

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 24, 2022
Stow Town Building & Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Megan Birch-McMichael, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark, Cortni Frecha, Ellen Sturgis, and Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Chair Sturgis called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and welcomed the new, and returning, Board member Ingeborg Hegemann Clark (who is a former Board member) and welcomed back Cortni Frecha (who was re-elected for another term). She advised everyone participating in the meeting that Stow TV is recording this meeting. If a vote is not declared as unanimous, the vote will be done by a roll call.

Reorganization of the Board

Chair Sturgis said she has been honored to serve as chair and was not interested in continuing. She asked those interested to speak to why they want to be the chair.

Board member Birch-McMichael listed some responsibilities of the chair, stating the most important is being responsible for running an effective and efficient meeting. She is interested in becoming chair, and said she is highly organized and manages a small business with a staff of 13 employees. She has previously chaired the Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee. This is her third year being on the Board and she has watched and learned and would like a shot to be the chair.

Board member Frecha agreed with Birch-McMichael's description of the duties of the chair. She sees it as a service to keep the meetings organized and running smoothly. Her goal in meetings is for members to be cordial and deliberate, and kind to both each other and to applicants and visitors. The Board is the public body that sets the tone for how conversations are held publicly in the Town. She has previously chaired the Community Preservation Committee and the Conservation Commission.

Chair Sturgis asked for a motion.

Board member Clark nominated Megan Birch-McMichael as chair. Chair Sturgis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

In making her motion, Board member Clark said it is member Birch-McMichael's last year in her term, and although member Frecha has a lot of good experience, she has a few years to become chair.

Chair Birch-McMichael proceeded with the meeting.

Board member Clark nominated Ellen Sturgis as clerk. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Input

Alex Riker, 24 Asa Whitcomb Way, asked the Board to reconsider expediting the filling of the vacant seat on the Board.

Board Member Comments

Board member Clark said that this is the forum for the public to bring ideas forward, either during Public Input or via correspondence to the Board.

Board member Frecha thanked all the voters and the other candidates, adding that it was exciting to run in a contested election that got the Town talking.

Chair Birch-McMichael thanked Ellen for chairing the Board during the past year.

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- Covid cases are up to 42 in town, with a positivity rate of 8.16%.
- Congratulations to Officer Brandon Murphy who graduated from the Police Academy last week. He has started as an officer, and his family welcomed a baby recently. We wish him luck all around.
- A huge 'shout out' to Kathy Sferra who completed her 50th half marathon, one in every state. She ran in North Dakota on Saturday.
- Thank you to the voters for turning up at Town Meeting and the election, and for supporting the Library project. The Board will be asked at the next meeting to disband the existing building committee and to create a new committee to carry the process through design and construction.
- From May 23rd to June 2nd the Gleasondale Bridge contractor will be working extended hours at the project site; work will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (except on May 27th). Traffic impacts are expected to be minimal.
- The Board will discuss the Special Election at the next meeting. The target date is September 6th, the Tuesday after Labor Day, to be held with the State Primary Election at Center School.
- The TA will be on vacation next week, the week of May 30th.
- Town Planner Jesse Steadman will be resigning this summer. He is leaving municipal government to focus on his Christmas tree business. He has been a tremendous asset to the community and to the Town.

Annual June 1 Appointments

Board member Frecha moved to reappoint Fire Chief John Paul Benoit to the position of Forest Warden, for a one-year term, ending May 31, 2023. Board member Sturgis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board member Frecha moved to reappoint Francis Ramsbottom to the position of Building Commissioner, for a one-year term, ending May 31, 2023. Board member Sturgis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Board member Frecha moved to reappoint the following inspectors, for one-year terms, ending May 31, 2023:

- *Local Inspector: Douglas Hyde*
- *Electrical Inspector: Robert W. Norton*
- *Deputy Electrical Inspector: Dennis Monteiro*
- *Deputy Electrical Inspector: Michael A. Norton*
- *Gas Inspector: Adam Sahlberg*
- *Deputy Gas Inspector: Robert Smith*
- *Plumbing Inspector: Adam Sahlberg*
- *Deputy Plumbing Inspector: Robert Smith*

Board member Sturgis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Library Summer Reading Event – Saturday, June 18, 2022

Library Director Tina McAndrew was present via Zoom.

It has been three years since there has been a summer reading program. This will be a community event on June 18 at Town Center Park to promote the kick-off for summer reading. If there is inclement weather the event will be held inside the Library.

Board member Frecha moved to approve a permit for the Randall Library Summer Reading Event, to be held at Town Center Park on Saturday, June 18, 2022 from 4:30 until 6 PM. Board member Sturgis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Stow SpringFest – Saturday, June 4, 2022

SpringFest Committee members Sherry Jusseaume and Jackie Spataro were present via Zoom.

Ms. Jusseaume provided an overview of the 2022 SpringFest. There will be entertainment, baby farm animals, activities, games, touch-a-truck, and more. Proceeds raised from a dunk tank, a blow-up archery game, and the sale of pre-packaged ice cream will go to the Stow Food Pantry. They will have vendors inside and outside, and are still looking for more vendors. There will be three food trucks if the permitting is completed. The Lions Club will be selling food, and their permit is in order. The committee has great sponsors and many volunteers.

The Town Administrator said the pending items are the tent inspections by the Building Inspector on Friday, June 3rd and permits for three food trucks through the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health. The TA said the three food trucks do not have an annual permit from Nashoba and therefore they need to go through that process. Nashoba has a list of 12 food truck vendors that do have the annual permit. Chair Birch-McMichael suggested to Ms. Jusseaume that she get the list of approved food trucks and reach out to them for availability.

Board member Frecha moved to approve a permit for Stow SpringFest, to be held at Center School on Saturday, June 4, 2022 from 11 AM until 4 PM, pending receipt of all the remaining Board of Health permits and inspection by the Building Commissioner. Board member Sturgis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Permit for 2022 Recreation Department Boating Program

Board member Frecha moved, on the recommendation of the Lake Boon Commission, to grant a Commercial Use Permit to the Stow Recreation Department for its boating program for Camp Stow and the Town Beach, for the 2022 season, valid through December 31, 2022, and to waive the \$5 fee. Board member Sturgis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Annual Town Meeting Debrief

Chair Birch-McMichael thanked everyone who attended the meeting.

Member Sturgis is in favor of having an outdoor component going forward. She thinks that the Saturday morning versus Monday night has not changed the voter turn-out, and she prefers the Saturday meeting.

Member Frecha also liked the outdoor celebratory feel, and asked about the electronic voting devices and the added time due to voters transmitting from outdoors.

The TA said it was discovered on Thursday night that additional equipment, including boosters, was needed for the set-up at Hale School. The boosters could not be procured in time. On Friday night, she and Town Clerk Linda Hathaway and IT Director Ron Eld found a way to make the outdoor voting work in an area marked off by cones. On Saturday, with the number of people inside and outside, there was too much interference for the antennas to transmit properly. We have since procured the boosters.

Member Clark said she was outdoors and placed her vote quickly so she did not have a problem voting. She said they've all heard about how young families can participate and hopes they will explore the liabilities and opportunities for this. Chair Birch-McMichael added that the past few years have changed people's relationship with town government and they are feeling more empowered to be part of the process. She would like to see how we can get more people to attend Town Meeting.

Moderator David Walrath did a hybrid method of voting, using both the clickers for some votes and by raising a card for other votes. The Board agreed this was a good method for this meeting. Chair Birch-McMichael said clickers give an accurate vote count that is anonymous.

Kate West, 8 High Street, was working at Town Meeting with the clickers. She spent most of her time outside and one of the issues was if any of the 75 people left the range of the clicker, it had to reregister to the base unit before they could vote.

Abby Morgan, 20 Railroad Avenue, appreciates the anonymity of voting by clicker. Covid has taught us that hybrid approaches are often the best solutions. She has a lot of ideas and hopes to meet about making Town Meeting more equitable, including an intermission.

The TA said that Abby is scheduled to meet with her and the new Moderator in June. The TA added that during Town Meeting, the Moderator asked if the people wanted to take a break, to which the majority responded 'no.'

Meeting Minutes

Board member Frecha moved to accept the meeting minutes of the May 10, 2022 meeting as drafted. Board member Sturgis seconded the motion and it passed 3-0-1 on a roll call vote: Frecha -aye; Sturgis -aye; Birch-McMichael -aye; Clark -abstain.

Correspondence

The Green Advisory Committee (GAC) emailed to ask about a follow-up to the meeting in March. Member Sturgis will follow up with GAC Select Board representative Carol Lynn for the written proposal which was not part of the presentation.

Adjournment

At 7:55 p.m., Board member Frecha moved to adjourn. Board member Sturgis 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.