whether the town had the ability to adopt gun control regulations in excess of what are in place at the state and federal levels.

Mr. Stanton said, contrary to a Berkshire Record news report, the town has never been responsible for installing Christmas lights downtown. He said that the Chamber of Commerce decided to skip a year, save the expense of purchasing new lights and hire fireworks instead. Mr. Bannon said when the Main Street Construction project is over; there will be better wiring for future lights. Ms. Chernila commended the decorations put up by Chamber members. Ms. Phillips said Main Street looked nice.

**3. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Town Manager O'Donnell presented paperwork for a seventh extension of the purchase-and-sale agreement for the Castle Street fire station. Ms. Phillips moved to approve, Mr. Bannon seconded, all were in favor.

**4. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME**

Jennifer Clark distributed a sheet to Board members and reviewed a half-dozen questions she had about the proposed Main Street project:

- *Could the town provide a full-size copy of the plans with color coding for lights, "load center," traffic signs, benches etc.* The town has a copy of the 100 percent design plans, Mr. Stanton said. A copy is posted on the town website. Mr. O'Donnell said it would probably cost something to ask Fuss & O'Neal to highlight the renderings. Mr. Stanton wondered if Town Planner Chris Rembold or DPW Superintendent Joe Sokul could do it.

Ms. Phillips said the “load center” is proposed for near the side entrance to Tune Street, from Railroad Street.

- *Can the public see a full-size version of the proposed ornamental lights?* DOT will not allow modified Williamsville-type lights, Mr. O’Donnell said. Mr. Stanton wondered if contemporary lighting could go it. The Board decided to ask the Historic District Commission to its next meeting, Jan. 7, to discuss the matter. (The board decided to hold a Jan. 7 as well as Jan 14 meeting.)

- *Is the program for artful recycling containers proceeding?* O’Donnell said 25 or so trash containers are planned, but he has not heard anything new from the individual who proposed overseeing the “funky” container program.

- *Where will traffic signs be placed and what size will they be?*

- *Can chirping be turned off on illuminated walk signs?* Ms. Phillips said the chirping is intended for hard-of-hearing crosswalk users, and DOT may not want the sound turned off. Ms. Clark said the sound could disturb apartment residents or store clerks if left continuous 24 hours a day.

- *What will happen to the tree memorial plaques?* Mr. O’Donnell said the plaques will be removed and saved, but there’s no plan yet for a new installation.

- *Will street signs be standard yellow or fluorescent yellow green?* Ms. Phillips said yellow.

- *Is there a landscape maintenance plan and budget?* Mr. O’Donnell said Mr. Sokul is working on a plan.

- *Could a request be made to delay the project a year, and let another town leapfrog?* Mr. O’Donnell said it is not a DOT issue, but rather the county Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) decides. The project could be delayed, but there’s no guarantee it would resume the following year. Ms. Phillips and others said they see no reason for a delay. There may be a few remaining questions, but it has to move forward. Mr. O’Donnell said DOT plans to put it to bid in January.

- *Could utility wires be placed underground between Rosseter and Cottage Streets?* Selectmen questioned an estimated \$20,000 cost.

In a return to an earlier matter, Andrea Jacobsen asked the Board if restrictions could be placed on ownership of semi-automatic weapons. Mr. O’Donnell said there was no way for the Board to learn or pass on the names of those in town who own such weapons. Mr. Stanton said the Board will discuss the issue at a later meeting.

## **5. OLD BUSINESS**

The Board will meet with members of the Agricultural Committee, Energy Committee, Planning Board and Conservation Commission on Jan. 30 to talk about sustainability. In nearly an hour of discussion, Board members offered ideas to take to the meeting. The ideas have been consolidated as follows:

### *Abstract*

- Encourage energy self-sufficiency
- Encourage alternative energy sources
- Encourage alternative transportation, particularly for bicycles and feet
- Encourage new employment in town

- Encourage new growth that is sensitive to the landscape and environment
- Encourage existing businesses and land uses to act sensitively toward the environment
- Encourage conscientiousness as to the cost of living in town (i.e. the tax rate) going beyond the earning capacities of those living here
- Encourage home-grown food production and marketing
- Encourage activities that promote good health
- Encourage reuse of municipal waste, perhaps as an energy source
- Encourage new endeavors by taking a leadership role
- Encourage new endeavors by developing sensitive and practical regulations

*Concrete*

- The town could own its own means of generating electric power.
- The town could develop a reasonable route to the regulation of solar and wind installations
- The town could ban single-use plastic retail bags
- The town could develop sidewalks, trails, bike paths, etc., so more people will be physically active, and at the same time reduce use of automobiles
- The town could offer tax breaks or subsidies for alternate energy endeavors

Ms. Chernila said the Board needs this vision so it will have something on which to base future policies.

If the Board is to have a warrant article on the 2013 annual meeting warrant to ban single-use plastic retail bags, members agreed research has to be done into towns that have adopted such laws, what laws the town may adopt, implications for merchants, etc. Mr. O'Donnell said Mr. Rembold will be busy for some time completing the new Master Plan. He said someone outside Town Hall could be hired to do the research. Ms. Phillips suggested a student intern might be recruited to spend 20 hours. The issue will be taken to the Jan. 30 five boards meeting.

**6. SELECTMEN'S TIME**

Ms. Chernila noted a tree in front of the Masonic Lodge has been removed. It was suggested the information be passed along to the Tree Committee, which might speak with the property owner about planting a new tree.

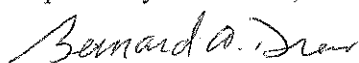
**7. MEDIA TIME**

David Scribner asked when the Seekonk Road construction will end. As soon as National Grid moves a utility pole, Mr. O'Donnell said.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bernard A. Drew  
Recording Secretary