



SELECT BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 26, 2021

7:00 PM

Town Hall Room 204 with In-Person and Virtual Public Participation

Present: David Martin, Dean Charter, Jim Snyder-Grant, Fran Arsenault, Himaja Nagireddy, and Town Manager John S. Mangiaratti

Absent: None

Mr. Martin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

I. **Regular Business**

1. **Residents Concerns**

Terra, West Acton: expressed concern that the Planning Board performed a straw poll vote to not approve the proposed project at 47 Conant Street, and then staff prepared a draft approval document. The concern is that if staff is preparing drafts in advance of votes, there should be both one to approve and one to deny.

Linda Vieira, Great Elm Drive: asked the Town Manager if he was going to continue to give COVID-19 updates, and asked about reduced hours at the library.

David, Great Road: Referenced the comment made at the Annual Town Meeting regarding Chinese residents, and the need to consider the impact of racist statements and actions on the mental health of those targeted by such statements. As a licensed mental health professional who works with young people in Acton, he sees these impacts in his work.

2. **Chair Update/Town Manager Update/Members Minutes**

Mr. Martin had no updates. Mr. Mangiaratti announced eight current cases in isolation to a cumulative total of 994 cases and will continue to monitor any changes on a daily basis. The COVID email news updates have not resumed, but will consider same should the need arise. Mr. Mangiaratti will look into the current hours of operation at the Memorial Library as he was not aware that hours had been cut back. Mr. Snyder-Grant is waiting for a hearing date for the Home Rule Petition from Article 14 that passed at Annual Town Meeting on June 21, 2021, and will be waiting for Acton's hearing, and had attended a meeting on July 17 at NARA Park regarding the Climate Coalition and apartment dwellers. Ms. Nagireddy further updated regarding climate coalition, and additional plans to host another meeting for those who want to be more involved. Mr. Charter had no updates, yet mentioned the Library may have routinely reduced hours during the summer. Ms. Arsenault announced the Acton Housing Authority received its "project authorization letter" from the state for the 348-362 Main Street housing project, which is the last step needed before proceeding to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Martin received a



message from the Memorial Library Board of Trustees and announced the current hours and will be back to regular operating hours in the fall.

II. New/Special Business

3. Presentation of CARES Funds Used to Date

The town received \$2.9 million in CARES Act funding. Laura Ducharme presented how the money was utilized and awarded. Acton received \$128,000 in Emergency Rental Assistance, \$31,000 in Mortgage Assistance, \$49,170 in childcare subsidies, and \$116,443 from the Acton-Boxborough United Way COVID-19 Emergency Grants for a total of \$307,803.

4. Discussion of Tree Removal, Bumble Bee Way (46 High Street)

Mr. Mangiaratti updated the Board regarding a resident's concern regarding the ability to safely turn out of the driveway. At a previous Board meeting, the Board voted not to remove two trees on High Street, and the developer agreed to relocate the driveway, between a 44" tree and a 35" tree. Geoff Beach updated the Board regarding the two trees at the end of the driveway, one being a safety concern, and one with potential health issues. The developer, Mark Gallagher from Seal Harbor, updated the Board that the trees had previously been requested to be removed and this removal was approved by the Tree Warden. An appeal was received and the developer realigned Bumble Bee Way to keep the trees, and voluntarily deposited \$10,000 into the street tree fund to remove or replace if necessary. As the former Tree Warden, Mr. Charter evaluated the two trees, and noted that the 35" oak has root decay, is a hazard and should be removed. The 44" oak has root damage at the base and may be due to past snow plow damage, and that the tree may die and that the site clearance at Bumble Bee Way is not appropriate. Mr. Charter believes that both trees should be removed due to safety matters and suggested the Town Manager negotiate how the trees should be removed. A member of the public commented on the status of the trees and suggested that the Board hold a new tree hearing. Mr. Snyder-Grant suggested that interim measures may be appropriate, such as a "Blind Drive" sign, and a convex mirror to allow for a better view, and that these measures may make it possible to just remove the 35" tree. Another member of the public requested the Board to remove the trees due to safety concerns. Richard Keleher, Brewster Lane, agrees with taking down the smaller tree, moving the driveway and preserving the 44" oak. Liz Nugent, Concord Road, asked if a safety audit was involved with sidewalks. The Board deferred a decision, requesting the Town Manager to negotiate with the developer with the general direction of removing the 35" Oak, and revisiting the decision at a future meeting.

5. Discuss Support of S.1853/H.2890 An Act Providing for Climate Change Adaption Infrastructure and Affordable Housing Investments in the Commonwealth

Senator Jamie Eldridge presented to the Board the Housing and Environmental Revenue Opportunities (HERO) Act bill that he is sponsoring, seeking support from



the Board. The Act would provide sufficient funding to combat both climate change and affordable housing.

A member of the public hoped that the bill would align with the Housing Production Plan and to look for rehabilitation of current buildings and exempting taxes for properties under \$200,000.

Mr. Snyder-Grant moved that the Board support S.1853/H.2890, the Housing and Environment Revenue Opportunities Act, and look forward to this program helping those of the lowest incomes, and those living in Environmental Justice communities, seconded by Ms. Nagireddy. The Board voted 5-0, the motion carried.

6. Polystyrene Presentation from Ban the Bag and More

Carolyn Platt and Peter Berry from Ban the Bag and More presented a request to support a Home Rule Petition at the next Town Meeting to ban polystyrene and disposable plastic items, and requesting the Board to petition the General Court to adopt the legislation “An Act Authorizing the Town of Acton to Establish a Fee for a Checkout Bag”. Three grocery stores in Acton are in agreement with the fee per bag. The group plans to meet with the Board of Health, communicate with food establishments and retailers, and perform outreach to committees and residents. Board Members asked about what alternatives are available to the use of the current containers. Mr. Berry mentioned that other establishments have had few issues switching to bamboo-based utensils and recyclable and compostable materials for packaging. Linda Vieira, Great Elm Drive, noted her concern for people on food stamps and asked what provisions would be in place for them to receive free bags at grocery stores. Ms. Platt noted that when the plastic bag ban went into effect, the group working to pass this got a grant to provide a large number of free reusable bags, and that they hope to do this again if the home rule petition succeeds. The Board had a general consensus to move forward when ready to prepare to present the alternative materials proposed for merchants to use, and to ask Town Counsel to prepare articles for Town Meeting.

7. Discuss International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives Invitation to Join the ICLEI150 in the Race for Zero

Ms. Nagireddy moved to approve, seconded by Ms. Arsenault. Board Members Mr. Snyder-Grant stated that he would like to have the Sustainability Director comment on the impact that joining the ICLEI 150 would have on the Climate Action Plan already in process before signing on. . **Ms. Nagireddy moved to withdraw the motion, seconded by Ms. Arsenault** no formal vote was made by Board Members.

8. Appoint Member or Designee to the MBTA Advisory Board

Mr. Martin noted that Ben Bloomenthal is currently the Acton member on the MBTA Advisory Board. **Mr. Charter moved to appoint Ben Bloomenthal as the Acton member, seconded by Mr. Snyder-Grant and unanimously voted by the Board.**



9. Discuss Select Board Committee Liaison Change, Design Review Board

The Board agreed by consensus to remove Mr. Snyder-Grant and add Mr. Charter as Select Board Member liaison to the Design Review Board.

10. Update on Existing Goals from Town Manager

Mr. Mangiaratti updated the Board with the FY21 goals established by the Board, and the current status of each long and short term goal.

11. Listening Session for Community Input on Select Board FY22 Goals

Danny Factor, Davis Road – read his email previously sent to the Board requesting expansion of the delivery of Human Services by increasing the current full time employee count, specifically for those with economic insecurity, create more outreach for Human Services, create a volunteer committee that supports a Human Services Department.

Linda Vieira, Great Elm Way – would like to see more public information on town elections, more information on town Boards and Committees with more public outreach to generate more involvement.

Terra – more notification to the public to provide comment for the Select Board Goals, more publication of how the Town supports residents, support two bills regarding progressive taxation for property taxes, and certain people being exempt from property taxes, focus to save trees and a process to save trees, and the creation of an affordable housing rehab trust.

III. Consent Items

Mr. Charter moved to approve consent items 12-23 inclusive, seconded by Ms. Arsenault, and unanimously voted by the Board.

Mr. Snyder-Grant moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Charter, and unanimously voted by the Board. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Agenda, July 26, 2021
- CARES Act Presentation
- Tree Removal Documents
- HEROs Act Documents
- Polystyrene Presentation from Ban the Bag and More
- International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Invitation Documents
- MBTA Advisory Board Letter Dated July 11, 2021
- Status on Select Board Goals FY21 Document Updated July 22, 2021
- Select Board Goal Setting Public Comment Emails
- Amended Meeting Minutes, April 5, and April 12, 2021
- Meeting Minutes, July 12, 2021
- Executive Session Minutes, July 12, 2021



- Minor Amendment to Site Plan Special Permit #04/30/71-15, Acton Plaza
- Grant of Utility Easements, 300 Main Street
- Accept Gift, Recreation Department from Daniel and Laura Kelmar and Judy Nolan Dated July 9, 2021
- Accept Gift, Recreation Department from Rod & Kirsten Kunz and Chuck & Kate Feininger Dated July 6, 2021
- Accept Gift, Recreation department from Robin Talkowski Dated July 7, 2021
- One Day Alcoholic Beverage License Application, Nashoba Valley Neighbor's Club
- One Day Alcoholic Beverage License Application, Rupesh Shiramalla
- One Day Alcoholic Beverage License Application, Emily Frey