

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
NOVEMBER 15, 2017
REGULAR SESSION

Members Present: David Andrade, Nelson Almeida, David Viera,
Michelle Hines, Davie 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.

He announced that, in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), any person recording the meeting must notify the Chairman. The Board of Selectmen is recording via audio and visual.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE OPENINGS UPDATE

Mr. Almeida announced that volunteers are needed on the Charter Study Committee (2 Board of Selectmen appointments), Conservation Commission (2 BOS), Energy Committee (2 BOS), Finance Committee (2 Moderator), Historical Commission (1 BOS), Property Tax Work-Off Committee (3 BOS), and Zoning Board of Appeals (1 BOS).

COMMUNITY SPEAKS – None.

PUBLIC HEARING

Consider National Grid's Request to Install a 2-duct Road Crossing from an Existing Underground Primary Cable to a New Transformer on Commerce Way

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

VOTED: To open the public hearing at 7:01 p.m.

Mr. Michael Fraser from National Grid was in attendance.

DPW Superintendent David Cabral advised the Technical Review Committee expressed concern about the work being done during the holiday season. However, it will not be done until spring 2018. National Grid is here to start the process to apply for a permit for the road opening. The work will be done between The Paper Store and Taco Bell. The road will be restored upon completion of the work.

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

VOTED: To close the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

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

VOTED: To approve the National Grid request to install a 2-duct road crossing at Commerce Way with the provision that no work can start on road opening until after February 2018.

OLD BUSINESS

Discuss Alternate Location for Howitzer Cannon

Chairman Andrade said that board members were supposed to explore possible locations.

Mr. Viera felt it will be a problem no matter where it's placed. He suggested the Board continue to work with the Board of Library Trustees to keep the cannon at the Veterans Memorial Park.

Mr. Parker said there are several locations including the town hall area. However, he felt the cannon should stay where it is as a tribute to the men and women who sacrificed their lives.

Chairman Andrade said it should go where there is high visibility.

Ms. Hines did not think about other locations because she understood the chairman was going to discuss it with the Board of Library Trustees.

Chairman Andrade said the conversation centered on the fact that there was a Memorandum of Understanding for review. That came about from a joint meeting with Mr. Durkay, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Viera, Mr. Cadime and himself. There was discussion that board members would explore possible alternatives.

Mr. Cadime noted that Chris Pelletier had offered land outside of Greenbrier. He has concerns because it is private property.

Mr. Cabral said each location has its own concerns.

Mr. Cadime said the intent was to have it at the memorial.

Ms. Debbie Block of 301 Jacob Street said she visited the memorial park after the last meeting. It is beautiful. She was very moved by it with the exception of the howitzer. She asked when and how the decision was made to get it.

Chairman Andrade explained that the Board of Selectmen agreed to place the howitzer at the memorial at the request of Mr. Viera, Chairman of the Veterans Memorial Park Committee. The Board of Library Trustees was not aware and discussions came out of that. The howitzer is on permanent loan from the National Guard.

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Mr. Viera said he is a veteran and it is great to be able to get this.

Chairman Andrade said the Board of Library Trustees has agreed it could stay at the library location if a suitable location isn't found.

Mr. John Alves, 25 River Street, suggested the American Legion might want to place the howitzer at its location.

Chairman Andrade said it came to mind but the America Legion is private land and the howitzer is on loan from the National Guard.

Mrs. Janet Bowdon, 170 Walker Street, can't image what people who are memorized in that park would think if they heard this conversation. It is tribute to our stamina and freedom.

Mr. Almeida agreed with the previous speaker. He felt the howitzer should remain at the Veterans Memorial Park. However, he was elected to serve the people so it should go on the ballot for an ultimate decision.

Chairman Andrade is against it. Board members are elected to make decisions and choices. He felt there is no need for a Board of Selectmen if every decision has to be on the ballot. Anyone who disagrees with his decisions should not vote for him.

Ms. Hines said the townspeople voted on the Veterans Memorial Park and voted to get the money. This addition was not on the original plan. She gets e-mails from both sides. This howitzer is looked at as a weapon of destruction and a weapon of freedom. She agreed with putting it on the ballot.

Mr. Parker added that, as elected officials, they sometimes make decisions that not everybody agrees with. He is in favor of putting it on the ballot. He would like reassurance from the Board of Library Trustees that they would abide by the results of the election. He felt veterans would be very happy with a ballot question.

Mr. Robert Blanchard, 85 Sykes Road, agreed with Mr. Parker. He felt there is a difference between a Memorandum of Understanding and a Memorandum of Agreement. He would like to see the document.

Chairman Andrade said it is the same.

Mr. Cadime said it is in draft form. It will be an agenda item within the next two meetings.

Mr. Blanchard asked about input from the ZBA.

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Chairman Michael Durkay reiterated the vote taken by the Board of Library Trustees as stated at the previous meeting. That the Board of Selectmen would remove the howitzer for renovations and a potential location found. The Board of Library Trustees was OK with the library location if it's the only place as long as restrictions and any zoning implications were addressed.

Ms. Hines felt it is premature to talk about a ballot question without input from Zoning.

Mr. Cadime said the building commissioner has to make the determination.

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

VOTED: To begin steps for a ballot question as to whether the howitzer should stay at the Veterans Memorial Park subject to ruling by Zoning official regarding restrictions and a copy of minutes from the Board of Library Trustees on the vote to abide by the election results.

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

Prior to the vote, Mr. Durkay asked if it would be the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen to find another location if the vote is to remove it.

Mr. Alves implored the Board of Selectmen not to pass the buck to a ballot question in April and to make a decision now.

Ms. Block felt there hasn't been serious considerations of another location. She felt the howitzer is not appropriate to honor our veterans.

Chairman Andrade said that several board members made an effort.

Mr. William Clark of 71 Talbot Way suggested the American Legion would be a good alternate location.

Mr. Viera noted that he hasn't seen this much controversy in town over something that is part of history. It is an artifact.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss a New Secretarial Position to Complete Board and Committee Minutes

Mr. Viera explained that he requested this item on the agenda to ensure that minutes are done in a timely manner according to the Open Meeting Law. It would be a part-time under 20 hour position.

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Mr. Parker said he can't support it at this time. He counted eight or nine different boards that do not have a secretary. He doesn't know of any problem getting minutes done. He also does not like to hire in mid-year.

Mr. Viera said the Veterans Memorial Committee minutes are being done now but were not in the past. The By-Lay Study Committee requested a secretary.

Mr. Cadime said nothing has been identified. Additional funds would have to be reallocated to fund the position.

Ms. Hines noted an additional part-time secretary was hired for the Town Administrator's office. Some minutes have to be verbatim. She suggested one of them in that office could assist any board that is having difficulty.

Chairman Andrade said that person was hired to help the Executive Assistant.

Mr. Cadime said the ZBA is the only board that requires verbatim minutes. The clerk of the boards and committees should be taking minutes.

The By-Law Committee was looking for clerical staff. The part time secretary to the Veteran's Agent is transcribing the minutes from recording. Finance, ZBA, and Planning are covered.

Mr. Viera said a number of towns hire a secretary to take care of minutes.

General Discussion of Fall Town Meeting

Chairman Andrade stated that the vote regarding the Showcase Cinema property made no sense to him. That parcel sat vacant for ten years. The intent was to try to do something with that property. The Economic Development Committee and Mr. Cadime came up with a logical approach.

Ms. Hines felt voters did not want to change zoning until they know what is going in there. They should have been told that the owners of the property can sell it to whoever they want. Some people do not want to bother if they know they have to go through rezoning. It might not have been explained correctly.

The quorum is 75. There were 77 people in attendance at 7 p.m. The votes taken do not have to reach 75. When she was moderator, she saw registered voters who do not vote on all the questions.

Mr. Almeida was disappointed that only 77 people attended. Residents have said there is not enough notification. It is well advertised and people don't show up.

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He had a resident suggest that a print out of budget figures be available when people are checking into town meeting.

Mr. Parker mentioned that a vote taken on a particular article at a Board of Selectmen meeting was 3 to 2 in favor and the exact opposite at town meeting.

Mr. Almeida said board members can change their mind in two weeks.

Accept the Resignation of Probationary Firefighter Ryan Gormley from the Seekonk Fire Department, effective November 10, 2017

Chief Michael Healy advised that Mr. Gormley was having difficulty meeting one of the conditions of employment.

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

VOTED: To accept the resignation of probationary firefighter Ryan Gormley.

Consider a Conditional Offer of Employment to Michael Puhacz as a Probationary Third Class Firefighter/Paramedic

Chief Healy advised that Mr. Puhacz was interviewed in June. He did well in the testing process. He was told he needed his basic EMT license. He did that on his own over the summer. He recently moved to Seekonk.

Chief Healy requested and Mr. Cadime recommended to extend a conditional offer of employment to Michael Puhacz.

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

VOTED: To extend a conditional offer of employment to Michael Puhacz as Probationary Third Class Firefighter/Paramedic.

Discussion with Fire Department Regarding Water Tanker

Mr. Almeida stated that Becky Lane has no fire hydrants. They either have to put in a water holding tank or owner gives up \$5,000 per house to the Fire Department. He is not comfortable with that. He suggested the town purchase a used water tanker.

Chairman Andrade said it is a Planning Board requirement and the money goes to the town.

Chief Healy said it is in Planning Board regulations. Residential sprinklers are costly to homeowners and underground water tanks become the property of the town after the road is

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accepted. He had developers pay \$5,000 to the Planning Board and that money is used to purchase tanker and associated equipment for rural water supply. He also made an agreement with Rehoboth which has three tankers. There is also a Bristol County tanker task force and Warren, RI has a tanker.

Chief Healy felt the town has a very good system right now.

Consider the Approval of Regular Session Minutes of October 18, 2017

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

VOTED: To accept the Regular Session minutes of October 18, 2017.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS

Mr. Tom Benoit of 80 Ferncliffe Road asked when the howitzer would be removed.

Mr. Cadime said it is a matter of finding a place indoors.

Mr. Benoit said there was feedback that a developer was working a side deal with the town regarding the Showcase location.

Mr. Cadime explained that while attending a meeting with the developer of the new Southcoast Plaza in Fall River he did pitch Seekonk. The developer put \$111,000,000 into that property.

He said that big corporations will not consider a location if there is a rezoning or requirement of overlay district. He would like to see a medical facility at that location.

He said the owners of the Showcase are asking an astronomical price. A traffic light is needed there.

Mr. Clark felt some of the warrant articles needed more explanation and background information.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REOORT

Mr. Cadime thanked residents who attended Town Meeting. It's the same people that attend. He extended best wishes for a Happy and safe Thanksgiving with their families.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Veterans Memorial Committee Liaison Report – Nothing.

Mr. Viera asked Mr. Cadime to pass along to DPW that a resident is happy with the work at Hull Street and Provazza Drive. He asked about the fence situation on Ledge Road.

Mr. Cabral said he is trying to address this issue. He has talked to Planning and Zoning. There is a challenge with visibility. He has talked to the abutter. He will reach out to the homeowner.

Mr. Viera expressed concern with security at the larger venues.

Mr. Cadime said it is discussed at department head and smaller sub-division meetings. They have conducted active shooter training at the high school. They will do table top trainings. Chief Healy will coordinate that at least twice a year. It is important that response time and coordination of proper procedures and protocols are in place.

Mr. Parker asked for updates on the generator for town hall, the new website and the animal shelter.

Mr. Cadime said the generator should be in the first week in December. The website is not the top priority right now. They are waiting for review of documents for the animal shelter.

Mr. Parker noted a solar farm is going up in the north end. He asked if it has to be in the solar zone.

Mr. Cadime said yes.

Board members agreed to allow Mr. Parker to contact Rehoboth to participate in that town's 375th Anniversary celebration next year. He was thinking about possibly a float in the parade.

Ms. Hines thanked people who attended the Veterans Day observation and also the town meeting. She noted town meetings are held on the second Monday of March and second Monday of November. She intends to announce that at every Board of Selectmen meeting. She wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. Almeida thanked those who attended town meeting. He missed the Veterans Day observation because he had to work.

He announced that town hall is under renovation.

Chairman Andrade also extended best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving. He was also unable to attend the Veterans Day ceremony.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION – None.

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

VOTED: To dissolve at 9:11 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

David Viera, Clerk

Prepared by:

Patricia Gamer, Secretary

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Items Distributed at the November 15, 2017 Board of Selectmen Meeting

Letter of resignation from Ryan Gormley, Firefighter

Request from National Grid to install road crossing on Commerce Way with supporting documents and comments from Chief Craig Mace