

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 15, 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

Present via Zoom: Hector Constantzos

Chair Birch-McMichael called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and noted that the meeting is being recorded and is on Stow TV. Public Comment is limited to items not on the agenda.

Public Comment

Dan James, 81 Barton Road, spoke about the proposed dam project, thanking Denise and the Highway Department and the Board for the grant. He requested a public presentation to answer questions from residents, a timeline for the approval process, and a rendering of what it will look like when it is done.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Sturgis said the MA Select Board Association is having a one-hour session on affordable housing tomorrow, and the January MMA conference is in person this year, on January 20 and 21, 2023.

Mr. Constantzos acknowledged that November is Native American and Indigenous Peoples month.

Chair Birch-McMichael said registration is still open for the Stow Gobbler race on Thanksgiving Day.

Ms. Hegemann noted the passing of Beverly Benoit, a great resident who was very active with the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the Council On Aging.

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- As of November 10, there are 13 COVID-19 cases in Town at a 5.2% positivity rate. As a reminder, this does not include people that test at home and are not reporting it.
- The TA extended a huge thanks to Linda Hathaway and Deb Seith and all the election workers for a smooth state election last week.
- The TA thanked Hector and Rev. Cindy (The Reverend Dr. Cynthia Landrum, Minister) from the First Parish Church of Stow and Acton for organizing last week's Vigil Against Hate. It was a beautiful and powerful evening and she thanked all who attended.
- The TA thanked the Rotary Club of Nashoba Valley for inviting her to participate in the drive-through lunch for veterans last Friday. It was nice to say hello and serve them a lunch.
- Free Cash was certified at \$1,876,404. This money is historically used for capital improvements, putting money back into stabilization, and funding our OPEB liability.
- The TA will be attending the MA Municipal Managers conference at UMass in Amherst this Thursday and Friday and will be available by phone and email.

NRSD Stow School Committee Appointment

Stow School Committee members Leah Vivirito (Chair), Karen Devine, and Maureen Mazzone were present via Zoom. The applicant for the vacant seat, Scott Powell, was present in the Warren Room.

Richard Eckel recently resigned from the committee and per MGL chapter 41, section 11, a joint appointment to fill the vacancy is made by the Stow School Committee and the Select Board.

The School Committee members and the Select Board all agreed that Mr. Powell is a great candidate who clearly explained why he wants to be a member when he was a candidate for an opening back in September. Mr. Powell has served on a school board in New Jersey, and is happy to serve the community here. He thanked them for the honor and the privilege.

Following a joint vote of the Select Board and the remaining Stow Representatives of the Nashoba Regional School Committee, Board member Frecha moved that Scott Powell be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Nashoba Regional School Committee, effective from now until the May 2023 Annual Town Election. Select Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Appointments

Sean Duddy to the position of Call Firefighter/EMT

Fire Chief JP Benoit was present via Zoom. The Chief said that Sean Duddy is a Maynard resident with firefighting and EMT experience who is looking forward to giving back to the community.

Board member Frecha moved to appoint Sean Duddy as a Call Firefighter/EMT for the Stow Fire Department, for a term expiring June 30, 2023. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Aisha Anderson and Hannah Richardson to the Randall Library Building Committee 2.0

Aisha Anderson was present in the Warren Room. Ms. Anderson said her family is new to Stow and the library has been an important part of their transition during the past year. She is a project manager by training and cares about civic life and building a better library for the Town.

Board member Frecha moved to appoint Aisha Anderson to the Randall Library Building Committee 2.0, to serve until the project is complete and the renovated library is fully open. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Hannah “Sunny” Richardson was present via Zoom. Ms. Richardson said she has been volunteering at the Randall Library for a year. She feels that a library is one of the only publicly funded places remaining where everybody can go and be seen, be welcomed, and gain knowledge.

Board member Frecha moved to appoint Hannah “Sunny” Richardson to the Randall Library Building Committee 2.0, to serve until the project is complete and the renovated library is fully open. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Richard Fishman to the Randall Library Building Exterior Design Committee

Mr. Fishman was present in the Warren Room. Mr. Fishman said he has a background in graphic design and has studied architecture. He is an artist and a painter, and feels he can contribute to the aesthetics of the new library.

Board member Frecha moved to appoint Richard Fishman to the Randall Library Building Exterior Design Committee to serve until the exterior design of the building has been approved by the Randall Library Building Committee 2.0. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Alison Lamkin to the Recreation Commission

Alison Lamkin was present via Zoom. Ms. Lamkin said she moved to Stow over a year ago with her family and wants to help grow the Commission. She has been working in the events field for 12 years.

Board member Frecha moved to appoint Alison Lamkin to the Recreation Commission to serve 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.

Event Permit for the Holiday Tree Lighting

Linda Gothie of the Lions Club was present via Zoom. Ms. Gothie said the event will have Santa arrive on a fire truck and the TA has arranged for the Dunkin' truck to participate. They are trying to incorporate a menorah into the event. The Scouts will be toasting marshmallows in a fire pit.

The TA said the highway department put in a request in August with the company who provides the lighting for the tree, and that has not been confirmed yet. Ms. Gothie said there is no rain date.

Board member Frecha moved to grant a permit to the Stow Lions Club for a Holiday Tree Lighting on Saturday, December 3, 2022 from 5-7 PM on the Town's Lower Common, pending approval from the Town Administrator that all necessary documents have been received. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Updated Traffic Mitigation Plan

Police Chief Michael Sallese was present in the Warren Room. The Chief presented the updated plan to include the Christmas tree farms in town. The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee brought in the stakeholders to ensure that they had a voice. Mistletoe Farms will be the biggest traffic concern, in part due to the amount of advertising. Nan's Market may be added in as the next phase of the traffic plan. Ms. Sturgis asked that on page 12, "Shelburne Farms" be corrected to "Shelburne Farm".

Board member Frecha moved to accept the updated plan for Traffic Mitigation as presented at this meeting by Police Chief Michael Sallese, as amended. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Select Board Response to Antisemitic Vandalism and Next Steps

Chair Birch-McMichael received an email from resident Martin Brower, and it is on the agenda because she wants to discuss the recent antisemitic act that happened in town and the Board's response. There was a press release issued, and the Vigil Against Hate on November 8 had multiple congregations represented. Mr. Constantzos said he was honored to be able to do it, even though it was something they wished they didn't have to do. He would hope that whatever the Board puts forward will encompass the diversity of the town and state that we won't stand for hate, period, no matter who it is directed at.

For next steps with regard to what Mr. Brower had asked for, the Chair would like to invite Mr. Brower to an upcoming meeting to discuss what he has brought forth to the Sudbury Select Board. The Board agreed and asked for the proposed language for the antisemitism statement in advance.

Select Board Proposed Charter Changes

Debbie Woods, Chair of the Charter Review Committee (CRC) and Kathy Sferra, CRC member were present via Zoom.

The Select Board discussed and finalized its proposed changes to the Charter Review Committee.

Proposed changes include:

- Replace all references to Board of Selectmen with Select Board;
- Replace all uses of Master Plan with Comprehensive Plan;
- Article II – for 2-7(a) to have the CRC review to potentially increase the number of voters for an annual town meeting warrant article, and 2-11(b) to have the CRC review the number of voters needed;
- Article III - to change 3-1(d) to read “Elected officers shall receive no compensation for their services.” and 3-8 for the Board of Assessors to become an appointed board not an elected board;
- Article V – rewording of who the Select Board shall appoint;
- Article VII – changes to section 7-7, the Master Plan Committee (the Select Board will meet with the Planning Board at the December meeting to discuss this).

Town Clerk Linda Hathaway was present via Zoom and recommended that for Article II, it remain a set number and not a percentage as the Board discussed. Ms. Hathaway added that a percentage would just be a snapshot of the number of registered voters on that day.

Mr. Constantzos noted that at the last meeting there was a lot of discussion about how notices are sent out, and he asked the Board to encourage the CRC to make those more open to whatever technology is available at the time rather than specifying the newspaper and bulletin board. Ms. Woods said that the CRC has this as an item that they will be reviewing. When the TA met with the CRC they looked at section 7-8 and discussed striking it altogether as the majority of it does not comply with the Open Meeting Law, and posting of notices is statutory and does not need to be in the Charter.

Mr. Constantzos asked about a definition section and a review of how those definitions are used within the Charter. Ms. Frecha agreed that having definitions can be useful in a legal document, and asked if there is a way to define more terms without making the document cumbersome. Ms. Sferra said there are some definitions in section 7-5, and to let the CRC know if there are additional terms that need to be defined.

Ms. Woods noted that if an individual board member wants to suggest Charter changes a form must be submitted by Friday, November 18, 2022.

Board member Frecha moved to approve the following list of proposed changes to the Stow Town Charter, as finalized at this meeting, and forward the list to the Charter Review Committee. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Economic Development & Industrial Commission (EDIC) Charge

The Board discussed and finalized what they will have the Chair present as a mission statement to the Chairs of the Planning Board and the EDIC. The Board added, in part “The EDIC shall work with Stow boards and commissions, Stow businesses, and residents to balance Stow’s small-town character with business development within the Town.” If verbal confirmation is received from the other two boards via their chairs, the Select Board will finalize the charge and post it.

Sign the First Amendment to the Stow Acres Purchase and Sales Agreement

Ms. Dembkoski said that the Town has been working with Stow Acres on finalizing the closing and Stow Acres asked to extend it to early January instead of December 31. The closing date is January 13, 2023.

Board member Frecha moved that the Board approve and sign the document extending the date for the purchase and sale with Stow Acres to January 13, 2023. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Meeting Minutes

Board member Frecha moved to accept the meeting minutes of the October 25, 2022 meeting as drafted. Board member Hegemann seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Correspondence

Ms. Sturgis asked about the email regarding the Lake Boon dam project; one was sent to the Select Board and multiple emails with identical wording have been sent to the TA. The TA said there have been conversations with the two residents whose property is at each end of the dam, but the project is not ready to include public meetings until the final design.

Ms. Sturgis asked about the email from the library (from the Randall Library Trustee chair) regarding a Library gift fund. The TA said the library already has a fund and gifts have been accepted into that account.

Adjournment

*At 9:02 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.