



SELECT BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 6, 2021

7:30 PM

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

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

Remote Participation: Dean Charter

Absent: None

Mr. Martin called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Mr. Charter participated remotely due to a geographical location greater than 20 miles.

I. Regular Business

1. Resident Concerns

Madeline Cruz, 2 Townhouse Lane – authorizes the Acton Housing Authority to talk to members of the Select Board and release any information concerning Ms. Cruz' tenancy to the Select Board.

Terra, West Acton – supports Madeline Cruz, also in favor of a tenant advocate; asked the Select Board to consider asking others whether the Planning Board should be an elected board, and intends to submit a Citizens' Petition for Town Meeting.

2. Chair Update/Town Manager Update/Members Minutes

Mr. Snyder-Grant noted that, at the next meeting, a policy will be presented for Board discussion regarding discouragement of fossil fuel connections by developers, and further that the Building and Planning Divisions advise developers early in the construction/development process regarding alternative energy methods; looking forward to having the Acton Water District and the Water Resources Advisory Committee at the Board's next meeting. The Climate Action Plan blueprint is ready for public review; public comments are sought through December 10.

Ms. Arsenault volunteered with the Boston Area Gleaners last week and encourages anyone to volunteer for the group.

Mr. Mangiaratti announced that a working group has been established for updating the current Open Space Plan, and seeking liaisons from various Boards and Committees to be involved. Mr. Mangiaratti thanked the Finance Department and Director Steve Barrett for receiving the Government Finance Officers Award (GFOA) for the seventh consecutive year. The Town hired a new Building Commissioner, Tom Moberg. The Town has obtained its first hybrid Fire Department command vehicle. Mr. Mangiaratti thanked the many volunteers that assisted with the pediatric vaccine clinics over the past two weekends, and that there is a spike in positive COVID cases, now at 68. The Town is working with the Department of Environmental Protection with solid waste management and looking into continuing with the transfer station vs. curbside pickup.



II. Public Hearings

3. 7:35 PM Tax Classification Hearing

Brian McMullen first updated the Board regarding the tax abatement programs available to residents who qualify. Then, Mr. McMullen explained that there are four votes required before setting the tax rate: the Residential Factor, and the adoption of any of three possible exemptions: open space, residential, and small business. Mr. McMullen explained the residential factor and the three possible exemptions, reviewed the recent history of these exemptions in Acton, and explained why the assessors do not recommend any of the exemptions at this time.

Ann Chang, South Acton encouraged the Board to adopt a residential factor of 1. Terra, West Acton – questioned the number of seniors participating in property tax exemption programs, and noted there are 400 people in Acton earning less than \$17,000 annually.

Debra Simes, Concord Road – asked about the personal properties that were eligible for exemption vs. people that own investment properties. Mr. McMullen explained that there are hardship applications that are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Nagireddy to close the hearing and voted unanimously by roll call vote 5-0.**
- **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to adopt a residential rate of 1.0 and voted unanimously by roll call vote 5-0.**
- **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to not adopt an open space exemption and voted unanimously by roll call vote 5-0.**
- **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to adopt a residential exemption and voted unanimously by roll call vote 5-0.**
- **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to not adopt a small business exemption and voted unanimously by roll call vote 5-0.**

III. New/Special Business

4. Town Manager Recommended Municipal Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 (Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee)

The Finance Committee joined the Select Board and called its meeting to order. Mr. Mangiaratti presented the Town Manager's proposed FY23 Municipal Budget. The Select Board Chair and Town Manager received questions and comments from the Finance Committee.

Mr. Snyder-Grant suggested that if adding a renter advocate to the budget is not able to happen soon, a good alternative might be contracting with Regional Housing Services Office to provide renter advocacy services. Ms. Nagireddy asked about the \$750,000 allotted for sidewalk construction if it only included the design study, and appreciated the equity focus included in the proposed budget. Mr. Charter appreciated the support of the forestry program.

Charlie Kadlec, Paul Revere Road – asked about the status of the regional Acton-Concord dispatch center. Mr. Mangiaratti stated it is not reflected in the FY23 budget, however, the process is still underway and will be represented in a future



budget. Also requesting if any new FT positions being considered as part of the FY 23 budget be a separate warrant article.

Ann Chang, South Acton – questioned about how the Select Board was going to do a new Fair Housing legal review inside the recodification of the Zoning Bylaws.

Alissa Nicol, School Street – concerned about the Sidewalk budget amount, adding impervious asphalt increases the chance of flooding and stormwater management.

Mark Bishop, West Acton – questioned about a slide regarding the requests from the Water District.

Debra Simes - questioned if the analyst position would be supporting the Public Works and the Sustainability Director or would be supporting other departments.

Terra, West Acton – concerned about a position for equity for zoning and that it would benefit developers and would not support low income residents. The Finance Committee voted to adjourn its meeting.

5. Approve District Reprecincting and New Precinct Map

Mr. Mangiaratti provided an update that the State had updated the voting precincts once more since the previous Board vote to accept the new precincts. There is a new split in the 6th precinct. The goal is to divide each district to contain approximately three thousand registered voters.

Linda Vieira questioned when the voters were going to be notified of the new precincts and locations where they will be voting. Mr. Martin noted that Board approved a single polling location and if voters will be notified if they will be having a new representative. Mr. Mangiaratti stated postcards will be sent via U.S. Mail.

Ms. Arsenault moved, seconded by Ms. Nagireddy to approve the updated precinct map and voted unanimously by roll call vote 5-0.

6. Board to Discuss Requirements for Renovating the Asa Parlin House as a Cultural Center

Mr. Martin reiterated since the last meeting that the design was leaning more toward small meeting areas and away from a cultural center for larger events. Several comments made by Mr. Martin requested to have a larger meeting room and to include a kitchenette and more storage for catering purposes. The architect sent back revised conceptual plans based on the comments received by the Board at a previous meeting. Mr. Martin would like to see more space in the design to be allocated to the lobby. Mr. Martin feels the new design is still not large enough for storage or a food storage/preparation area. Mr. Charter felt that the design is growing more than originally planned, and was concerned about the money being requested from Community Preservation funds. Mr. Snyder-Grant was in favor of moving forward at a minimum cost. Mr. Charter commented on the thought of utilizing the town-leased space at 30 Sudbury Road which contains a commercial kitchen.

Christi Andersen, Main Street – suggested looking into other potential use for the property, including parking, as she has concerns about the current parking availability especially during popular times at the Memorial Library and playground.

Alissa Nicol, School Street – confused what the term “cultural center” meant and assumed it was for educational presentations and not for festivals and feels that there



are already meeting spaces for this type of center, identified the purpose of the purchase in 1996 was to create parking for the library and concerned about the price tag for the project. Feels that the building should be used for meetings in general for Boards and Committees, and Library staff for programs.

Jason Cole, Nashoba Rd – clarified a statement made at the public forum regarding consideration for the use of the building would be to raze the house to create more parking; supports turning the property into an outdoor meeting space location with additional parking; requested not further investing in the building.

David Honn, School Street – noted that the Historic District Commission would not approve the demolition of the building and feels the building will get plenty of use. Dawn Wang, member of the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council, feels culture is the heart of the town; 26% of the Town's population is Asian and feels there is no specific location for their receptions and (the ABCC) have to go to the Boxborough library ; feels that it would be well used if audio-visual equipment is installed.

Bettina Abe, commented on conversations with Vivian Birchall to have a building for cultural purposes that could be scheduled through the Memorial Library.

Terra, West Acton – doesn't think the building is large enough to be used as a community center.

The Board generally agreed with the Town Manager's recommendation to move the project forward with the CPC application that was submitted to the CPC and include it at Town Meeting in May.

7. Approve Municipal Support of Universal School Meal Legislation Sign On Letter
Ms. Nagireddy moved, seconded by Mr. Snyder-Grant to approve municipal support of universal school meal legislation sign on letter and voted unanimously by roll call vote 5-0.
8. Discuss Designation of Select Board Liaison to the Acton-Boxborough Community Resource Network
Mr. Snyder-Grant explained to the Board what the Network takes care of and offers to the community. Mr. Snyder-Grant offered to be the liaison from the ABCRN. **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault and voted unanimously 5-0 to establish a formal liaison to the Acton-Boxborough Community Resource Network.** The Board agreed by a "thumbs up" consensus that Mr. Snyder-Grant serve as liaison to ABCRN.
9. Designate Town Manager to Sign Refinance Documents Related to Affordable Housing Units
Mr. Mangiaratti requested the Select Board authorize the Town Manager to sign refinancing documents. Mr. Martin read the motion.
Ms. Arsenault moved, seconded by Mr. Snyder-Grant and voted unanimously by roll call vote (5-0) to authorize the Town Manager to act as the Select Board's designee for the purpose of acting on the following administrative matters not requiring the attention of the Select Board, where the Town is required to act, in order to ensure that such matters are acted on promptly:
 - a. **Approval of mortgage refinancing, leasing of the unit, or subordination of town mortgage due to refinancing**



- b. Declining to exercise the Town's right to purchase ownership units or any portion thereof, upon notice of the Owner's intention to sell, dispose of, or otherwise convey the property, or locating an eligible purchaser for the same,;
 - c. Obtaining, recording, signing, and acknowledging Compliance Certificates prior to the resale of any affordable units;
 - d. Reviewing and approving minor amendments to a previously executed Regulatory Agreement;
 - e. Submitting any information, documents, or certifications requested by DHCD to evidence the continuing compliance of a LIP project sponsor and Town with any regulatory agreement's terms, including the required annual certifications that LIP units are generally being maintained in a manner consistent with applicable DHCD regulations, guidelines, Regulatory Agreements, and deed riders;
 - f. Giving notice to DHCD of any default, violation or breach of either a LIP project sponsor or the Town; and
 - g. Approval of annual rents for LIP rental projects.
 10. Discuss Change to Water Resource Advisory Committee Charge
Ms. Nagireddy explained that WRAC requested that the topic be brought to the Board to increase the voting members from five to six. **Ms. Nagireddy moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault and approved unanimously by roll call vote 5-0 to change the Water Resource Advisory Committee Charge from five to six full voting members.**
- IV. Consent Items**
- Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to approve consent items 11-16 inclusive and voted unanimously by roll call (5-0).**
- Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Nagireddy to adjourn and voted unanimously by roll call vote (5-0). Meeting adjourned at 10:35 PM.**

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Agenda, November 15, 2021
- Tax abatement program description
- Tax Classification Hearing Presentation
- Town Manager Recommended Municipal Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 Presentation
- District Reprecincting Email from Eva Szkaradek Dated November 29, 2021 and New Precinct Map
- Email from Town Manager Dated December 2, 2021 Regarding Asa Parlin Requirements
- Municipal Support of Universal School Meal Legislation Sign On Letter
- Email from Jim Snyder-Grant Dated November 21, 2021 Requesting Designating a Liaison to the Acton-Boxborough Community Resource Network
- Motion to Designate Town Manager to Act on Certain Administrative Matters with Respect to LIP Housing



- Water Resource Advisory Committee Charge
- Meeting Minutes, November 1, and 15, 2021
- Executive Session Minutes, November 1, and 5, 2021
- Grant of Easement, 289 Main Street
- Accept Gift Memo from Natalie E. Haight Dated 11/12/2021
- Accept Gift Letter from Friends of Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Dated November 20, 2021