

# Select Board Meeting Minutes

## Tuesday, February 8, 2022

### Stow Town Building & Zoom

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

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

The Chair noted that all five Select Board members are present and if there is a vote that is not unanimous she will ask for a roll call vote. She also advised everyone participating in the meeting remotely that Stow TV is recording this meeting.

#### **Public Input:**

Kelly Lawlor, 170 Hudson Road, thanked the Board for serving the Town and she hopes that they will continue to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in our Town by supporting Mr. Salvie's statement to acknowledge and honor Black History Month.

#### **Board Member Comments:**

Member Birch-McMichael said the Friends of the Library will be having a book sale the weekend of April 22-24. Books can be dropped off weekdays at the Randall Library or the Community Center during operating hours.

Chair Sturgis mentioned the article in the Council on Aging's February newsletter about the "very sweet love story" of Marty Sheehan and Chet Jacobs. Also, the February issue of the Stow Historical Society has a great story about the Mapledale Golf Course and its history. Stow TV has a program about it, too.

The information session for Masters Academy is tomorrow night, Wednesday, February 9 at 7 p.m.

The Nashoba Regional School District has a budget presentation on Wednesday, February 16 at 7 p.m. It is also posted as a Select Board meeting in case there is a quorum of members present.

The Town Clerk wants to remind everyone that the Town census is due and dog licenses are due.

Nomination papers are available now through March 30 for many positions and information will be on the Town's website and in the newspaper.

Member Burns noted that the Capital Planning Committee met last Thursday for its initial budget discussion. He and Mr. Salvie met for the Level 3 grievance and they are working on a draft response, with a deadline of Friday. They will provide an update to the Board after they've submitted the final response.

#### **Recognition**

Chair Sturgis wished a belated Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Skip Warren, our local sheep farmer.

#### **Town Administrator (TA) Report**

- The TA acknowledged the great job done on the roads by the Highway Department over the last few weeks during the weather events.
- Black History Month began on February 1, and the Town's internal Diversity Inclusion & Awareness Team launched a weekly recognition on the Town's Facebook page.
- Stow's current COVID-19 case count is 89, which is a positivity rate of 12.19%; the number is slowly coming back down.
- The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) met and discussed three projects that requested funding.
- The Nashoba Regional School District is currently at a 4.67% increase over the Fiscal 2022 assessment, which is over \$1 million dollars. There are still many unknowns.
- Health insurance estimates have come in at an 8.5% increase for Fiscal 2023.

## **Statement in Support of Black History Month**

Chair Sturgis thanked the people who wrote in to support the Board and this statement.

*Board member Frecha moved to approve the statement of support of Black History Month. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

## **Local Initiative Program (LIP) Applications for Stow Acres**

Mark O'Hagan of MCO & Associates was present via Zoom.

Mr. O'Hagan said that what was proposed and presented at the public information meetings is the same proposal in the LIP Applications. He needs to submit the LIPs to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to receive their support. The information is still conceptual. The project consists of 189 units comprised of three different types of housing: 40 rental cottages, 25 apartments for age 62+ residents, and 124 detached homes for sale. Each type of housing requires its own LIP application. Of the 189 units, 96 will qualify towards the Town's subsidized housing inventory.

Chair Sturgis said there are letters of support from the Stow Conservation Trust and from the Town Planner, Conservation Director, and SMAHT (Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust). She added that the Green Advisory Committee has asked about solar components. Mr. O'Hagan said he has spoken with some of the members of the committee and there will be a plan for solar on an optional basis.

*Board member Frecha moved to approve, and authorize the Chair to sign, the LIP applications for Stow Acres, as presented at this meeting by Mark O'Hagan and MCO & Associates, and further moved to authorize the Chair to sign the Board's letter in support of the project to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

## **Deficit Spending for the Snow & Ice Account**

This is precautionary in case the Town exceeds the amount in the account before the next Select Board meeting.

*Pursuant to Mass General Law Chapter 44, section 31D, Board member Frecha moved to allow deficit spending of the fiscal year 2022 Snow & Ice account. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

## **Recognizing Diversity and Awareness Topics**

The Board liked the model of what was done for Black History Month, with the Board supporting work being done by the TA's Diversity Inclusion and Awareness Team and the Board presenting a statement which highlighted educational and commemorative events and facts. It recognized the current state of affairs, allowed for conversations on the topic, and educated many in the community especially via the Facebook posts.

The Board discussed having residents bring topics to them and then the Board would vote on statements of support. The Board would need the information at least a month or two in advance in order to respond properly with a discussion and a vote. For other topics that the Board is not focusing on as a month of awareness, recognition could be made in the Board Member Comments section of the meetings.

Member Birch-McMichael wants an agenda item for planning months of awareness included in a March meeting so the Board can decide which ones to select and how they can work with other community partners and amplify what is already being done.

In response to questions about the internal team, the TA said the purpose of the team she put together is to focus on the topic of recognizing diversity and awareness. She deals with the departments, what they are doing, and how they will facilitate the message for three or four months during the year regarding diversity. An enormous amount of time was spent on Black History Month. This process may not be carried through to each month chosen. The next focus is Pride Month. She asked that folks be patient as they maneuver through this.

Board member Burns asked the Town Administrator to provide an outlook and update on these initiatives during her TA Report, as a way to connect and communicate with folks and mitigate any criticism.

#### **Update Records Access Officers (RAOs)**

*Board member Frecha moved to approve the updated list of Records Access Officers (RAOs) as presented at this meeting. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

#### **Debt Exclusion Ballot Question – Randall Library Renovation**

A draft was presented to the Board, and by statute, a dollar amount does not appear on a ballot question for a debt exclusion. The Warrant will have the amounts listed, including the maximum amount offset by any CPC funds, fundraising, and trust fund allocations. The remaining amount is what would be borrowed through the debt exclusion. The project will take a couple of years, and funds are borrowed as needed. Leading up to Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election, information regarding the tax rate impact and what a 'yes' vote means and what a 'no' vote means will be forthcoming.

*Board member Frecha moved to authorize a debt exclusion ballot question for the Randall Library renovation. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

#### **Representation for Nashoba Area Police Anti-Crime Task Force**

This is to authorize a multiple representation disclosure that would allow KP Law to represent the Town. The Task Force is primarily a collaborative information project, not a pooling of funds.

*Board member Frecha moved to allow KP Law to represent the Town of Stow with regards to the Nashoba Area Police Anti-Crime Task Force, and to approve and sign the Determination form provided at this meeting. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

#### **Meeting Minutes**

Member Birch-McMichael asked that her name be corrected on page 3 in the "adjournment" section.

*Board member Frecha moved to accept the meeting minutes of the January 25, 2022 meeting as amended. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

#### **Correspondence**

There was an inquiry regarding SpringFest for this year. There are currently only two members on the five-member committee. Chair Sturgis said that if anyone is interested in joining the SpringFest Committee to contact the Select Board office.

#### **Adjournment**

*At 8:45 p.m., Board member Frecha moved to adjourn. Board member Birch-McMichael 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.*