

**Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
2/22/10**

The Board of Selectmen met this evening at the Easton Town Offices, Selectmen's Office, 136 Elm Street, with Chair Colleen Corona presiding.

Members present: Colleen Corona, John Haederle, Chuck King, Ellen Barlow, Irwin Cohen and Town Administrator David Colton

Corona called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and noted that this meeting is recorded and televised.

One day liquor licenses

Applicant John Rota was present and explained his request for a one day beer and wine license for a fundraiser at the Oakes Ames Memorial Hall on March 27, 2010 from 7pm – 11pm.

One Easton Police Detail is required for this event.

**Voted:** (Cohen/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve the one day beer and wine license

Stonehill College has requested the following one day alcohol licenses:

*A beer and wine license for the Salameno Lecture Dinner at the Martin Institute on March 1, 2010 from 5:30pm to 8:00pm*

*A beer and wine license for the Senior Student Athlete Dinner at the Martin Institute on April 26, 2010 from 6pm - 10pm*

*An all alcohol license for a Commencement luncheon at the Martin Institute on May 23, 2010 from 12:00pm – 3:00pm*

No Easton Police details are required for any of these events as Stonehill College provides their own details.

**Voted:** (Haederle/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve the one day liquor licenses as requested by Stonehill College

Mass Interlocal Insurance Agency (MIIA) Loss Control Award

Jeff Siena, MIIA Loss Control Manager was present as well as members of Easton's Executive Loss Control Committee.

See the attached press release. Siena explained that each year, MIIA reviews the participation of its members with respect to loss control activities and participation in the MIIA Rewards Program looking for members who have gone above and beyond the expectations in this area of loss control. Easton was chosen to receive one of the nine loss control awards for 2009.

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Colton recognized the Executive Loss Control Committee members present and also acknowledged the other members who were not present for the award presentation. Colton congratulated the members for achieving this award.

Siena noted the Easton's Executive Loss Control Committee has been in existence since 1987 and it is the longest standing committee in Massachusetts.

Barlow asked about Easton's committee and what type of activities we have done to go above and beyond. Siena discussed the MIIA Rewards Program was discussed and Easton's participation. MIIA Rewards Credits that are earned are credited to next fiscal year's insurance premium. He specifically spoke of Easton's participation in the MIIA Rewards Training Seminars, the quarterly Executive Loss Control Committee Meetings, the Police Department's participation in the driver training and the DPW Safety Newsletter.

Corona noted that she is now serving as a MIIA Board Member and stated that it is good to hear what Easton employees have done with respect to reducing insurance costs. Corona thanked all the employees present who participate, reducing the Town's insurance liability result in a savings to the Town.

DPW Director Wayne Southworth and Chief of Police Allen Krajcik accepted the award on behalf of the Executive Loss Control Committee.

Stop sign recommendation – Wilbur Street at the intersection of Center Street  
Traffic Safety Committee members Allen Krajcik and Wayne Southworth were present.

**Voted:** (Haederle/King) voted unanimously to approve the stop sign request at Wilbur Street at the intersection of Center Street and to amend the Code of the Town of Easton Traffic Rules and Regulations Section 502-62 Schedule #5 Stop Signs

### Shovel Shop Update

Colton spoke of the upcoming Special Town Meeting Scheduled for Monday, April 5, 2010 - 7pm at the Oliver Ames High School Auditorium. The Finance Committee has heard the Beacon Communities presentation and the Finance Committee has requested additional information.

Colton noted that Jason Korb of Beacon Communities Development LLC is present this evening to talk about potential funding from the Greater Attleboro-Taunton HOME Consortium Program as well as the Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) District.

Corona spoke of the historic preservation restriction needed.

Colton noted that the Beacon's proposal is far less dense than what Turner is proposing. Buying the historic preservation is buying an interest in the property. Corona noted that we would be limiting anyone that develops this property as far the building's expansion. It was noted that this is not a gift, that this is completely false if people think so. Colton noted that this is buying interest in the real estate and this is done all the time in other communities.

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Corona spoke of the \$4.5 million loan as proposed in the Beacon proposal. Beacon's original request was for much more. In negotiations, we asked Beacon to give us a loan instead so we could reuse the CPA money.

Barlow asked about the guarantee as proposed through lease-up. Colton explained this lease up is finished when 95% of the building is leased.

Corona referenced the performance bond that we will rely on as security. As proposed by the Beacon proposal, as soon as they lease the apartments, they have to start paying the Town back if the proposal goes forward. They have guaranteed the historic preservation restriction through lease-up as well.

Colton suggested the riskiest time is during construction because the value will be at its highest point when it is fully leased; it will have a mortgage and a second mortgage; the Town will have something to fall back on with respect to the second mortgage.

Corona noted that the entire Board of Selectmen serves the community because we are trying to make Easton a better place. Corona suggested that the Board members serve the community for minimum pay; we have been successful in passing an override and we helped toward the two recent school renovations and most recently acquiring the new Senior/Recreation Center. Corona suggested that she wants to make Easton a better community and she is willing to work toward this project, just like the others in years past. Corona suggested that we will deeply regret this if we do not support the Beacon proposal. She suggested this is a minimal acceptable risk to achieve the vision that she wants for Easton's downtown area.

Colton suggested to the Finance Committee that they look 10 years from now and think about what you might want to see in the downtown area; you would want to see people living in these buildings, not in a four story building, a quality development and we should want to see something under strict guidelines under the Massachusetts Historic Commission and our local Easton Historic Commission. This property is a tremendous asset to the Town. Colton suggested that it is up to the citizens what they want to see in 10 years. Colton further noted that we are looking for ways to offset the costs to the Town.

Jason Korb of Beacon Communities Development LLC introduced himself and confirmed that Beacon also wants to reduce the Town's financial commitment. He spoke of the HOME Consortium funding through Housing and Urban Development. This is provided on a state and regional level. Korb explained that he and Planning Director Alice Savage met with the Home Consortium representatives and put together a proposal to have them look at. A letter of interest has been drafted. Korb stated that Beacon has worked with other consortiums in other communities. Korb suggested that he is fairly optimistic about this request for funding as it meets all the objectives of the program.

Barlow noted that she continues to be impressed with the conservativeness and the creativeness of those involved with the Beacon proposal.

Haederle stated that he fully supports this request for funding. Haederle suggested that opponents need to look long and hard on what the impact will be if they don't support this; if you vote against this, there are real consequences.

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**Voted:** (Barlow/King) voted unanimously to approve the letter to the Greater Attleboro-Taunton Home Consortium as drafted

Korb also noted that the Saving America's Treasures Grant program is another grant program available for funding. They are looking to reinstate this program for properties across the country that has national historic significance. This funding will be used to decrease the Town's contribution to the project. Korb suggested that the National Trust for Historic Preservation is very supportive of preserving the Shovel Shop property.

Haederle expressed caution that the Saving America's Treasures Program may be very underfunded and this is a very competitive program. He spoke of the funds that the Unity Church was not able to get. Korb understood Haederle's concern but strongly feels strongly suggested that this application for the Shovel Shops is really a completely different situation than the Unity Church and there is a lot of nationwide support for this property.

### *TIF Agreement Discussion*

Korb spoke of the Urban TIF which freezes property taxes at the current level while the units are sold as condominiums. After the units are rented for five years; they will begin to sell the units as condominiums. We think this aligns with our incentives and this encourages housing in the downtown areas. This enables them to obtain financing to develop the program.

A plan, a zone and an agreement is involved in the TIF process. The TIF would include the Shovel Shop parcel as well as other parcels in the downtown area. It was noted that the Town will see a draft of this next week.

Corona spoke of how a TIF District was done in Norton and possibly Mansfield at the new Shopping plaza.

King asked if the TIF district would give incentive to renters to purchase a condominium. Corona stated yes and noted that condo owners will pay taxes.

Corona spoke of the concern that if anyone lives in an apartment that they may get kicked out at some point in time when the conversion from rental to condo purchasing takes place. Corona explained that this will be clear to everyone interested in renting that this is a five year rental plan. Beacon has an agreement to have a two year rent to own option.

Korb noted that Beacon will be deferring more than ½ of their fee and until they start to defer to condos, their fee is also delayed until they convert into condos as soon as 5-7 years.

Corona noted that the developer is entitled to a profit but they have divided the profit; until the loan is paid they will not see their entire profit.

Korb noted that the Department of Housing and Community Development limits them to 40B profit limitations as well but this is after the Town receives their money.

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Colton noted that everyone has said that they are not going to pay taxes but the taxes are really just frozen for now. If there were no TIF, the tenants will be thrown out by whoever develops the property. Colton noted that there is going to be a temporary loss to the amount of money we can raise in taxes if we do nothing.

Korb noted that the way the program is set up, it sets the real estate taxes to an inflated level at 20 years; the state likes the way we are proposing this.

King expressed concern if there would be a market for condos as suggested by Beacon. Corona spoke of Easton Crossing and how we saw new growth when we went from rental to condominiums. The consensus of the Board is that the Shovel Shop area of the downtown will be a very sought out place to live.

Corona noted that we are asking to have an additional meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup> to hold a hearing on the TIF District. The Board agreed that they would have a quorum that night.

Corona noted that the public is asking for more details of the financial impact. Korb noted that this will be available in the next few days.

### Annual Town Meeting

Colton referenced the Town Charter and announced that on May 17, 2010, the Annual Town Meeting will be held at the Olive Ames High School Auditorium. Colton asked that the Board vote to open the warrant and set of date of March 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 for all warrant articles to be submitted to the Town Administrator.

Corona noted that she testified with the Joint Ways and Means Committee today in Amherst, Massachusetts, advocating for a resolution to get as much information as possible so that we can prepare the upcoming fiscal year budget. Also discussed was the pension payment plan extension to 2030; legislation to allow health care changes outside of collective bargaining, and changes to the reimbursement requirements for the Quinn Bill. Corona also spoke about the proposed Ballot Question to roll back the State sales tax from 6.25% to 3%, and noted that, if successful, it would further devastate local aid.

Barlow asked if we are optimistic we will have a state budget in time for town meeting. Colton replied that we have to move forward and continue the town meeting for the budget if needed.

**Voted:** (Barlow/Haederle) voted unanimously to hold the Annual Town Meeting on May 17, 2010 at 7m at the Oliver Ames High school and to close the warrant on March 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm

### FY'2011 budget discussion

Colton referenced the detailed preliminary budget summary sent to the Board via email today. Printed copies will be provided if needed. Colton explained that he has met with all of the department heads about the budgets. Our Blue Cross Blue Shield HMO insurance will increase by 6% this year. Colton suggested that this pretty good comparatively; we originally presented a 9% increase.

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Barlow asked if we should be looking at Group Insurance Commission (GIC). Colton and Corona stated no; the GIC is underfunded and midyear, the participating towns were subjected to a mid year increase.

Colton noted that our plan changes saved the Town \$ 700,000; this also saved the employees and their families money in increases.

Colton expects that the 15% increase we planned for the Southeastern Regional School will not be as high; the actual budget number will most likely come in less. Colton noted that we don't have an Easton School Department budget yet. Colton has not asked the department heads to make other cuts until we have the School Budget. The next Budget Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The Board discussed the pension funding through Bristol County Retirement System.

Cohen asked about the change in concessions and if we have to look at this again this year. Colton spoke of the wage freeze in place earlier this fiscal year which is no longer in effect, The Clerical Union employees took a furlough which is over as of FY'11 as well as the Firefighters gave up their EMT Stipend and this is back in this budget this year.

The Board discussed what will be needed if the revenues do not start to climb again. Colton suggested that some time in the future we may have to re-open negotiations and reconsider a wage freeze again but not at this time.

Colton noted that we will have to make some cuts but they are cuts that are manageable. Colton stated that he is worried about the following fiscal year.

Corona noted that we are looking at some regionalization as a way to save money.

### CPA Committee resignation

Corona referenced Patricia Hunt's recent resignation from the CPA Committee.

Corona noted that Hunt served as Selectmen and began serving on the CPA Committee when the CPA Fund was first instituted. Hunt helped spearhead that movement.

**Voted:** (Corona/King) voted unanimously to accept with regret Patricia Hunt's resignation from the CPA Committee

Minutes:

**Voted:** (Barlow/King) voted unanimously to approve general minutes dated 4/6/09

**Voted:** (King/Haederle) voted unanimously to approve general minutes dated 4/ 27/09

**Voted:** (Barlow/Haederle) voted 3-0-2 to approve general minutes dated 5/4/09 (King and Cohen abstained)

**Voted:** (Haederle/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve general minutes dated 5/11/09

**Voted:** (Barlow/King) voted 4-0-1 to approve general minutes dated 8/31/09 (Haederle abstained)

**Voted:** (King/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve general minutes dated 2/8/10

**Voted:** (Haederle/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve and release executive session minutes dated 5/11/09

**Voted:** (King/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve executive session minutes dated 1/11/10

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**Voted:** (Barlow/King) voted unanimously to approve executive session minutes dated 2/8/10

### Town Administrator Notes

Colton asked the Board to consider an executive session to discuss litigation and collective bargaining

### Press notes

None

### Selectmen's notes

None

### Public Participation

None

**Voted:** (Haederle/Barlow) voted unanimously to go into executive session, not to return to open session, to discuss litigation and collective bargaining (8:00pm)

*Cohen-yes; Haederle-yes; Corona-yes; King-yes; Barlow-yes*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Mary Southworth*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Stanley Corcoran, MIIA 617.426.7272 x244  
scorcoran@mnia.org

David Colton, Town Administrator  
508.230.0510

## **EASTON RECEIVES 2009 MIIA LOSS CONTROL AWARD**

**Town recognized from among 400 MIIA members for workplace loss prevention and safety efforts**

**(Boston, MA, February \_\_, 2010)** – The Town of Easton has won a 2009 “Loss Control Award” from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA), the town’s property and casualty insurance provider. Easton is one of nine towns selected from approximately 400 MIIA members to be recognized for promoting safety and loss control in the workplace. The award was announced at MIIA’s annual meeting held in conjunction with the 2010 Massachusetts Municipal Association’s (MMA) Annual Meeting & Trade Show at the Sheraton Boston Hotel.

The Town of Easton has made outstanding efforts to manage its insurance risks in 2009. Town employees participated in several seminars on employment and management topics including ethical leadership, Family Medical Leave Act update, municipal and labor law updates, managing multigenerational workforces, and law enforcement liability. The town also procured loss control grants to mitigate property damage and liability issues. With these grants, it purchased roof inspection equipment and a trench box to enhance the safety of employees working in trenches. To help reduce the risk of accidents, members of the police department practiced extreme driving skills in an Emergency Vehicle Operators Course. Members of the fire department attended workshops on the maintenance and operation of fire vehicles. The town has implemented quarterly safety committee meetings to address issues that ensure a safe work environment.

Easton proactively and voluntarily participated in these programs that are offered by MIIA at no cost as a membership benefit. In addition, the town earns credits on its insurance premiums for its participation through the “MIIA Rewards” program, saving the town and its taxpayers money.

“MIIA works with members as a partner to develop innovative programs that help them save resources without sacrificing coverage,” says MIIA Board Chairman Ira Singer. “The loss control programs provide an incentive to members to increase their education and awareness which ultimately reduces risks and expensive claims. We congratulate Easton for its achievement in this area in 2009.”

### **About MIIA**

In fiscal year 2009, more than 2,179 municipal employees participated in over 61 MIIA Rewards seminars and workshops offered in 26 locations throughout the state. Massachusetts cities and towns efforts yielded nearly \$2 million of premium credit collectively to the membership, for a seven-year total of \$10 million. The Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) is the non-profit insurance arm of the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA). As a member-based organization, MIIA’s only focus is to

provide excellent service and quality risk management solutions to Massachusetts municipalities and related public entities. Municipal insurance its only business, MIIA insures nearly 400 cities, towns, and other public entities in Massachusetts. For more information, visit [www.emiia.org](http://www.emiia.org) and [www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org).

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