

Select Board Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 26, 2022  
Stow Town Building & Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Chair Ellen Sturgis, Cortni Frecha, James Salvie, and Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Present via Zoom: Megan Birch-McMichael

Chair Sturgis called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and noted that 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. Anyone speaking during Public Input should state their name and address, and limit comments to two minutes or less.

**Public Input:** None.

**Board Member Comments:**

- Congratulations to the Randall Library Friends for a successful book sale.
- The Council On Aging is still looking for Bridges Together volunteers to work with the 4<sup>th</sup> graders.
- The Annual Town Meeting is Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. at Hale Middle School.

**Recognition for Eagle Scouts – Ethan Henry and Drew Abrutyn**

Chair Sturgis said many Courts of Honor were postponed due to the coronavirus and the Board is now catching up on recognitions now that the Courts of Honor are being scheduled.

*I move to recognize Boy Scouts Ethan Henry and Drew Abrutyn for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout, and to sign the letters and proclamations, to be presented at their joint recognition ceremony on Saturday, May 7, 2022.*

**Certificate of Appreciation – Chris and Laura Spear**

Board members shared their appreciation for all the Spears have done for the Town. They are moving from Stow and it will be a loss for the Town.

*Board member Frecha moved that the Select Board vote to approve and sign a certificate of appreciation for Chris and Laura Spear. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**Town Administrator (TA) Report**

- Tomorrow evening is Candidates' Night, a live public forum hosted by the Stow Independent and Stow TV from 7-9 p.m. More information is on the Town's website.
- Covid cases in have increased slightly to 16, which is a 3.39% positivity rate. Per the CDC, if you are eligible and have not received a booster you are no longer considered to be fully vaccinated.
- Last week was Administrative Professionals Week and the TA acknowledge and thanked all the administrative staff that works for the Town.
- The tank is scheduled to be removed the former Great Road Firearms this week.

- Superintendent Downing is confident that the School Committee will make Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> a professional development day which means the Town can hold the Primary and Special Election at Center School in the cafeteria.

### **Open Space Deed for Joanne Drive Subdivision**

Conservation Director Kathy Sferra was present via Zoom.

The three parcels of open land total approximately 28 acres; one of the parcels is wetlands and abuts the town-owned Kane land, and the largest parcel has a trail that leads to a bluff overlooking the Assabet River. The Conservation Commission has accepted and signed the deed and it now needs the same from the Select Board.

*Board member Frecha moved to accept and sign the open space deed for the Joanne Drive Subdivision, as presented at this meeting. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

### **Joint Board Meeting with Planning Board – MBTA Communities**

Lori Clark, Chair of the Planning Board, and other Planning Board members were present via Zoom.

Town Planner Jesse Steadman and Assistant Town Planner Malcolm Ragan were present via Zoom.

Ms. Clark said the joint meeting is to educate everyone on the state proposal for MBTA communities, and part of the requirement of the proposal is a specific presentation to the Select Board.

Mr. Ragan gave an overview of the new multi-family zoning requirements for MBTA communities. Stow has already been designated as such by the state. The key takeaways are that compliance is not optional; the new requirement is for cities and towns to create a zoning district allowing multi-family housing by right, without special permit requirements, and the municipality must allow a gross density of 15 units per acre. Stow would be disqualified from substantial infrastructure grant funding if no district is created, and possibly other state funding. Interim compliance steps include this presentation, and a short community information form which the Planning Department will submit to the state by the May 2nd deadline. In the Timeline for Compliance, municipalities must adopt a zoning amendment by December 31, 2024. The new requirements do not include any production mandate or requirement to build new units, it only requires multi-family by-right zoning, not housing production. All the information is available at [mass.gov/mbtacommunities](https://mass.gov/mbtacommunities).

Select Board members and Planning Board members discussed the potential impact on Stow and on Lower Village. Mr. Steadman said the Planning Board approved a letter to DHCD (Department of Housing and Community Development), with a copy to our legislative delegation, regarding concerns that the Planning Board has with this Housing Choice Initiative.

### **MVP Grant for Stow Acres**

Conservation Director Kathy Sferra was present via Zoom.

The Town's grant application to the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP) is due next week; a letter of support was submitted to the Board for approval. This will be one of a dozen letters of support, including letters from both of Stow's legislators and the Conservation Commission. The application is seeking year one funding for the acquisition of the portion of the North Course that Town Meeting voted to buy last fall, and year two funding for a Climate Resilience Master Plan. The

plan will include the Stow Acres parcel, about 20 acres of the development parcel that abuts Elizabeth Brook, and a 12-acre parcel that the Conservation Commission already owns that abuts Stow Acres. It is not looking at just one piece of the property; there is a vision that includes recreational sports for people of all ages in addition to restoring wetlands and conservation.

*Board member Frecha moved to approve, and authorize the Chair to sign, the letter of support for the Stow Acres Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant proposal, as presented by the Conservation Director. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

## **2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant**

The Board reviewed the Warrant and decided to discuss and vote on only a few of the articles. Vin Antil, Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Chair, was present via Zoom.

### Article 44. Renovations to the Randall Library

### Article 45. To Supplement Prior Borrowing Votes to Permit the Application of Sale Premium to Pay Project Costs for the Renovations for the Randall Library

### Article 46. Repurpose Previously Allocated Funds

*Chair Sturgis moved that the Select Board vote to support Articles 44, 45, and 46 related to the renovations of the Randall Library. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

### Article 43. Funding Support for Stow Town Hall Restoration

Mr. Antil said if the Select Board votes to not support this article, he is thinking of having it tabled on Town Meeting floor.

*Chair Sturgis moved that the Select Board not support Article 43. Select Board member Salvie seconded the motion for discussion. The motion failed on a 2-2 roll call vote: Birch-McMichael -aye; Sturgis -aye; Salvie -nay; Frecha -nay.*

*Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board support Article 43. Board member Frecha seconded the motion. The motion failed on a 2-2 roll call vote: Salvie -aye; Frecha -aye; Sturgis -nay; Birch-McMichael -nay.*

Board member Birch-McMichael asked that the Board take no position on this article. The recorded vote of 2-2 for each motion essentially established that the Select Board took no position on Article 43.

### Article 42. Stow Municipal Affordable Trust, Red Acre Road Community Housing

Chair Sturgis asked the Board members if they had enough information on this to vote on it. Board member Salvie said he supports it, but the Town provided a subsidy by providing the land, and he is surprised that the CPC is putting another \$1.1 million towards this. Mr. Antil said that it was presented to the CPC as being important to attract a developer by showing that the Town was supporting this project. Chair Sturgis will ask SMAHT to attend the next meeting to provide more details.

Article 3. Wage and Salary Schedules for Fiscal Year 2023

Article 4. General Budget for Fiscal Year 2023

Article 56. Amend General Bylaw Article 11 – Personnel Administration

*Board member Frecha moved that the Select Board support Articles 3, 4, and 56. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Article 41. National Guard/Reserve Tax Relief

This is a new tax relief article, and the Board discussed it and decided to hold on this article pending more information.

Article 48. Creation of a Capital Stabilization Fund

The Town Administrator said this is a funding mechanism and a way to start saving money that is dedicated to capital-related projects such as infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, or to pay debt services on capital projects.

*Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board vote to support Article 48. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Article 50. Legal Services

*Board member Salvie moved that the Select Board vote to support Article 50. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*Board member Frecha moved to accept the warrant for the May 14, 2022 Annual Town Meeting, dated April 26, 2022. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**Meeting Minutes**

*Board member Frecha moved to accept the minutes of the April 12, 2022 meeting as drafted. Board member Salvie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**Correspondence:** No comments.

**Adjournment**

*At 8:58 p.m. Board member Frecha moved to adjourn. Board member Salvie 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.*