

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 9, 2022
Stow Town Building & Zoom

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

Present via Zoom: Ellen Sturgis

Chair Birch-McMichael called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The Chair reminded everyone that the meeting is being recorded, participants via Zoom are to use the “raise hand” function for public comment, and that public comment is for items that are not on the agenda.

Public Comment:

Debbie Woods commented on the legal notice that was in the newspaper for a feasibility study for a new public works facility. She asked when the town adopted the name change from a highway department to public works, and if spending for this was approved at the Annual Town Meeting.

Board Member Comments: - None

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- As of August 4, there are 14 positive Covid-19 cases in town, which is a 5.07% positivity rate. Our numbers have decreased over the past few weeks.
- Although it visually appears that the bacteria has gone away, per MA guidelines we need to wait on algae test results before the Town Beach can be reopened. The only testing facility is in Washington state.
- A community notification call went out on Friday night asking the public to do their best to conserve water. Stow is all private wells, but all water does come from the same aquifer and as the current drought continues it may impact individual well systems.
- The Comcast public hearing will be September 13, not August 23 as noted in the packet.
- The TA will be on vacation next week.
- In response to Public Comment, the Town did appropriate funding for the feasibility study, and it is being called “public works” as the cemetery department is in the process of moving into the highway building. The department name will be formally changed in the future.

Appointments

Call Fire Lieutenant - Steven Walsh

Fire Captain Barry Evers said Mr. Walsh has been a valuable, active member of the fire department for over three years as a call firefighter and has a background in public safety dispatch.

Board member Frecha moved to appoint Steven Walsh to the position of Call Fire Lieutenant through June 30, 2023. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Green Advisory Committee – David Korn

Mr. Korn was recommended by Arnie Epstein, the committee chair. Ms. Sturgis said that she could not think of a better person to be appointed and he brings an incredible background to this role.

Board member Frecha moved to appoint David Korn to the Green Advisory Committee, to fulfill the remainder of a one-year term expiring June 30, 2023.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote

Permits for the Assabet Craft Beer & Food Truck Festival – September 3, 2022

Event Chairman Hector Constantzos was present and gave a brief overview of the event. There will be three breweries, three food trucks, and an ice cream truck. It is a fundraiser for the First Parish Church. The TA said we are still waiting on a few items that can be provided prior to the event.

Board member Frecha moved to approve a Special Event Permit for the Assabet Craft Beer & Food Truck Festival, to be held at First Parish Church on Saturday, September 3, 2022 from 12 noon until 4 p.m., pending receipt of all required food permits, TIPS and Crowd Manager certifications for volunteers responsible for the event. In addition, recommendations of the Traffic and Safety Plan as put forth by Public Safety officials must be followed.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Board member Frecha moved to approve a One-Day Liquor License for the Assabet Craft Beer & Food Truck Festival, to serve beer from three breweries in a delineated area at First Parish Church on Saturday, September 3, 2022 from 12 noon until 4 p.m.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Permit for the Lake Boon Water Carnival – September 3, 2022

David Gray of the Lake Boon Association was present via Zoom. He said this event has been going on for at least 100 years in various configurations. This year's event on land, at Pine Bluff Recreation Area, will be Saturday, September 3 with about 100 people attending throughout the day.

Board member Frecha moved to grant a Special Event Permit for the Lake Boon Carnival to be held at Lake Boon on Saturday, September 3 from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., contingent upon receipt of the Temporary Food Establishment Permit from the Board of Health, and with the understanding that there will be no amplified music during Lake Boon Quiet Hours.

Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Economic Development and Industrial Commission (EDIC) Joint Board Discussion

Planning Board Chair Lori Clark was present via Zoom. EDIC Chair Tom Farnsworth, and members Jen Gero, Mary Bradt Mintz, and Kevin Whalen were present in the Warren Room.

Ms. Clark shared an outline created by the Planning Board last week which highlighted three key points: define a context that establishes the framework for the group, which acts as an overarching goal from the town's perspective; a specific charge to create and implement an economic development plan to attract and retain businesses that fit into the Town's Comprehensive Plan (formerly known as the

Master Plan); and work in conjunction with other boards and committees for collaboration to drive input to the Town's Comprehensive Plan and creating one common vision.

Chair Birch-McMichael asked Mr. Farnsworth for his thoughts on how the Planning Board's vision of the EDIC compares to how the EDIC currently functions. Mr. Farnsworth said his understanding is that the current charge is for the EDIC to help businesses in town resolve issues that they may be facing. He thinks it is crucial that some EDIC members are business owners.

Ms. Hegemann said that the two statements were different but not opposed and asked what the process would be for working on a statement and the goal. The TA said that this discussion is it; this is where you gather information, discuss what you'd like to see, and decide as a group what you'd like the focus to be for the EDIC going forward.

Select Board members and EDIC members shared their thoughts, and most agreed that it would have been helpful to have Ms. Clark's outline prior to the meeting. Some EDIC members will make their decision on whether to remain on the committee once the modified charge has been developed.

Chair Birch-McMichael said the purpose of this meeting was to re-form the committee and not remove members. She wants to figure out the best way to use their abilities and the relationships that they have in order to have a successful EDIC. The Select Board members will provide their comments and feedback at their next board meeting. The chairs of the three committees will then meet to work on a draft of the EDIC charge. The current EDIC will be allowed to meet so that they can discuss their charge.

Board member Frecha moved to allow the Economic Development and Industrial Commission to meet. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Comcast Contract Discussion

Stow TV Director Jonathan Daisy, LACAC¹ Chair Bob Glorioso and LACAC Vice Chair Lisa Lavina were present. Mr. Daisy gave an overview of the contract which will be in effect for 10 years, the period of November 1, 2022 through October 31, 2032. Stow TV is funded by a federally mandated fee from the cable companies, and this percentage is negotiated. The PEG² Access support is 4.75% of the gross annual revenues of the federally mandated cable fee charged to subscribers. The maximum any town can receive is 5%, however, at 5% the FCC³ has ruled that cable companies can charge for their costs. There is also capital support given to the town for equipment. As of December 31, 2021 there are 919 Comcast subscribers (907 for Verizon).

There is a buyout payment to the Town of \$30,000 so that the Licensee will no longer be required to connect offsite locations to the Town Building via I-Net (video connections via wire) for PEG Access video return. The Town can use this money to install fiber optics to connect to those buildings.

There will be a public hearing at the Tuesday, September 13th meeting where residents can share their comments or concerns prior to the Select Board voting on the contract.

Minutes

Board member Frecha moved to accept the meeting minutes of the July 26, 2022 meeting as drafted. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Correspondence

Ms. Frecha commented on the emails from residents regarding water conservation. Ms. Hegemann suggested the Board talk at a future meeting about the types of geology and the subtleties of the geology in town and how it contributes to a drought. She said it may be beneficial to allocate funding to educate the public on this topic and to have a professional understanding of it. The TA said that the Stow Board of Health has a meeting this Thursday night and one of the topics is the possibility of the town adopting a bylaw to allow some type of enforcement during a drought.

The Planning Board request for feedback on the Community Engagement Plan will be added as a future agenda item.

Adjournment

At 8:19 p.m. Board member Frecha moved to adjourn. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

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.

¹LACAC: Local Access Channel Advisory Committee

²PEG: Public Education Government

³FCC: Federal Communications Commission