

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MARCH 8, 2017
REGULAR SESSION

Members Present: David Andrade, Nelson Almeida, David Viera,
Michelle Hines, David Parker

Town Administrator: Shawn E. Cadime

Chairman Andrade opened the meeting at 7 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE OPENINGS UPDATE

Mr. Almeida announced that volunteers are needed on the Board of Health (1 Board of Selectmen appointment), Capital Improvement Committee (2 BOS), Conservation Commission (3 BOS), Economic Development Committee (1 BOS), Finance Committee (1 Moderator), Historical Commission (1 BOS), Property Tax Work-Off Committee (3 BOS), Recycling Committee (1 BOS), Zoning Board of Appeals (2 BOS).

COMMUNITY SPEAKS – None.

PRIORITY MATTERS

Discussion with Jeffrey Walker, Executive Director of the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) Identifying Assistance Priorities

Mr. Walker talked about the various programs at SRPEDD. The Southeast Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization is preparing to develop the upcoming transportation improvement program which will consolidate identified top priority projects from the 27 municipalities. They are preparing for the annual certification to confirm that all aspects of the MPO are being handled in a cost effective manner.

The Town will receive a community compact grant for the development of the economic development guide book. They will continue to look for other funding sources.

Mr. Walker said the Town has been well represented by Mr. D'Amico and Mr. Roach. There are 51 members.

He advised that the consolidation of MPOs in regions where there is more than one MPO in an urbanized area has become a final rule. There were two public comment periods. During the first, 550 to 600 letters were received overwhelmingly in opposition. The public comment period was reopened and again there was a high volume of opposing letters.

The western part of the state would become part of the Providence MPO beginning in 2022.

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The northern communities would go up to Boston. Eastern communities would become part of Barnstable. New Bedford, Dartmouth, and Fairhaven would become their own free-standing MPO.

Boundaries would be redrawn and regions would have two years to comply. It could be a whole different transportation landscape by 2024 unless there is an exemption by governors.

This would result in considerable less funding. Smaller communities would go to the bottom of the list.

Mr. Cadime said he would do whatever he can to lobby against the changes on behalf of the Board.

The order of business moved to:

NEW BUSINESS

Consider the Open Space and Recreation Plan

Town Planner John Aubin III, Conservation Agent Jennifer Miller, and Recreation Director John Pozzi were in attendance.

Mr. Aubin said they have been meeting for several months with the CPC and Seekonk Land Trust to set the foundation for an update to the open space and recreation plan. The last update was in 2012. They have developed a work plan. One of the elements of the Master Plan is an open space and recreational development so this falls in place with that.

Mrs. Miller had a copy of the 2009-2010 open space draft. She noted the document is necessary when applying for grants.

Chairman Andrade asked to have that sent electronically.

PUBLIC HEARING

Consider National Grid's Request to Relocate Poles and Install Three New Poles on Central Avenue (tabled from September 7, 2016)

Chairman Andrade opened the public hearing at 7:23 p.m.

No comments from the audience.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Almeida, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To close the public hearing at 7:24 p.m.

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Mr. Ed Paluch, Principal Engineer for National Grid, was in attendance.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was

VOTED: 4 Ayes; 1 Nay; To approve the request from National Grid to relocate poles and install three new poles on Central Avenue.

The vote: Mr. Parker – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Almeida – Aye; Chairman Andrade – Aye; Ms. Hines – Nay.

Prior to the vote, Mr. Paluch explained this will improve the liability to customers of Pine Street and Brown Avenue.

Ms. Hines questioned why another pole is going in the area of pole #2185 ½ on Central Avenue. There will be three poles in front of a house. She said two poles will be ten ft. away from each other.

Mr. Paluch said it is a dead end pole for the primary wire so they have to guy it.

DPW Superintendent David Cabral added that he is good with the locations.

Another National Grid representative said there are multiple angles at this pole. Pole 2185 is set behind the sidewalk upon the grassy areas because of a drain so that is the reason for another pole. National Grid is required to guy the pole because it is a dead end.

Mr. Viera asked the distance between poles.

The representative said 23 ft. from 2185 to the new pole. It is typically 150 ft. maximum between each pole. This is to prevent anchors in this location. There are two poles at that location. Abutters were contacted.

Ms. Hine said she will complain even though the abutters didn't. It gets done when someone complains.

She said there will also be three poles in front of the house at Pole #2179.

Mr. Cabral noted this request was before the Board back in September. These poles are about 60 ft. apart. There is a utility corridor. Poles are not directly in front of the house. It is not pole on top of pole. They are limited at what they can do at this location.

LICENSE HEARING

Consider the Approval of a Mobile Food Cart Permit for Timothy Spaulding to Sell Food at Seekonk Speedway

Mr. Cadime noted this is an annual request approved by the Board.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the mobile food cart permit for Timothy Spaulding to sell food at Seekonk Speedway.

SEASONAL LIQUOR LICENSE RENEWAL

JCM Petroleum/Crossroads Convenience, 822 Fall River Avenue – Jean-Claude Massad

Mr. Cadime noted this seasonal license has been approved in the past. The license is from April 1 through November 30; however, the Board can extend it through January 15.

Mr. Parker said this is the only store left in Seekonk that is seasonal. When others were transferred, this property was being sold and was not included. The ABCC refused to grant an additional license for them.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Almeida, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the seasonal liquor license renewal for JCM Petroleum Crossroads Convenience at 822 Fall River Avenue, Jean-Claude Massad proprietor, for the period commencing April 1, 2017 through January 15, 2018.

Mr. Parker suggested the Board request Rep. Howitt to contact the ABCC to make this an annual license.

OLD BUSINESS

Consider the Opinion from Town Counsel Regarding the Charter Study Committee

Mr. Cadime read from the opinion. It says the Board has the right to create a committee. Applicants need to be interviewed. The committee can review the entire charter and make recommendations but cannot vote to change the form of government. It would have to be a charter commission.

Ms. Hines said she spoke to the attorney and this is not what he told her. He said the Town needs a commission and should not form a committee.

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Chairman Andrade said the intent was to have the committee look at the charter to see if there is anything that could be changed by a full commission.

He said Ms. Hines is questioning the validity of the opinion compared to what the attorney told her.

Mr. Almeida said the attorney told him to bypass the committee and go directly to a commission.

Ms. Hines felt this should have been on the ballot for April.

Mr. Cadime said this is the only written opinion they have. The earliest it could take place is a year from now. When initially approved at town meeting, it was submitted to Rep. Howitt. It missed the deadline. Rep. Howitt has re-filed the home role petition.

Ms. Hines felt the applicants should know the Board is looking to form a commission in April 2018.

Chairman Andrade said the committee could go to work now and then in April 2018 go to the ballot.

Mr. John Alves understood that the Board could appoint a committee but the next issue is to elect a commission of nine members. He will be on the ballot; but, he will strive to make sure the question about the need for a commission is defeated.

Interviews will be held at the next meeting.

Discussion on the Status of Old Town Hall

Mr. Cadime advised that he is waiting to hear from tribe members about setting up a conference call with all parties including attorneys. He emailed Atty. Klein to reiterate the fact that the Board of Selectmen is getting frustrated with the length of this transaction and is considering rescinding the vote for any transaction taking place. Hopefully, this issue will be resolved within the next week.

Chairman Andrade said they talked about this two and a half months ago.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on Pavement Management Including Current Proposed Road Improvements for this Year

Mr. Cabral requested approval of the plan for this year.

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He has been trying to keep some focus on Newman Avenue alternating every other year. The next section would be from Jacoby Way to Brown Avenue. He will coordinate with Columbia Gas to get service at Jacoby Way before work is done.

Last year approximately \$580,000 of Chapter 90 money was spent and an additional \$32,000 for work on Pamden Lane and Wildflower Drive. Those roads were in poor condition. They will need to stone seal those roads to keep the water away from the surface.

Heritage Road, Drohan Court, and John Alden Road will require leveling. Morris Street, Lynn Street, Ipswich Street, Hull Street, Provazza Drive, Avon Street, and Milton Street will require drainage improvements. He will try to do some of those improvements in house.

He will work with the Police Department to accommodate detours.

Ms. Hines asked about closure of Newman Avenue in East Providence from March 13 to March 20.

Mr. Cabral said there was a press release. It is the beginning of work on the Newman Avenue culvert. It will probably be alternating one-way traffic. Arcade Avenue will be the preferred detour route.

He will move forward with the plan as early as tomorrow.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the pavement management plan.

Mr. Parker was amazed at the cost of police details - \$25,000. In some cases, there are five officers on a detail. He noted that 47 out of 50 states do not require police details. They use construction workers.

Mr. Cabral said he has been talking to Mr. Cadime about a pavement management plan. In pavement management courses, they learn to spend money on roads that are in good shape. He had a handout and would like to do a powerpoint presentation for the Board at the next meeting. The initial cost would be \$25,000 to \$30,000 of Chapter 90 money and updates every two or three years.

Mr. Cadime said the money for pavement management is short money. It gives you a snapshot of how much it would cost to fix roads as of today. If some projects come in under budget, there would be money to allocate to other projects.

A similar plan was done with SRPEDD.

General Discussion of Special Town Meeting

Mr. Cadime thanked residents for their support. The animal shelter will be on the ballot for the April 3 election. He reminded residents to support it.

DPW got a new street sweeper. Also, \$800,000 was transferred from the Health Insurance Trust Fund into Other Post Employment (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund for our retirees. The Town has funded just under 10% of that unfunded liability. Other communities have not begun to do that. It helps to ensure a good bond rating

Mr. Cadime commended the by-law study committee who worked diligently over the past 1 ½ years. It was very fulfilling to see that pass at Town Meeting.

Mr. Parker felt the Town Meeting went very well. He felt the by-law study committee did an exceptional job presenting it.

Ms. Hines thanked the residents who attended. She said as long as there is a quorum the business of the Town still has to continue. It would be great to have hundreds of people but that doesn't happen often. They got through it. It was great. She commended the by-law study committee. She noted that the warrant and pertinent information is available two weeks prior to the meeting.

Mr. Almeida saw that Town Meeting in a different view. As a member of the Board of Selectmen for 4 ½ years, he was very disappointed at the Special Town Meeting. He thanked residents (just under 100) who showed up and voted for the articles.

He felt that Board members and department heads were interrogated. It was like none of the issues were discussed at Board meetings. The warrant was in the newspaper, on the website, and discussed at Board meetings.

Residents who claimed fowl play showed up at the meeting so they knew about it. The Board does its best to inform residents. A resident sat there playing with his phone and voting down articles. After three hours, he asked for a quorum check.

Mr. Almeida felt the form of government is outdated in Seekonk. He would like to see Representative Town Meeting (RTM) or city council type of government.

Mr. Viera said he has made the same argument for a long time. Seekonk went to RTM at one time. He felt Seekonk has the fairest form of government where everybody has an opportunity to be heard and vote. Either everybody trusts the Board or there is no apathy. They need to do something to spark the interest in this community. A \$44M budget was decided by 83 people. Residents should have a say in that. It is not the Board's fault if they decide to stay home.

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He suggested not televising the town meeting. Residents who are interested would have to go to town meeting. He noted that this community belongs to everybody. Residents should support department heads.

Vote on the Ballot Question for Animal Shelter

Mr. Andrade abstained and left the room. Vice-Chairman Almeida assumed the chair.

Mr. Cadime read the ballot question.

A motion was made by Ms. Hines, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was

VOTED: 4 Ayes; 1 Abstention; To approve the ballot question for the animal shelter.

Consider the Approval of Regular Session Minutes of February 27, 2017.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the Regular Session minutes of February 27, 2017 as presented.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS – None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discuss Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairman 48 Hours Before the Meeting – None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cadime advised that he has collaborated with TV-9 to host a monthly TV show. He recorded the first one yesterday. Chief Healy was the guest. The purpose is to keep residents informed and to highlight what is going on in the Town of Seekonk.

He is open to recommendations from Board members and town residents.

He noted there is competition going on because Chief Mace is bragging that he has the most watched show.

He announced there will be a public hearing on department fees during the meeting of March 22, 2017.

Statutory exemptions are due in the Assessors' Office by April 3, 2017. Motor vehicle excise taxes are due by March 9, 2017.

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The annual town election is on April 3, 2017. Absentee ballots are available from March 13 to March 31.

Also, residents are asked to return the town census forms.

The rabies clinic is scheduled for Saturday, March 11, 2017, from 9 a.m. to noon at the DPW building.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Veterans Memorial Committee Liaison Report

Mr. Viera said, now that the weather is improving, bricks that were purchased will be added and others fixed. Works should be done by Memorial Day.

He thanked Communications Director Chris Campbell for securing a camera and electrical hook up to be placed at the park.

He received an unsigned handwritten letter in the mail. He gave it to Mr. Cadime to make copies for all Board members.

Mr. Viera asked if there is a policy with regard to closing town hall due to inclement weather.

Chairman Andrade said there is no written policy. The Town Administrator makes the call..

Mr. Viera asked if consideration is given to town residents who are applicants for positions.

Mr. Cadime responded yes but qualifications have to be there.

Mr. Viera said he heard several complaints about people not getting documents in a timely manner for Town Meeting. He agreed with Ms. Hines that documents are on line and also available at town hall.

He would like to see the Finance Committee take an active role at town meeting as per the Charter.

Mr. Parker stated that he has received calls on electric rates. The Town is included in a consortium and the rates have not gone down.

Chairman Andrade said the only discount is on the electricity itself. National Grid is charging delivery charges.

Mr. Cadime felt they are getting the reduced rate. He will check.

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Ms. Hines thanked everybody who went to the Taste of the Town. She also thanked the businesses who donated prizes. She commended the members of the Kiwanis Club who sponsor this event every year.

She announced the Save-A-Pet Auction is scheduled for March 28, 29, and 30 at the Ramada Inn from 6 to 10 p.m. Save-A-Pet will donate to the new animal shelter.

Se asked about work at the Mararian property.

Mr. Cadime said there are discussions about a ball field going there. It is in preliminary stage. He noted that Conservation and DPW are doing clean up at the area.

Mr. Viera said it is rumored about a ball field and neighbors are upset about added traffic. If that is going to happen, he suggested a neighborhood meeting to keep residents informed.

Mr. John Alves, an abutting neighbor to the property, read from the warrant article when the land was purchased in 1978. The action at Town Meeting was that the land be preserved in natural state. He would certainly argue against anything different.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:02 p.m., Mr. Viera motioned, seconded by Mr. Almeida, to go into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions with respect to negotiations with Fraternal Order of Police MASSCOP Local 215 per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3), Seekonk Firefighters Union IAF Local 1931 per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3), United Steelworkers of America Clerical Unit Local 16031 per M. G. L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3), and United Steelworkers Supervisors Unit Local 16031 per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town; and to consider the approval of Executive Session minutes of February 22, 2017; not to return to open session.

The vote: Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Almeida – Aye; Ms. Hines – Aye; Mr. Parker – Aye; Chairman Andrade – Aye. Mr. Parker would not participate in Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

David Viera, Clerk

Prepared by:

Patricia Gamer, Secretary