

## Selectmen's Meeting Minutes 3/23/09

### Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes 3/23/09

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 and Town Administrator David Colton.

Members not present: Irwin Cohen  
Corona called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

#### Presentation by W. Bridgewater Selectman Matt Albanese re: proposed gaming

Selectman Matt Albanese was present and gave a brief presentation of proposed gaming. Casino information as well as information from the Southeastern Mass Regional Task Force was distributed. Casino impact to cities and towns were discussed. Easton and W. Bridgewater would greatly be impacted if the proposed plan at the Raynham Dog Track were to move forward, specifically the traffic aspect. The Town of W. Bridgewater would like to get mitigation for the proposal and suggested that Easton consider this also. He recommends that Easton officials contact the state legislatures. Corona agreed that we would need mitigation for the intersection of Rt. 138/106. She has already had a conversation with Representative Flynn about this issue. Albanese offered to talk to the Task Force about joining and then he will relay the information back to the Selectmen.

#### One day liquor license requests – Stonehill College, Inc. (2)

**Voted:** (King/Haederle) voted unanimously to approve a one day beer and wine license for an art reception at Stonehill College Martin Institute on April 1, 2008 from 6 – 8pm

**Voted:** (King/Haederle) voted unanimously to approve an all alcohol license for a reception at Stonehill College Martin Institute on April 2, 2009 from 7 – 9pm

#### Ambulance bill abatements

The Board reviewed the ambulance bill abatement request submitted by the Fire Chief.

**Voted:** (King/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve the ambulance bill abatement request in the amount of \$2,201.84

#### Refer to Traffic Safety Committee the Ames Free Library request to consider safety options – 53 Main Street

Director Madeline Holt and Treasurer Joe Murphy were present. Holt explained the request to consider traffic safety options in the area of 53 – 56 Main Street.

King expressed concern with the historic nature of the area and asked that the committee consider this if traffic signs are proposed.

**Voted:** (King/Barlow) voted unanimously to refer the request to the Traffic Safety Committee for review

#### Tufts Farm tenancy Conservation/Land Use Management Plan Update

Land Use Agent Stephanie Danielson and Conservation Commission Member John Grant were present.

Danielson updated the Board on the management plan. See the attached information. Last year, a contract was awarded to a company to do an assessment of all the conservation land in Easton. They will provide a final report mid to late April.

With respect to Tufts Farm, it's the only conservation land with structures. The house was habited for a number of years and was vacated approximately one and one half years ago. The Commission would like to put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) looking for a tenant that would put the property back into agricultural use. Other parcels such as Wheaton Farm, may also qualify for agricultural use. The final report will confirm.

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Haederle asked if the tenant's rent would be reduced for doing the work such as mentioned above. Grant noted that this is an option, there are employees of the town that have expressed interest and this may be an option also.

Danielson noted that she used the RFP for Smith Farmhouse at Borderland as a guide when preparing the draft RFP for Tufts Farm. Danielson spoke of the need for town meeting approval to get permission to lease the land; she would like the Selectmen's support on this. She also asked that the Board help with a selection committee to help review the candidates. The committee may consist of one member of the Conservation Commission, one member of the Planning Board, one member of the Board of Selectmen and one member from the agricultural community.

Colton noted there are a number of properties in town currently or more recently used for agricultural purposes. If we are able to do this, this will release some of the pressure from those property owners to sell to developers. Danielson agreed and stated that there is a greater demand for leased land than land available. She has attended a number of workshops on farming recently.

Barlow asked if this proposal would be self sustaining. Grant replied yes, on the Tuft Farm three acre parcel of land, the Tufts family supported ten children. Barlow asked if they anticipated a problem with the neighbors. Grant noted that zoning doesn't prohibit livestock. Corona noted that we could take this into consideration during the selection process. Grant noted there is livestock on the Wright Farm and we agreed to allow Mr. Galloway to keep the livestock as long as he lived.

The consensus of the Board was to support the proposal. Corona agreed to help with the criteria in order to develop a committee charge for the proposed Community Agriculture Program Committee.

Grant announced that the Conservation Commission recently purchased 42 acre parcel off of Foundry Street across from New Pond.

### Review of departmental budgets

Colton referenced the preliminary budgets and the current financial uncertainties and union concessions as proposed. The Board is not expecting to vote recommendations on the budgets at this point in time.

#### *Library – (\$451,465)*

Library Director Madeline Holt, Library Treasurer Joe Murphy and Library Members Donna Richman and Steve Merlin were present.

Holt referenced the increase in the library services and the wonderful community and media support. Murphy reviewed the figures for their budget proposal. See the attached information.

Holt also updated the Board on the construction project to date.

#### *Police – (\$3,472,392)*

Chief Kominsky was present and gave a brief overview of the Police Department budget.

#### *DPW*

##### *Adm (\$535,333)*

##### *Bldg & Grounds – (\$993,380)*

##### *Highway – (\$1,009,117)*

##### *Snow & Ice – (\$188,700)*

DPW Director Wayne Southworth was present and gave a brief overview of the DPW budgets.

#### *Town Clerk – (\$199,573)*

Town Clerk Jeremy Gillis was present and gave a brief overview of the Town Clerk's budget and spoke of new initiatives within Town Clerk's Office since he arrived in August 2008.

#### *Treasurer/Collector \$293,332*

Treasurer/Collector Teresa DeSilva was present and gave a brief overview of the Treasurer/Collector's budget and specifically spoke of the recent overdue tax collections exceeding \$234,000. DeSilva noted for the public that if

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citizens find themselves in a position where they cannot make tax payments, to contact her to establish a payment plan.

Haederle thanked Colton and the department heads for coming together and proposing these budgets during very tough economical times.

Corona again reiterated that these budgets are preliminary and things will most likely get worse. Colton agreed and again spoke of the needed union concessions and some legislative initiatives to help balance the budget. Corona also noted that Easton is very fortunate that we passed the override a few years ago.

Update on the Upper Taunton River Watershed – Wastewater Management Evaluation Project

Corona updated the Board on the information provided at the meeting last week. Wastewater for a regional standpoint. Colton, Corona and Southworth attended last week. We are looking to other communities to see what options may be available to us. As progress is made, Corona will continue to update the Board.

Colton agreed that the whole point isn't to move our wastewater and make it someone else's problem; we need to be responsible for our wastewater whether it moves out of town or stays in Easton.

Barlow asked is Mansfield is part of the proposal. Corona replied yes. Colton clarified that Mansfield is exempt from the Interbasin Transfer Act and the Town of Easton may be able to work with Mansfield without having to take their wastewater back into town.

Revision - Human Rights Committee and Green Communities Committee charges

Corona spoke of some revisions that were necessary to help with the membership count on the proposed committees.

**Voted:** (King/Barlow) voted unanimously to approve the amended charges as proposed

Town Administrator's notes

Colton referenced the recently printed 2008 Annual Town Report and noted that this year; the Easton Lions Club was highlighted on the cover. The Lion Club was selected as the Most Outstanding Club in the World.

Press notes

None

Selectmen's notes

Barlow referenced the Financial Assistance Summary Brochure which lists savings and exemptions for Easton residents that Corona and Kit Minsky put together. Corona noted that this information should be very helpful to resident and can be found on the town's website [www.easton.ma.us](http://www.easton.ma.us) . The flier is also available in the Town Hall reception area.

Public participation

None

**Voted:** (Haederle/Barlow) voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:45pm

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Mary Southworth*

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*Approved*

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*Date*