

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 12, 2021
Stow Town Building & Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Chair Ellen Sturgis, Megan Birch-McMichael, Zack Burns, Cortni Frecha, James Salvie, Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Also present: Chief Michael Sallese, Detective Cassandra Scott, Acting Sergeant David Goguen, Katie Fisher

Chair Sturgis called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Public Input: none

Board Member Comments:

Chair Sturgis thanked the Police Department and residents for a successful apple picking holiday weekend.

The Council on Aging has a survey available to get feedback on what services residents would like from the COA.

The Special Town Meeting is Saturday, October 30, and during the coming week there are meetings relating to the STM: a Stow Acres forum, the Finance Committee Public Hearing, and two Planning Board Public Hearings.

The Highway Department has upcoming paving information on its Facebook page and the Town website.

The Board of Health flu clinic is October 16 at the Pompo Community Center, and there are other clinics available in the area during the month. The information and the link to register are on the Town's website.

Stow is recognizing Breast Cancer Awareness Month with events at the Library and the Council on Aging, and the Police Department has pink badges for sale to support the American Cancer Society and Emerson Hospital.

Recognition:

Thank you to Amanda Bennett, who has stepped down as chair of the Food Pantry after many years of service.

Our thoughts go out to the family of George Veracka who died last Thursday. He was the former owner of Hudson Road Auto. Mr. Veracka was a veteran of the Vietnam War, served for over 18 years on the Veterans Graves Committee, and was a dedicated part of the Stow Memorial Day traditions.

Appointment of Police Sergeants – Det. Cassandra Scott and Acting Sgt. David Goguen

Chief Michael Sallese said his promotion to chief and Darren Thraen's promotion from sergeant to lieutenant has created two openings for sergeants, who are line supervisors and assist in running the department's day-to-day operations. Following department policy, the positions were posted and four internal candidates applied. The first round of interviews was conducted by a group consisting of 3 civilians and two department members. The second round was with three area police chiefs. The final interview was with the Town Administrator, Assistant Town Administrator Dolores Hamilton, and Chief Sallese.

With Det. Scott's promotion to sergeant, she will be the first woman in Stow's history to hold a command officer position, and she will help move the department forward with 21st century policing.

Acting Sergeant Goguen has been with the Stow Police Department for 32 years and has been a police officer for 36 years. He knows the department and the town, and is well respected by the members of the department.

At 7:12 p.m. Board member Frecha moved to appoint Detective Cassandra Scott to the position of Police Sergeant through June 30, 2023, subject to reappointment thereafter. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

At 7:13 p.m. Board member Frecha moved to appoint Acting Sergeant David Goguen to the position of Police Sergeant through June 30, 2023, subject to reappointment thereafter. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Town Administrator's Report

- On Thursday, October 14 at 7 p.m. the Library is hosting a zoom with Sarah Thomas, an ultra-marathon swimmer who holds the world's record for the longest continuous unassisted non-wetsuit swim. She is a cancer survivor and will speak about her determination to reach her goals.
- A reminder that residents can offer words of support or honor someone with our "awareness and support trees" at Town Building. You can write on a pink ribbon and hang it on the pink-lit trees.
- In response to many questions regarding the potential new school, the Town Administrator's webpage now has information about The Masters Academy, the new owners of the former Bose property.
- The Town officially closed on the two lots at Hallock Point on October 5, 2021. The combined sale was for \$630,000.00.
- The Town's Fiscal Year 2022 free cash was certified by the state at \$2,046,610.00. Free cash is the amount leftover from the prior fiscal year budget and is then available for appropriation during the following fiscal year.

Special Town Meeting Warrant

(The order of the articles shown below are from the final draft which supersedes the draft warrant in the packet.)

Article 1 – Unpaid Bills

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 1 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 2 – Barton Road Dam Safety Improvements

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 2 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 3 – Senior Property Tax Work-off

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 3 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 4 – Veterans Property Tax Work-off

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 4 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 5 – Stow Acres North Course Acquisition

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 5 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 6 – Amend Zoning Bylaw Section 6.3 Signs

Town Planner Jesse Steadman was present via Zoom and explained that complaints had been made during the past few months and this is a stopgap measure to allow businesses to have an illuminated "open" sign without violating the zoning bylaw. The sign bylaws will be looked at in a broader sense over the next year as part of the Lower Village zoning.

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 6 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 7 – Amend Zoning Bylaw Sections 3.10 Table of Principal Uses, 5.5 Registered Marijuana Establishment Overlay District, and 10 Temporary Moratorium on Recreational Marijuana Establishments

The Town Planner said this is to clean up the bylaw and reduce it by a couple of pages and to remove the related moratorium.

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 7 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 8 – Amend Zoning Bylaw Sections 3.10 Table of Principal Uses and 3.6.3 Uses Allowed by Special Permit in the Industrial District

The Town Planner explained that this article will allow private schools (and other uses) in the industrial zone. This would then allow The Masters Academy to apply for a special permit with the Planning Board and potentially open at the former Bose property. Any business would need to apply for a special permit and go through a public hearing process. Also, this bylaw change would be subject to and contingent upon a development agreement signed by the Select Board, which allows the developer and the Town to come up with mutually beneficial ideas and arrangements beyond what zoning can typically do.

Mark Forgues was present via Zoom and asked if there is something in the bylaw to prevent a private, for-profit school from becoming a non-profit. The Town Planner said this is why having a development agreement in place is helpful, to be able to state that it is contingent upon remaining a for-profit school.

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 8 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 9 Amend Zoning Bylaw Sections 1.3 Definitions, 9.2.7.14 (Special Permit Conditions)

The Town Planner said this article would offer some flexibility and criteria for the Planning Board regarding sidewalk requirements, which would then be tied to the Complete Streets Policy.

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 9 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Article 10 – Amend Zoning Bylaw Sections 1.3 Definitions, 5.4.9 (ACTIVE ADULT NEIGHBORHOOD Overlay District Special Housing Standards), and 7.3 Schedule of Minimum Parking

The Town Planner said this is to clarify inconsistencies in the definitions of floor areas in the bylaw.

Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board recommend approval of Article 10 of the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Special Town Meeting Warrant

Board member Frecha moved to accept the warrant for the October 30, 2021 Special Town Meeting, dated October 12, 2021, pending legal edits by Town Counsel that may change the wording but not the intent of the articles. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Disclosure Form for Daniel Nicholson

The Board spoke with Dan Nicholson regarding his membership on the Stow Recreation Commission and his potential paid work as a contractor for the Recreation Department on a project-by-project basis. Recreation Director Laura Greenough has a list of specific tasks that need to be completed.

Questions were asked regarding this process: have other members done work in the past and been paid, was there a process for how he got chosen, were there other applicants, would Mr. Nicholson recuse himself from votes that are related to the projects that he is working on, would he be considered a town employee.

The Town Administrator clarified that if he is doing project-specific tasks, and Ms. Greenough is not overseeing him and managing his daily tasks, then he would not be considered an employee. The Board would like Ms. Greenough to attend the October 26th meeting to discuss this further.

Board member Frecha moved to table the item pertaining to Daniel Nicholson's disclosure form until the October 26 meeting. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Planning Board Request for Comments - Proposed Amendments to the Stow Zoning Bylaw

The Select Board discussed the Zoning Bylaw amendments during the Special Town Meeting warrant discussion.

Planning Board Request for Comments – Petition for a Hammerhead Lot Special Permit and Site Plan Approval at 57 Barton Road

The Planning Board will have a public hearing on this topic on October 26, 2021. The Select Board made no comment on this project.

Nashoba Regional Agreement Amendment Subcommittee appointment

Each town in the Nashoba Regional School District was asked to appoint a person to this subcommittee. Chair Sturgis is a former School Committee member and was willing to be the Board's appointee.

Board member Salvie moved to nominate Ellen Sturgis to serve on the Nashoba Regional Agreement Amendment Subcommittee for a term expiring June 30, 2022. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Strategic Planning

Select Board Goals

Chair Sturgis asked each Board member what their top goals are for the Board through the end of their term (June 2022). Her goals are updating the Board's policies and any general policies, Lower Village, promoting all businesses, promoting affordable housing, and improving communication between boards.

Board member Frecha added including conversations about funding water to the focus on Lower Village, and to move on funding other things that are 'stuck' such as the Town Hall. She would like to have a discussion about bonding CPA funds.

Board member Burns wants to discuss funding and prioritizing big projects and capital projects with the Capital Planning Committee and the Finance Committee. He suggested a "Be a Good Neighbor" report from this Board and the Planning Board to truly figure out how we will have businesses next to residential neighborhoods.

Board member Salvie's goals are the entertainment policy and a more formal policy on one day liquor licenses. Also, he approves of the highway superintendent's systematic approach to replacing equipment and repaving roads, and wants the Board to get involved in any policy dimension of it. And in relation to this, sidewalks.

Board member Birch-McMichael, stating she agrees with the priorities of her fellow Board members, said she has been 'banging the drum' on water in Lower Village for years. She supports the "Be a Good Neighbor" program as a way to provide understanding for neighbors so we can have a thriving district in Lower Village.

Resident Katie Fisher asked if the Select Board appoints the Master Plan Committee, as she feels it is an important part of this discussion. The Planning Board makes the appointments.

The Board discussed the need to prioritize policies and having a few policies on each upcoming agenda for them to review. Once approved, the policies can be added to the website.

The Board discussed having a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page on the website. Some residents have to speak with multiple departments to get a question answered. The Town Administrator said there is a "How Do I" section on the website which is similar to a FAQ page, and there is a new webpage with resources for new residents. She is able to put information on the website as it is given to her by departments and boards, and this will make the website more user-friendly. Also, part of the Asst. Town Administrator's job is constituent services. The ATA can be the first point of contact and then follow up to make sure the resident has received a response.

Chair Sturgis asked each Board member to review the "How Do I" section of the Town's website and offer suggestions to the Town Administrator so the information can be requested from the appropriate department and added to the website. Board member Burns would also like to see the Select Board goals on the website.

The Board discussed bringing more boards and committees into the Select Board meetings and scheduling them on upcoming agendas.

Meeting Minutes:

Board member Frecha moved to approve the meeting minutes of the September 28, 2021 meeting as drafted. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed 4-0-1 with Board member Salvie abstaining.

Correspondence

Board members received an email about the MA Municipal Association's conference in January. Chair Sturgis encouraged Board members to attend as she has found it to be very helpful.

Adjournment:

At 8:38 p.m. Board member Salvie moved to adjourn. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Sampson

Executive Assistant

Documents used at this meeting:

Documents can be found in the Select Board's Office in the meeting folder.