

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes 3/22/10

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes 3/22/10

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, Chuck King, Irwin Cohen, Ellen Barlow and Town Administrator David Colton

Members not present: John Haederle

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

One day liquor licenses

Stonehill College has requested the following one day alcohol licenses:

An all alcohol license for the Outstanding Alumnus Ceremony at Donahue Hall on March 27, 2010 from 6pm – 10pm

A beer and wine license for the Annual Peter Mareb Lecture at the Martin Institute on April 15, 2010 from 5:30pm – 9:00pm

A beer and wine license for the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center dinner at Donahue Hall on April 28, 2010 from 5pm to 9pm

An all alcohol license for the Ames Family Dinner at Donahue Hall on May 1, 2010 from 4pm – 10pm

Easton Police Department details are not required for any of the events.

Voted: (King/Barlow) motioned to approve April 15, 2010, April 28, 2010 and May 1, 2010 one day alcohol licenses. (Barlow/King) motioned to amend the motion to include the March 27, 2010 one day license; the Board voted unanimously to approve the one day licenses

Verizon New England Inc/Massachusetts Electric Company – pole location hearing Pole P9-1 on Norfolk Ave, Easton, MA

Verizon Representative Paul Begley was present. Corona read the notice of hearing into the record.

Begley introduced himself to the Board and explained the pole location. Corona asked about the plan to remove the service to the pole. Begley explained the need to expand service for a new business.

Voted: (Barlow/King) voted unanimously to approve the pole location request

Lincoln Street Land Sale

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Colton explained the offer to sell land. The Town received five bids for the property and the high bidder was from an abutter, Robert Taylor in the amount of \$102,100. This is more than \$10,000 in excess of the minimum price we recommend for the property. Colton asked the Board to consider giving him permission to negotiate the Purchase and Sales Agreement with Mr. Taylor to include a permanent pedestrian access easement connecting Lincoln Street to the Queset Gardens. Colton noted the Library representatives would like this easement and it makes sense to do so. Corona asked if this requires a town meeting vote. Colton replied that no town meeting vote is required.

After reviewing the information, Cohen noted the closeness in the two top bids \$102,100 and \$102,000; Cohen asked if once the bids are open its final. Colton agreed it would be final unless there is a flaw in the process; then we would reject to the whole thing.

Colton noted the two high bidders are experienced with real estate in town and it shows we were accurate on the dollar amount. Colton noted this is one-time money and we are limited to what we can use this for; it's generally limited to other capital expenditures.

Voted: (Corona/King) voted unanimously to allow Colton to enter into a P&S Agreement with Mr. Taylor which would include a condition to have access to the Queset Gardens

Special Town Meeting Warrant Review

ARTICLE 3. FUNDING FOR WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

Colton asked that the Board consider Article 3 which now has the dollar amount included as \$1,560,000.

Cohen asked for explanation of how the treatment plan will be financed. Corona noted that under the Massachusetts General Law, when you establish a public utility, an enterprise fund, it must be set up so that the people that use the product pay for the product. Corona referenced water bills and trash bills as examples of these types of funds. The law is very clear for an enterprise fund. Under the law we can bond for the fund but it must be paid by the users. We can also borrow money under the Water Enterprise Fund but again it would have to be paid back.

Colton stated that in the case of sewer systems, federal law requires that this be user supported. There is no way to do this without issuing bonds initially and then we pay them back. We need to set up this fund and start building this infrastructure. Only certain areas of the Town that use the treatment plan will pay for this.

Barlow asked if the \$1,560,000 is the actual dollar amount. Colton explained the \$1.5 million is the actual cost to design and build what is proposed under the Turner Brothers plan. The extra \$60,000 is to cover the Town's planning costs for this project such as determination of the size of the sewer district, preliminary design, and certain elements of the system. We plan to have the plan ready for May 17th Annual Town Meeting.

Cohen asked if the Turner's wastewater treatment project moved forward if the Turners have paid for this. Corona stated yes, they would pay for this and manage it. The reason why the Town is involved is to help service some of the downtown area that is in need. We want the Town's standards to apply to this wastewater treatment plant.

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Corona noted that many businesses in Easton have wastewater treatment plants but they do not offer services to others.

Voted: (Barlow/King) voted unanimously to recommend Article 3

ARTICLE 4. ADOPT TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT

Corona asked about the five year TIF as proposed and the maximum limit of 20 years and we have the right to negotiate whatever we want. Colton noted the law says up to 20 years but it doesn't have to be twenty years. Colton noted that we have no intention of having it run this long. When we talk about five years, this is the hold period under historic tax credits. 80% of the units will be rented for five years, at the end of the five years they will begin to be sold as condominiums. This will all depend on when the condominiums sell as far as how many years the TIF will be. The time limit has not been negotiated yet but we hope to have this negotiated before the Special Town Meeting on April 5th.

Corona noted that the TIF proposal is on the Town's website.

FY'2011 Budget Discussion

Colton noted the deficit is currently just below \$800,000. The Board has discussed the probability of additional Local Aid cuts. A 5% Local Aid cut would increase the Town's deficit to over \$1,000,000. Colton suggested that we are expecting somewhere between a 2% and 5% cut in Local Aid.

Corona anticipated this year to be a bad year but suggested next year will be worse. Colton agreed.

Corona was asked to join a Healthcare Coalition working toward controlling health insurance; The Massachusetts Municipal Association is working very hard to allow cities and towns to change healthcare without negotiating. Corona asked if the Board felt support for a change in the process and asked if the Board had any concerns with her working in this way.

Colton expressed no concern and wished Corona luck on this important initiative and noted this is an important tool to control health insurance the cost of health insurance has been the biggest problem we have had over the last three or four years. Corona noted the work Colton has done over the last several years to save the Town and employees money.

Local Historic Study District Committee (LHDSC) Update

Committee Chairman Paul Rohr was present. Rohr explained that we have a number of National Historic Districts in town and there is currently no local control over these. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40C allows a town to create a bylaw and designate a commission that will allow us to oversee Local Historic Districts. No building or demolition permits can be issued with the commission's approval. The proposed commission provides protection from demolition and inappropriate remodeling.

Rohr noted that the LHDSC has been focusing on the North Easton Village District. The committee's findings are available on the Town's website. The report will be finalized at the end of April and the committee is in the process of seeking public input.

Corona asked Rohr to name the properties proposed for the Local Historic District. Rohr named the properties as listed below:

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The Rockery, Oakes Ames Memorial Hall, Ames Free Library, Old Colony Railroad Station, Ames Gate Lodge, F. L. Ames Gardener's Cottage, and the Shovel Shop. A complete list of proposed parcels is included in the committee preliminary report dated February 18, 2010.

Corona noted that only the named addresses found on the proposed list would be affected.

Rohr explained the process of being included in the district. He spoke of the things that should be reviewable within the commission.

Corona asked if the new commission will protect the Shovel Shop projects from the current owners of the Shovel Shop 40B. Rohr responded that his understanding is no, it's the ZBA decision; the LHDSC would have no authority. Corona explained that if the Turners didn't build a 40B but they propose a CVS to build a CVS, this would apply, but not another 40B this would apply. Rohr noted yes.

Corona asked if someone within the proposed district wanted to replace the windows, would this proposed bylaw apply. Rohr noted that this particular issue is still being debated.

Rohr stated that the next step of the committee is to talk to individual owners to be sure they can work within the proposed rules. They are looking at the possibility of Wednesday April 28th as the proposed date for the public hearing. The committee based the draft bylaw on a model bylaw from the Mass Historical Commission for approval at the Annual Town Meeting in May.

Corona noted that the LHDSC has worked very hard, under a lot of stress, and thanked Rohr and his committee for the work to date. Corona noted there will be other work to do down the road.

Rohr noted the 41 page preliminary report is online and it includes the draft bylaw. Rohr encouraged feedback because now is the time to revise the plan before the public hearing.

Cohen suggested that paint color shouldn't be as big of deal as roof type for consideration by the new commission. Rohr noted that this is something that gets people very bothered; if you are in residential area, they care more about paint color. The issue of roofs is important because of their roof materials, especially within the historic zone because many of the roofs are tile.

Barlow spoke of the wall along Main Street near the Shovel Works property and asked if the wall is gone or is now crumbled is there funding available for this type of repair. Rohr noted that the commission is not a funding body and they don't impose maintenance requirements. Good faith effort to rebuild within a period of time is not a reviewable item but if you let things go, this could become reviewable by the commission.

The Board thanked Rohr for the hard work.

Corona and Colton noted the Town's 2nd Consecutive Common Cause Massachusetts E-Government Award of Distinction for promoting open government/government transparency. Corona noted that the Town has been trying to put so much information on the website including important information

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pertaining to the Shovel Works project. Colton thanked the many town employees and volunteers who participate in this effort and noted their commitment to make this award possible.

CPA Committee Interview (to fulfill unexpired term 6/30/2010)

Corona noted that Bill Anderson postponed his interview last week and was notified and confirmed the time for an interview this week. Mr. Anderson was not in attendance.

Corona referenced the interview with Mr. Jay Rose interview last week. She noted that both candidates expressed interest in serving. Mr. Rose has the legal background and Corona suggested that he could be an asset as a liaison to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board as well.

Barlow asked if there is a seat available on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board. Colton noted no, but Mr. Rose could serve as the CPA Committee designee. Corona reiterated that Mr. Rose could be a good fit on both Boards.

It was suggested that although Mr. Anderson couldn't make the interview, he may be interested in serving in another capacity, on another board or committee,

Voted: (Corona/King) voted 3-0-1 to appoint Mr. Rose to the CPA Committee with a term expiration of June 30, 2010 (Cohen abstained)

Minutes

Voted: (King/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve general minutes dated 3/8/10

Voted: (King/Barlow) voted 3-0-1 to approve executive session minutes dated 3/15/10 (Cohen abstained)

Town Administrator Notes

None

Press notes

None

Selectmen's notes

Corona announced that the Federal Census was recently mailed to all residents. She explained that cities and towns get many things based on census such as water allocation, Chapter 90 funds, school funding. Corona encouraged the community to fill out the census as this helps the community as a whole.

Public Participation

None

Voted: (King/Barlow) voted unanimously to adjourn (7:45pm)

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Southworth