

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MARCH 31, 2021
REGULAR SESSION

Members Present: Justin Sullivan, Chris Zorra, David Viera,
David Andrade, Adam Petronio

Town Administrator: Shawn E. Cadime

Asst. Town Administrator/
Director of Human Resources: Carol-Ann Days

The meeting was held at the Seekonk Senior Center, 540 Arcade Avenue.

Chairman Sullivan opened the meeting at 7 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

He announced that, per Gov. Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20, it is necessary to limit the number of attendees that will be allowed to physically access the Board of Selectmen meeting to 25. Attendees must wear a mask.

Public comments and questions could have been submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting by completing the Google Form prior to the meeting by Tuesday, March 30, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be broadcast live via Seekonk Cable TV9.

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20(f), any person recording must notify the Chairman at the beginning of the meeting.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Mr. Viera announced that volunteers are needed on the Capital Improvement Committee (2 Board of Selectmen appointments), Commission on Disability (5-13 BOS), Economic Development Committee (5 BOS), Energy Committee (1 BOS), Historical Commission (3 BOS), Parks & Recreation (1 BOS), Recycling Committee (3 BOS), Zoning Board of Appeals (2 Alternates).

COMMUNITY SPEAKS

Mr. John Alves, Chairman of the Community Preservation Commission, asked if the Board had considered lumping the major building projects and asking for an override.

Chairman Sullivan said it is something the Board could consider. However, they tend to do debt exclusion.

Mr. Andrade said they would have to weigh pros vs. cons.

PUBLIC HEARING

Consider the Proposal and Adoption of an Order to Layout the Roadway “ Woo Drive” in Accordance with the As-Built Plan and Legal Description for Possible Street Acceptance at Spring Town Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Petronio, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was unanimously

VOTED To open the Public Hearing at 7:04 p.m.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Mr. Louis Contilli of Insite Engineering was in attendance.

DPW Supt. David Cabral stated that Town Planner John Aubin III and he did a final walk through on the site and it appears to be in order.

Chairman Sullivan said he heard about drainage issues that need to be addressed with respect to residents on Alameda Drive.

Mr. Cabral said the site work going on caused some water to hold at the end of the cul-de-sac. It has been graded. Everything is draining toward the rear of that property conveying the water away. They have rectified problems in the Alameda Drive neighborhood. He has not had any calls from residents. He has not observed problems with the drainage.

Mr. Andrade asked about maintenance.

Mr. Aubin said it would be maintained by the town.

Mr. Viera asked where the water is dumped.

Mr. Cabral responded that is an unknown. There is a catch basin but they don't know where the outlet is. The intent is to do exploratory work in July when it dries out.

Mr. Andrade asked if DPW has a plan to maintain various drainage basins.

Mr. Cabral said it is a scheduled maintenance twice a year.

Mr. Petronio asked how many easements is the Town responsible for.

Mr. Cabral said about six.

Mr. Aubin said any development since 2009 would be under the Homeowners' Association. Through the Homeowners' Advisory Committee, they have looked at all blueprints for stormwater systems back to the early 1950s.

Mr. Petronio wanted to make sure there is no undue burden on the infrastructure.

Mr. Cabral noted there are 1,900 catch basins so it requires some outsourcing to maintain them.

There were no other speakers.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To close the Public Hearing at 7:19 p.m.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To adopt an order to layout the roadway “Woo Drive” in accordance with the as-built plan and legal description for possible street acceptance at the Spring Town Meeting.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Consider the Request from National Grid to Install a New Pole #3600-50 to Provide Electrical Service to a New Address – 127 Cross Street

A motion was made by Mr. Petronio, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was unanimously

VOTED To open the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Mr. Michael Parent, Senior Designer for National Grid, was in attendance.

Mr. Cabral said he related that the pole was too close to the roadway and recommended moving it three feet. That was done.

Mr. Andrade felt National Grid should own the poles from day one.

Mr. Parent said a broken pole that has National Grid on it will be taken care of. He said there is an agreement between National Grid and Verizon to mutually own the pole.

Mr. Andrade not happy with that response.

Mr. Parent said there should be a liaison to work with the town.

Mr. Andrade said every time there is a meeting with National Grid the representative is not from the area.

Chairman Sullivan said the matter is greater than one pole.

Mr. Viera said to petition the Department of Public Utilities.

Mr. Cadime said there is already legislation to take down double poles. They have so many years to correct all the issues. This resident has been waiting a year to get a pole.

There were no other speakers.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Viera, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To close the public hearing at 7:32 p.m.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

A motion was made to by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the request from National Grid to install a new pole #3600-50 to provide electrical service to a new address – 127 Cross Street.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade - Aye (for the resident), Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

General Discussion of Fall Town Meting

Board members talked about the recent town meeting held on March 27, 2021. Chairman Sullivan said there were 78 people in attendance.

Mr. Andrade was extremely dissatisfied with putting off the charter changes. He understood the discrepancy in the document but not the request for more discussion and deliberation on charter changes.

Chairman Sullivan concurred.

Mr. Petronio suggested when the redo is done it should be underlined or done in bold for resident copies.

Mr. John Alves stated that he was bitterly disappointed in the actions of town meeting. The legislative body should have gone through the document page by page to make corrections. The legislative body refused to do the work.

Mr. Petronio suggested a special town meeting just to review the charter changes.

Mr. Andrade questioned the ability to get a quorum.

Chairman Sullivan said the documents were posted for six months.

Mr. Viera said it would have been good to have the Charter Review Commission explain why changes were made.

Mr. Alves said the Board of Selectmen had discharged the Charter Review Commission..

Mr. Petronio said the charter is the driving legislation for Seekonk and is a living and breathing document because it is subject to change with the cultural times. There has got to be a cycle to review it.

Mr. Cadime said it is stated in the charter.

Mr. Andrade said it is 10 years.

Mr. Cadime clarified that the Board of Selectmen created a committee to provide recommendations to the Charter. The changes being submitted are those voted on by the Board of Selectmen. The Charter Commission is completely different. He noted the committee spent 1 ½ year to study the charter.

Mr. Petronio apologized to the public for not recognizing the errors.

Chairman Sullivan asked about appropriating funds for a traffic study for Arcade Avenue and Ledge Road. He suggested a stop light.

Mr. Cadime said there is enough for a traffic study. He felt it should not be on the Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Andrade would like to have a place holder on the warrant for \$250,000.

There was discussion about moving free cash from \$500,000 to \$1M as proposed by Mr. Benoit.

Chairman Sullivan said Mr. Cadime has been working on financial policies. This concerns stabilization accounts.

Mr. Cadime explained the intent of the policies. There is a cap on how much can go into stabilization funds but it exceeds Seekonk needs.

A motion was made by Chairman Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To direct the Town Administrator's office to pursue the solar field facility at the old landfill and also the carport behind the Police Station.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Continued Discussion of a Proposed “Nuisance Property” Bylaw for Consideration on the Spring Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Cadime distributed changes made with regard to the fees. Page 4, Section 3, as recommended by legal. M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 21(d) is specific to bylaw fines \$50 first offense, \$150 second offense, and \$300 for all additional offenses with each day being a separate offense.

Mr. Cadime advised that Chief Isabella met with all hotel managers to discuss what the premise behind this was. Dep. Chief Enos, Lt. Jardine and Det. Perry were in attendance. Some of the managers said they would not call the police. The Chief said they will be watching certain crimes and, if there is an increase to a certain level, they will sit down and establish a partnership on how they can work together on the cause.

Chief Dean Isabella said this puts everybody on a level playing field.

He spoke to an owner of one of the larger hotels. Managers feel they need this by-law. They have concern that we are clear about the intent of the bylaw which is to work with these businesses and does not put an undue burden on public safety. Calls for services at hotels are excessive.

Mr. Petronio asked if the Chief had any recommendations so it's not shot down by the Atty. General.

Mr. Cadime said the Atty. General's office does not have to review cities; but, does have to review towns. The intent is to clean up as much as possible. Hopefully, it will be approved by the Atty. General.

Chief Isabella said he will talk to legal of one of the hotels. We all agree on the intent.

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Mr. Petronio felt it needs to be spelled out a little more clearly.

Chief Isabella said it can be done.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the “Nuisance Property” Bylaw for consideration on the Spring Town Meeting Warrant.

The vote: Mr. Petronio - Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

Consider Accepting the Regular Session Minutes of March 3, 2021

A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the Regular Session minutes of March 3, 2021.

The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS

Mr. Nelson Almeida reminded residents of the town election on April 5 from 7 am to 8 p.m. He extended good luck to all candidates. He noted he is a candidate for the Board of Selectmen. He reminded residents to cast their vote for two candidates.

OTHER BUSINESS – None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Mr. Cadime said part of the goals and objectives is financial policy. He will give it to Board members and provide two weeks for review. Hopefully, it can be discussed at the April 14th meeting. The focus should be on free cash appropriations. Operations are typically established by general law. If approved by May, it could go to whatever bond rating agency the town will use. Might be able to get a boast to AAA rating.

Chairman Sullivan thanked Asst. Town Clerk Lorraine Sorel for assuming the duties at Town Meeting. She did an excellent job.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Bristol County Advisory Board – None.

Aitken School Expansion Building Committee Report

Mr. Zorra said the landscaping will be completed once the trailers are out of there.

540 Arcade Avenue Building Committee Report

Mr. Viera said they met last week but not much headway.

Veterans' Council

Mr. Viera advised the Memorial Day Parade is scheduled for Saturday, May 29. The vehicle parade will start at 9 a.m. at Martin School. There will be a ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Park.

Since this might be his last meeting as a member of the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Viera said it has been a pleasure to serve with all of them. He felt the town is fortunate in its employees, particularly department heads. No matter what, he will remain on the Veterans' Council.

South End Fire Station Building Committee

Mr. Cadime advised they are in the process of negotiating with the OPM. The proposal of 12% was a bit of a shock..

Mr. Petronio said we have accomplished a lot this month with meeting every week.

Mr. Zorra asked about LED lights for the fields at Water Lane.

Mr. Cadime said no update.

Mr. Zorra asked about an update for the Pond Street bridge.

Mr. Cadime explained the Conservation Agent is waiting to hear from engineers.

Mr. Zorra asked about the gas leak at the Subway location.

Mr. Cadime said Chief Rave reported it was done during construction.

Mr. Zorra said he has had a good three years on the Board. He would like to have three more. He urged residents to come out and vote.

Chairman Sullivan extended best wishes to all candidates. He thanked the 78 residents who attended Town Meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:55 p.m., Mr. Andrade motioned, seconded by Mr. Petronio, to go into Executive Session

- A. To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the negotiating position of the town (472 Taunton Avenue);
- B. To conduct strategy sessions with respect to Seekonk Public Library Employee Association, MLS, AFT Massachusetts, AFL-CIO per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the litigation or bargaining position of the town;
- C. To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30, Section 21(a)(6) as having the discussion in open session would be detrimental to the negotiating position of the town (320 Pleasant Street);
- D. To consider the approval of Executive Session minutes of March 3, 2021; not to return to open session.

Respectfully submitted,

David Viera, Clerk

Prepared by:

Patricia Gamer, Secretary

Items Distributed at the March 31, 2021 Board of Selectmen Meeting

Documents for adoption of an order to layout the roadway “Woo Drive”

Documents for National Grid installation of pole at new address, 127 Cross Street