

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 23, 2022
Stow Town Building & Zoom

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

Chair Birch-McMichael called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The Chair reminded everyone that the meeting is being recorded, and that Public Comment is for items that are not listed on the agenda and is limited to two minutes.

Public Comment:

Dorothy Granat spoke about her concerns with the property at 92 Great Road.

Town Clerk Linda Hathaway updated residents on the last day to register to vote or change party affiliation, in-person early voting, and voting by mail.

Board Member Comments:

Ms. Sturgis thanked Louise Peacock, “a little treasure of Stow”, and the team of Warm Hearts of Stow who delivered 50+ backpacks to families in preparation for the new school year.

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- As of August 18, there are 8 positive Covid-19 cases in Town which is a 3.65% positivity rate.
- A joint boards meeting about the Town Hall, between the Select Board, the Capital Planning Committee, and the Finance Committee, has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 20 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Town Hall, and a Zoom link will be provided.

Permit for the Stow Firefighters Association Touch-A-Truck Event

SFFA Vice President Erick Benoit was present via Zoom. This is the second annual event, and the location this year is 688 Great Road.

Board member Sturgis moved to approve a permit for the Stow Firefighter Association’s Touch A Truck event, to be held Saturday, August 27 from 10 AM until 2 PM at 688 Great Road.

Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Level-3 Critical Drought and the Board of Health Non-Essential Outdoor Water Use Ban

Chair Birch-McMichael was invited to, and attended, the Board of Health’s (BOH) meeting last Thursday. At the meeting the BOH passed a temporary Non-Essential Outdoor Water Use Ban. The Police Department will not be enforcing this ban, and any water ban violations can be reported to the Board of Health office.

Charge for the Economic Development and Industrial Commission (EDIC)

Board members shared their thoughts on the information presented by Planning Board Chair Lori Clark at the previous meeting regarding the charge for the EDIC. The Board would like to clarify who the EDIC

reports to, its liaison role to businesses in Town, and decide the boundaries and benchmarks for the EDIC going forward. Ms. Sturgis suggested that the word ‘advocate’ would be a better word to use than ‘liaison’. Ms. Frecha likened being an advocate to a mediator and would like to encourage cordiality. The Chair will schedule a meeting with the chairs of the Planning Board and the EDIC so that each can bring back talking points to their board.

Update to the Traffic Mitigation Plan – Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC)

Police Chief Michael Salles said the goal is keeping public safety available to all residents when the number of people in Stow triples on the weekends during the fall. A plan had been created in 2014, and the TSAC found some things that could be changed when they reviewed the original plan. Representatives from Honey Pot Hill Orchards, Shelburne Farm, and the Collings Foundation were invited to the recent TSAC meeting, and each was sent a copy of the proposed plan, but nobody attended. The TSAC will also be working on a plan for the Christmas tree farms.

Board member Sturgis moved to approve the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee’s updated Traffic Mitigation Plan for the fall season as presented at this meeting.

Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Town Administrator Goals and Annual Evaluation

The Board members reviewed the Town Administrator’s FY22 goals, discussed the FY23 goals, and approved the evaluation form. Chair Birch-McMichael said it is tremendous what has been accomplished.

Review FY22 Goals

The TA was given nine formal goals, in addition to some long-term goals. The highest priority of the Town, Stow Acres, was one of the goals. The purchase and sale agreement has been signed, a retained rights agreement has been negotiated, and she is confident that they will proceed with the funding. The TA attends a monthly meeting about the project. The TA shared highlights of Track Road, the Green Advisory Committee, Select Board policies, onboarding new committee members, developing and implementing HR plans, the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, the Library renovation, and the Bylaw review process.

Discuss FY23 Goals

Board members shared ideas for attainable goals for the upcoming year. These included:

- Bringing forward a water feasibility study for Lower Village;
- Applying the past year’s amazing work with communication and transparency to the website;
- Continuing to stay informed about the Bose property; although not a goal because it is not up to the TA or the Town, the future of the property and its impact is important to the Board;
- The future of the Town Hall;
- Preparing the Town for droughts and flooding, and determining whose purview it is;
- Facilitating the possibility of a “no gas connections” grant with the Green Advisory Committee.

Additional goals can be sent directly to the Town Administrator by September 8 for the next meeting.

Approve Evaluation Form

Ms. Sturgis questioned the evaluations being sent to Assistant TA/HR Director Dolores Hamilton. This is a standard procedure in other towns. Board members will send their evaluations to Ms. Hamilton.

Board member Sturgis moved to approve the Evaluation Form for the Town Administrator as presented. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

General Bylaw Review Committee

The Town Charter states that the bylaws be reviewed at five-year intervals by a special committee of five voters. The last Bylaw Review Committee was in 2005, but there is no record of a report. However, since that time bylaws have been updated as needed on a case-by-case basis. The Charter states that this committee shall present a final report during the year following the year in which it is appointed. Ms. Hegemann asked if a staff member who lives in Stow could be on the committee. Per the Charter, the committee calls for five voters, so it would be possible.

The Board discussed having a committee of five review the bylaws and reach out to departments and boards to verify if any changes are needed for the more specific ones, such as the wetlands protection bylaw or the police regulations. The Board discussed creating the committee in January 2023, which would give the committee almost 15 months to work on the bylaw review. The TA will present a draft charge following the language of the Charter and will add in the following: work with departments, boards, and committees to identify issues; gather input; and present a draft of the changes.

Meeting Minutes

Board member Sturgis moved to accept the meeting minutes of the August 9, 2022 meeting as drafted. Board member Frecha seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Correspondence

Chair Birch-McMichael said there have been questions about correspondence and that this topic will be addressed as a future agenda item.

Ms. Sturgis asked about the School Committee vacancy and the process of the joint board appointment.

The request for a proclamation will be on the next agenda.

Ms. Hegemann asked about the MPO (Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization) and if someone on the Board is a member.

Ms. Hegemann discussed the two letters from GZA (GZA Geoenvironmental Inc.).

Adjournment

At 8:56 p.m. Board member Sturgis 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.