

AGENDA
SELECT BOARD
February 22, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.
Town Building & Zoom

Following the Governor’s Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, this meeting of the Select Board will take place without any public present, but we will make every effort to ensure the public can adequately access non-executive session proceedings in real time via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87310784202?pwd=UDRhMTh0aXZlakIxWWhVcEIEZUxMQT09>

Meeting ID: 873 1078 4202

Passcode: 022139

1. Public input
2. Board Members comments
3. Recognition
4. Appointments:
 - o Barry Evers to the position of Fire Captain
 - o Matheus Alves to the position of Call EMT
 - o Colin Taranto to the position of Tree Worker
 - o Jackie Spataro to the SpringFest Committee through June 30, 2023
 - o Carol Ann Baer to the SpringFest Committee through June 30, 2023
5. Town Administrator’s Report
6. Discussion and Possible Vote
 - o Town Administrator’s presentation on the FY 2023 Financial State of the Town pursuant to Article 4, section 10 of the General Bylaws
 - o Meet with members of the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee regarding their 2/17/2022 Memo & Recommendations
 - o Lighting for Autism Awareness Month (April)
 - o Review & Approve Select Board 2021 Annual Report
 - o Review & Approve the Capital ARPA list put forth by the Town Administrator
 - o Review the existing Municipal Employee Face Covering Policy enacted on 01/11/2022
7. Meeting minutes
 - o February 8, 2022
8. Correspondence
9. Adjournment

Posted Thursday, 2/17/2022
3:30 p.m.
Revised at 4:07pm



APPOINTMENTS



Denise M. Dembkojski
Town Administrator
townadministrator@stow-ma.gov

Town of Stow
Office of the
Town Administrator

380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775
Tel: 978-897-2927

I am thrilled to recommend Barry Evers to be the next Fire Captain. We had three outstanding candidates for the position, but Barry stood out as the top choice. His direct and honest answers impressed both the initial and final screening committees. Barry has command presence and will be a valuable resource for the Chief in leading the Stow Fire Department.

Barry has been with the department for over 20 years, 17 of which are as a full-time firefighter and 12 years as a call Lieutenant. His knowledge and training have prepared him well to advance to this next step in his career and his passion for the fire service will help him excel in the role.

I respectfully ask for your ratification of the recommendation.

Denise M Dembkojski



Denise M. Dembkojski
Town Administrator
townadministrator@stow-ma.gov

Town of Stow
Office of the
Town Administrator

380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775
Tel: 978-897-2927

I am pleased to support the recommendation of Chief Benoit in the appointment of Matheus Alves to the position of Call EMT with the Fire Department. Matheus has completed the Nashoba EMT Cadet Program and is a registered EMT, both through the State and at the National level. Additionally, he lives in Town and will be a valuable resource for Department.

I respectfully ask for your ratification of the recommendation.

Denise M Dembkojski



STOW FIRE DEPARTMENT

511 Great Road
Stow, Massachusetts 01775
Phone (978) 897-4537
Fax (978) 461-1400
Firechief@stow-ma.gov

John P Benoit
Fire Chief

February 2, 2022

Town Administrator
Denise Dembkoski
380 Great Rd.
Stow, MA 01775

Denise,

I respectfully request your recommendation to appoint Matheus Alves to the Position of Call EMT with the Stow Fire Department. Matheus is a Stow resident attending Nashoba Regional High School. He has completed the cadet program through the school and as a result he is a registered Nationally and State certified Emergency Medical Technician. His eagerness and desire to preform the job would make a valuable employee to the Stow Fire Department.

Please let me know if you require any other information regarding this candidate.

Respectfully,

John P Benoit
Fire Chief



Denise M. Dembkoski

Town Administrator

townadministrator@stow-ma.gov

Town of Stow
Office of the
Town Administrator

380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775
Tel: 978-897-2927

I am pleased to recommend Colin Taranto to the position of Tree Worker. Colin has been with the Town since March 2020 and continues to grow in his role with the Highway Department. While Colin is still in the learning process of tree work, he has been actively undertaking training to bring him up to the necessary standards. Additionally, the hands-on learning will be invaluable.

I respectfully ask for your ratification of the recommendation.

Denise M Dembkoski



**OFFICE of the
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

Dolores Hamilton | Asst Town Administrator & HR Director
Town of Stow | 380 Great Road | Stow, MA 01775
978-897-4175 | assttownadmin@stow-ma.gov

Date: February 3, 2022

To: Denise Dembkoski, Town Administrator

From: Dolores Hamilton, Assistant Town Admin./HR *dh*

Re: Tree Worker

The Town has advertised for a Tree Worker since December 14, 2021. We have received one internal application from Colin Taranto. Colin was an applicant in October when we filled one Tree Worker position. He was interviewed but was the second choice. He was candidate #2 from the interviews in October. He has experience working with a family member who has a tree business. He has gained more experience working with the Tree Worker since October. He does not have all the qualifications but has taken the MIIA Chain Saw training and would benefit from training and additional supervised hands-on experience.

The Superintendent would like to offer this position to Colin with the same criteria given to the Tree Worker, Nicolo Antonelli. The offer letter would include a six-month probationary period, although he has completed the Chain Saw training, uses the complete similar training programs including Tree Care Safety, Bucket Truck Safety, Ground Operations Safety and Electrical Hazard Awareness. Most of these programs are available through MIIA. I think this is a reasonable plan.



Denise M. Dembkoski
Town Administrator
townadministrator@stow-ma.gov

Town of Stow
Office of the
Town Administrator

380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775
Tel: 978-897-2927

I am pleased to recommend Jackie Spataro to the SpringFest Committee. I have communicated with Jackie a number of times since I came to Stow and she has always been so pleasant and I think she will bring a great perspective to this committee.

I respectfully ask for your ratification of the recommendation.

Denise M Dembkoski

Denise Dembkoski

From: Joyce Sampson
Sent: Wednesday, February 9, 2022 12:38 PM
To: Denise Dembkoski
Subject: FW: SpringFest Committee

FYI!

From: selectboard
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 10:21 AM
To: Denise Dembkoski <townadministrator@stow-ma.gov>
Subject: FW: SpringFest Committee

I have replied to Ms. Spataro, acknowledging her email and advising that you will be in contact if you plan to make an appointment.

From: Jacquelyn K. Spataro <kanejs@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 9:22 AM
To: selectboard <selectboard@stow-ma.gov>
Cc: Maura Deneen <maura50@verizon.net>; sherryjusseume@gmail.com
Subject: SpringFest Committee

Good morning selectboard,

I would like to volunteer for the SpringFest committee with Maura and Sherry. This would be my first appointment from the select board, but I do have years of experience in volunteering in many capacities with the Randall Library and the Center Hale PTO. I am a hard worker and committed to making a difference in my community. Springfest is a cornerstone of community spirit and I look forward to helping Sherry and Maura!

-Jackie Spataro



Town of Stow
Office of the
Town Administrator

*380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775
Tel: 978-897-2927*

Denise M. Dembkoski
Town Administrator
townadministrator@stow-ma.gov

I am pleased to recommend Carole-Ann Baer to the SpringFest Committee. Carole-Ann is extremely passionate and dedicated to the organizations she works with. I think she will be a wonderful addition to the SpringFest committee.

I respectfully ask for your ratification of the recommendation.

Denise M Dembkoski

Education

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| * Boston University | Boston, MA | 1978-1979 |
| * Brigham Young University | Provo, Utah | 1980-1983 |

Job Experience

- | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| *Brandeis University | Waltham, MA | 1996 – Present |
| <i>Dance Professor – Responsibilities include teaching the history and dance techniques of various ballroom and latin dances</i> | | |
| *Massachusetts General Hospital | Boston, MA | 1985 - 2008 |
| <i>Research Analyst – Responsibilities included monitoring the trend of substance abuse via the Emergency Room patients. Data was collected, analyzed and submitted to the National Institute of Drug Abuse.</i> | | |
| * Massachusetts General Hospital | Boston, MA | 1984 - 1985 |
| <i>Unit Secretary for the Psychopharmacology Clinic – Responsibilities included setting appointments, liaisons between patients and their caregivers, organizing various clinicians’ schedules and record keeping and transcribing of reports.</i> | | |
| * Arthur Murray Dance Studio | Boston, MA | 1983 - 1984 |
| <i>Dance Instructor – Responsibilities included teaching, choreographing routines, and competitions with various students.</i> | | |

Dance Experience

- *Brigham Young University Ballroom Dance Team
- *Ephraim Curtis Middle School Theater Troupe Sudbury, MA - Choreographer
- *Temple Shir Tikva Players Weston, MA - Choreographer
- *Champion Competitive Dancer

Leadership & Volunteer Experience

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| * HOPEsudbury Inc | 2001 - Present |
| <i>A grassroots organization founded out of the September 11th tragedies. We organize fundraisers, drives and auctions to raise money for various causes, including local, national and international charities. To date we have distributed over \$600,000 to these organizations. My specific role on the board is to organize the drives, host various “Coffee Houses” where we highlight other charitable organizations as well as organize, host and solicit talent for our annual telethon.</i> | |
| * Sudbury Little League | 2002 - Present |
| <i>I am the founder and Commissioner of the Sudbury Red Sox, Challenger Division Baseball Team. Our team is a team comprised of “differently abled” kids who are able to engage in the joy and camaraderie of a team sport.</i> | |
| * Humanitarian Service Coordinator | 2020 - Present |
| <i>My role is to engage a group of women of about 2-300 members to find service-related volunteer opportunities. I organize and seek opportunities for these women to find ways to volunteer and share their time and talents.</i> | |
| * Red Cross – Community Volunteer Leader | 2020 – Present |
| <i>Assist in various tasks to engage the community in volunteer opportunities for the Red Cross and their needs</i> | |
| * Sudbury Valley Trustees Community Leader | 2006 – 2010 |
| <i>Organized various activities where the community could become aware of the SVT cause, through particular fundraisers as well as educational programs – including the annual “Family Fair”.</i> | |
| *ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens) – Brigham Young University | 1982 – 1983 |
| <i>School leader in organizing programs to engage in volunteer opportunities for students and children with special needs</i> | |

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE

**Town Administrator's
Presentation on the FY 2023
Financial State of the Town**

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

2/17/2022 Memo & Recommendations

Planning Board
380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775
Tel: 978-897-5098
Fax: 978-897-2321

**Town of Stow
Traffic Safety
Advisory Committee**

Memo

To: Stow Select Board
CC: Denise Demboski – Town Administrator; Complete Streets Committee; Planning Board
From: Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
- Police Chief, Michael Sallese
- Fire Chief, John Paul Benoit
- Superintendent of Streets, Steve Nadeau
- Town Planner, Jesse Steadman
Date: 2.17.2022
Re: Amending Traffic Rules and Orders & Recommendation for Funding Traffic Safety Policy Implementation

Summary

The purpose of this memo is to recommend the Stow Select Board authorize specific changes to the Traffic Rules and Orders for the improvement of public safety on Stow roads and to request support for FY2023 requests for implementing the Stow *Traffic Safety Policy*. Specifically, this memo recommends the following actions:

1. Amendment to the Traffic Rules and Orders to reduce speed limits on applicable public and private ways that currently do not have posted speed limits, in accordance with Article 6, Section 6 of the Town's General Bylaw;
2. Support of following ARPA Funding Requests:
 - a. Signage to implement the creation of the new speed zones described above;
 - b. Delineation of a "Safety Zone" along Crescent Street, in the vicinity of Town Center;
 - c. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) request for traffic engineering to allow the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee to initiate studies and/or peer review of potential traffic mitigation measures as directed by Stow Traffic Safety Policy.

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Charge

The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee was established in 2021 by the Stow Select Board to act as an *"advisory group that can receive all requests and suggestions for traffic safety improvement in the Town of Stow, and evaluate and recommend to the Town Administrator and Select Board various approaches that could be used to create safer and more livable neighborhoods through efforts to reduce speeding and unnecessary traffic on neighborhood roads."*

Town Wide 25 MPH Regulation on Qualifying Roadways

Overview

Since its first meeting of August 17th, the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) has accepted well over fifty pieces of correspondence regarding traffic safety issues from a variety of neighborhoods and streets in Stow. Many of the letters regard the high speed of vehicles and their attending safety hazards. While there are a number of design and signage interventions the Committee is also considering, the TSAC believes that speed regulation can play an important role.

The TSAC has reviewed the process for amending speed limits through the MassDOT required process. Given that MassDOT requires traffic studies for amending speed limits, undertaking individual, street-by-street studies on many of the relatively short, low trafficked roads in Stow would not be as efficient or cost effective as implementing a blanket speed regulation on qualifying roadways. The Committee has further found that regulating speeds on many of Stow's unregulated roadways would not only provide the Police Department with the legal mechanism to enforce speeds in those areas, but provide opportunities to further educate drivers regarding speed expectations in Stow.

Enabling Legislation

At the July 2017 Special Town Meeting, voters approved a measure allowing the Town to opt-in to MGL c90 s.17C, which enables municipalities to lower the speed limit for Town owned roads that meet the definition of *Thickly Settled* or *Business District*, provided there is no speed regulation in place for that road. MassDOT has provided guidance indicating that the best method for enabling this allowance is to place signage at entrances to Town stating a speed limit of 25 mph, unless otherwise posted (see Fig. 1 and Exhibit C).

Fig. 1



MGL c90 §17C defines *Thickly Settled* districts as:

“the territory contiguous to any way which is built up with structures devoted to business, or the territory contiguous to any way where dwelling houses are situated at such distances as will average less than two hundred feet between them for a distance of a quarter of a mile or over.”

Given that the language of c.90 s.17C specifies that roads receiving a *Thickly Settled* speed reduction must be *Town owned*, the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee is also recommending that the Select Board act through its Traffic Rules and Orders to implement a similar speed limit on *Town Maintained Private Ways* that meet the same *Thickly Settled* definition.

Effect of the Regulation on Stow Roads

The below table notes the specific action recommended by the TSAC, as well as the type and number of roads affected through its implementation:

Table 1: Recommended Actions

Recommended Action	Proposed Traffic Rules and Order Change	Type of Road affected	# of Affected Roadways
Reduce speed limit on all “thickly settled,” <u>Town-owned</u> roadways in Stow to 25MPH.	Amend Article VI Section 7-2 to refer to (25) MPH on all “Town-owned public ways” defined as thickly settled in accordance with an appendix of applicable street listings and c.90 s.17C.	Town-owned public ways within a thickly settled district.	<u>28</u> (see Exhibit A – roads outlined in black with red center line)
Reduce speed limit on all un-zoned <i>Town-maintained private ways</i> in Stow to 25 MPH	Amend Article VI Section 7-2 to refer to “Town Maintained Private Ways,” definition.	Private way, maintained and plowed for public safety.	<u>30</u> (See Exhibit A – roads with dotted red line)
	Add definition of “Town Maintained Private Way” to Article I – Definitions.		
	Amend Article VI to create a new Section 12 listing all un-regulated Town-owned ways, and all Town Maintained Private Ways in Stow		

Required Signage

In addition to amending the Traffic Rules and Orders, the Town would need to post signage at the prominent entrances to Stow. The installation of the signage would not only notify drivers of the new regulation, but also set expectations among drivers that the Town is serious about vehicle speeds throughout Stow. Although no bid has yet been placed or official estimate received, the TSAC estimates that the cost of the necessary signage, including the required steel posts, could be between \$4-5 thousand dollars.

What About Business Districts?

Although the statute specifically refers to the ability to lower speed limits in established “Business Districts,” the Business Districts in the Town of Stow, primarily Lower Village and portions of Hudson Road at Route 117, are unaffected by this proposed Traffic Order since they already have an established speed regulation in place. Therefore, all existing speed regulations in place within those districts would remain.

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Recommendation

On February 2, 2022, the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Stow Select Board amend the Traffic Rules and Orders to create a new Section 12 of Article VI, titled “Thickly Settled Districts,” which states that all roadways listed in Section 12

shall be subject to a speed limit of 25mph, unless otherwise posted, in accordance with MGL chapter 90 s.17C or to use any other language as recommended by the Select Board or Town Counsel to achieve the same.

Creation of Safety Zone on Crescent Street

At the July, 2017 Special Town Meeting, the Town of Stow accepted rights associated with *Section 194 of Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2016* to establish regulatory 20 mph “Safety Zones” in qualifying areas of Town. Safety Zones are intended to be used in areas where vulnerable road users are more likely to be present, such as in the vicinity of parks, certain municipal uses, areas in around school and daycare centers, etc.

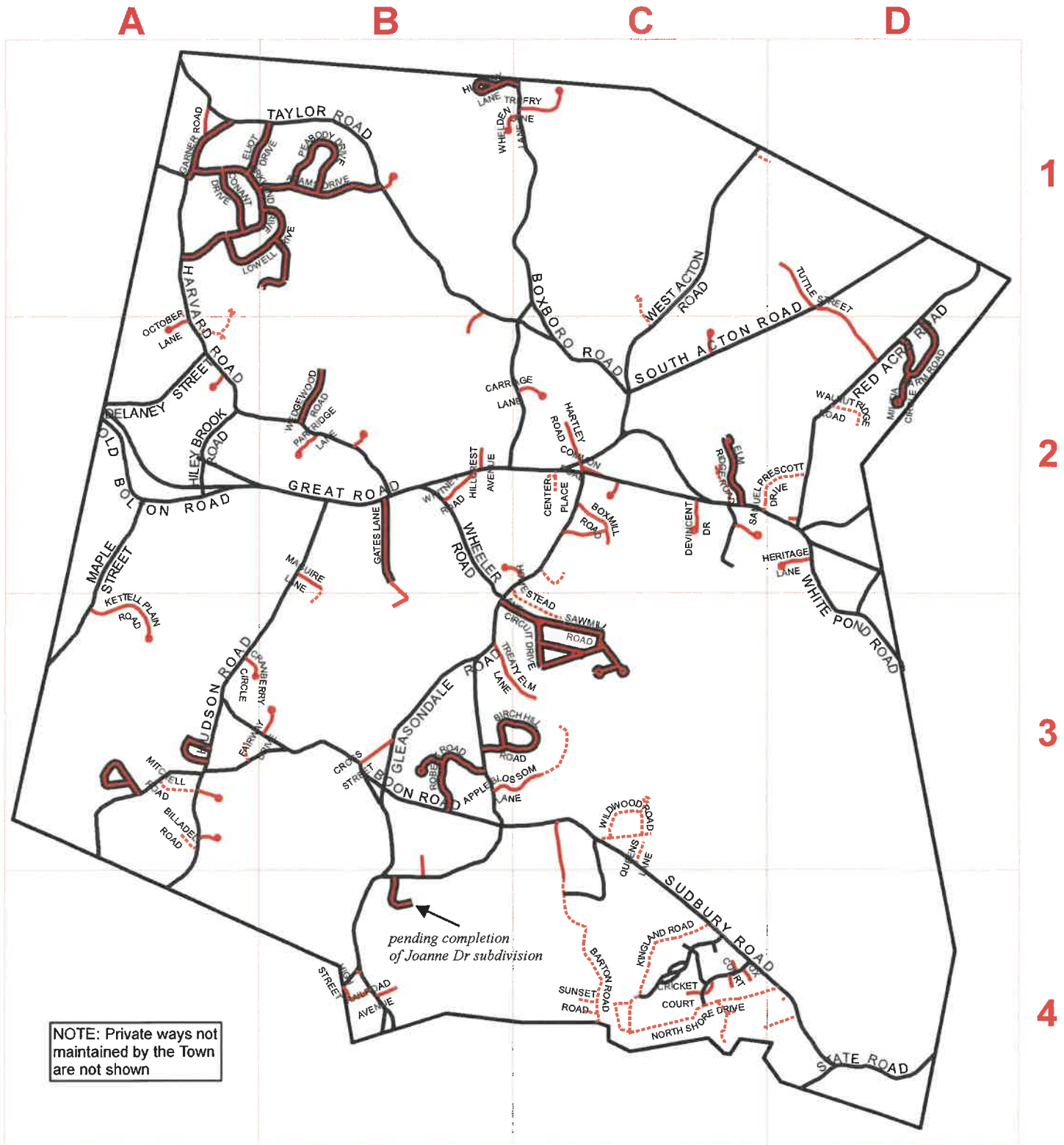
The TSAC is considering such a Safety Zone along Crescent Street, in the vicinity of Hartley Road, Library Hill Road and Town Center Park. Crescent Street includes three of the top 10 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan projects and is a heavily used pedestrian corridor, particularly school aged children.

Request for Support of Engineering/Design Funds for FY2023





On August 31, 2021 the TSAC approved a Stow Traffic Safety Policy that outlined the steps the Committee would take to evaluate, prioritize and mitigate the various traffic safety concerns in Stow. The TSAC is requesting support for a forthcoming ARPA request of \$15,000 to responsibly initiate evaluation of pressing transportation safety concerns in accordance with Traffic Safety Policy. Having funding focused on design/engineering would provide for procurement of traffic counts, peer review of potential safety measures and performance of other small scale engineering tasks throughout the year, allowing the Committee to be more responsive to residents and to queue up more sophisticated studies for upcoming Town Meeting consideration.

Roads Without Posted Speed Limits

February 2022



NOTE: Private ways not maintained by the Town are not shown

-  Thickly Settled, Public Way, No Posted Limit
-  Public Way, Posted Limit
-  Public Way, No Posted Limit
-  Private Way, No Posted Limit



0 1 Mile

Public Ways – No Posted Speed Limit

Street	Grid	Street	Grid	Street	Grid	Street	Grid
Adams Dr	A1, B1	Cross St	B3	Hillcrest Ave	B2	Pine Ridge Rd	C3
Apple Blossom Ln	B3, C3	Devincent Dr	C2	Indian Ridge Rd	A3	Railroad Ave	B4
Asa Whitcomb Wy	B1, B2	Dunster Dr	B1	Kerrington Wy	B2	Robert Rd	B3
Barton Rd	C3, C4	Edgehill Rd	A3	Kettell Plain Rd	A3	Robin Wood Ln	B3, B4
Birch Hill Rd	B3, C3	Eliot Dr	A1, B1	Kirkland Dr	A1, B1	Salamander Ln	C4
Box Mill Rd	C2	Elm Ridge Rd	C2	Lane's End	C2	Sandy Brook Dr	A3
Brook Mill Rd	B2, C2	Evelyn Rd	C3	Library Hill Rd	C2	Sawmill Rd	C3
Brookside Ave	C2	Fairway Dr	B3	Lowell Dr	A1, B1	Timberedge Rd	C3
Cardinal Ct	C4	Farm Rd	D2	Maguire Ln	B2	Treaty Elm Ln	B3, C3
Carriage Ln	C2	Forest Rd	B4	Marlborough St	B4	Trefry Ln	C1
Catherine Cir	B3	Fox Ct	C4	Maura Dr	B1	Tuttle Ln	D1, D2
Cider Mill Rd	A2	Frances Cir	A3	Middlemost Wy	C3	Wedgewood Rd	B2
Circuit Dr	B3, C3	Gardner St	D2	Militia Cir	D2	Wetherbee Ln	C2
Common Rd	C2	Garner Rd	A1	Ministers Wy	C2	Whelden Ln	B1, C1
Conant Dr	A1	Gates Ln	B2, B3	No Name Rd	A1	Whitney Rd	B2
Cranberry Cir	A3	Hartley Rd	C2	Nyra Rd	B3	Woodpecker Ct	C4
Cranberry Cir	A3	Heritage Ln	D2	October Ln	A2		
Crescent St	C2	Hickory Ln	B1, C1	Partridge Ln	B2		
Cricket Ct	C4	High St	B4	Peabody Dr	B1		

Private Ways – Town Maintained – No Posted Speed Limit

Street	Grid	Street	Grid
Apple Blossom Ln	C3	Lakewood Rd	C3
Barton Rd	C4	Laws Ln	C2
Billadell Rd	A3	Middlemost Wy	C3
Brandymeade Cir	C1, C2	Mitchell Rd	A3
Canterbury Rd	C1, D1	North Shore Dr	C4, D4
Center Place	C2	O'Connell Wy	C4
Davis Rd	C4	Queens Ln	C3
Dawes Rd	D4	Samuel Prescott Dr	D2, C2
Deer Field Ln	C2	Sawmill Rd	C3
Elizabeth Dr	B2, B3	Seven Star Ln	A3
Hale Rd	C4	Sunset Rd	C4
Hallocks Point Rd	C4, D4	Sylvan Dr	A1, A2
Homestead Ln	C2, C3	Thicket Cir	C3
Kingland Rd	C4	Walnut Ridge Rd	D2
Lakewood Rd	C3	Wildwood Rd	C3

Public Ways – Thickly Settled – No Posted Speed Limit

Street	Grid	Street	Grid
Adams Dr	A1, B1	Hickory Ln	B1, C1
Birch Hill Rd	B3, C3	Kirkland Dr	A1, B1
Catherine Cir	B3	Lowell Dr	A1, B1
Circuit Dr	B3, C3	Middlemost Wy	C3
Conant Dr	A1	Militia Cir	D2
Dunster Dr	B1	No Name Rd	A1
Edgehill Rd	A3	Nyra Rd	B3
Eliot Dr	A1, B1	Peabody Dr	B1
Elm Ridge Rd	C2	Pine Ridge Rd	C3
Evelyn Rd	C3	Robert Rd	B3
Farm Rd	D2	Sandy Brook Dr	A3
Forest Rd	B4	Sawmill Rd	C3
Garner Rd	A1	Timberedge Rd	C3
Gates Ln	B2	Wedgewood Rd	B2

Lighting for
Autism Awareness Month
(April)

Joyce Sampson

From: Melissa Whalen <mwhalen2995@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 1:14 PM
To: Kevin Whalen; danagreen4444@gmail.com; selectboard; Denise Dembkoski
Subject: Light It Up Blue April 2, 2022

Good afternoon-

We are writing to you to ask permission to use the Stow Community Center Parking lot and community center space (if it's allowed due to Covid restrictions) for our annual Light It up Blue event happening April 2nd, 7-9pm.

We have already reached out to Laura Greeno to save the indoor space from 6-9pm if allowed.

Our plan is to install the solar lights around the Community Center 2-4 days before April 2nd so they can charge previous to night fall on April 2nd. We have done approximately 10-12 lights each year depending on the weather.

Last year, we had great success with the drive through handing out sensory toys, and either a cupcake or bag of Chips and a bottle water for the kids on the car. As well as a few High School students dressed in blow up costumes for entertainment.

We would typically do a cake or cupcake cutting and have a speaker or two inside and present information regarding Autism and special need. Kate Hogan was there one or two years. Often police chief Mile Sallese has address community let them know go they ever needed anything or had any questions or concerns that they were always availed to talk.

Plus they always put up their blue light to support the evening. Which is very special

Typical years, we would have tables with representatives from Nashoba Best Buddies, local ABA companies, our Special Ed parents group (SEPAC), Unified Sports, and anything else that can help families with children on the spectrum.

We know that the things have been different the last few years, so we only are asking for permission for whatever is allowed at that time. However we hold like the indoors at very least change for volunteers to have access to the restrooms or place to warm up if it is freezing out. If restrictions change and we can do both that would be wonderful and we can update you of the plans. Look forward to hearing from you. Of you questions please reach out via email or better yet by phone.

Melissa's Cell is 617-803-0712

We think this is a great event that brings that helps bring our community together and has people asking why the guiding is blue... which is conversation starter.

Thank you

Melissa & Kevin Whalen

(Apologize for grammar or spelling- we wanted to get this out ASAP)

**Review & Approve
Select Board 2021
Annual Report**

2021 Annual Report from Select Board

As the pandemic continued, the volunteer Select Board is extremely grateful for the dedication of all our town employees, with particular thanks to Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski, and Select Board office staff Joyce Sampson and Phoebe Haberkorn. In spite of the challenges presented to us, we are committed to ensuring transparency, engagement, and respectful debate in all our dealings with residents and individuals that come before us. As described in the Town Charter, the Select Board “shall be deemed to be the chief executive officer of the town, . . . and shall serve as the chief policy making agency.” A small but historic note that as of May 2021, this Board is now officially called the Select Board.

The Board started the year chaired by Thomas Ryan who chose not to run for re-election, having served on the Board for 11 years, which followed seven years of service on the Finance Committee. His dedication to Stow was recognized at the Annual Town Meeting in May. Incumbent Ellen Sturgis was elected for a full three-year term, and Zack Burns was elected for his first term to the Board in May; Sturgis was elected chair and Megan Birch-McMichael elected Clerk.

2021 saw many significant personnel changes in the Town of Stow. After serving as interim Police Chief since May 2020, Michael Sallese was named the new Police Chief in January, having served on the Stow Police force for 23 years. Joyce Sampson joined long time Select Board office assistant Phoebe Haberkorn in March. Following approval at Town meeting, Dembkoski hired Dolores Hamilton as Stow’s first Assistant Town Administrator; Hamilton’s focus initially will be on updating our Human Resources policies and practices. And one of Stow’s native sons, John Paul “JP” Benoit, who has been an active part of the Fire Department for 35 years, was appointed our Fire Chief in November. Benoit stepped up, following the August retirement of Chief Joseph Landry, who started his career with Stow Fire in 1985 and had served as Chief since 2013. Craig Martin, a lifelong Stow resident, retired in July after 14 years as building commissioner, and was succeeded by Frank Ramsbottom, who started in July. We applaud Town Administrator Dembkoski for her prompt and exceptional hiring, creating a strong leadership team which is serving Stow with commitment and compassion.

Annual Town Meeting is where registered Stow voters are encouraged to listen and vote on important matters facing the Town, including approving an annual budget. It is only the voters that can impact the tax rate in town, through the Town Meeting process. Thanks to the extensive experience of our Town Administrator, the budget increased only 2.14%. Again, we appreciate the efforts of all of our staff in controlling costs, and making the most of our tax dollars. In addition to new capital items, the votes approved two significant conservation purchases: Hallock Point on Lake Boon was purchased to minimize new buildings on a fragile section of the Lake, and a conservation restriction was approved to cover the south course of the Stow Acres project. The Fall Special Town Meeting saw part two of Stow Acres, with the acquisition of the North Course, thereby completing the overall land deal. We applaud the incredible teamwork of the owners of Stow Acres along with our staff Kathy Sferra and Jesse Steadman, as well as the Stow Conservation Trust’s Bob Wilbur. The willingness of the golf course to work with the town has resulted in a once in a lifetime opportunity to preserve hundreds of acres of land,

minimize development, and will ultimately result in a significant increase in rental and affordable housing as well as additional recreation land.

In July, the Board held a strategic planning session with the goal of making an explicit workplan for the next 12 months. Recognizing that our goals intersect with the Town Administrator's work plan, we completed the TA evaluation in August and laid out explicit goals for her second full year in office. The Board gave Dembkoski high marks for her first year: in spite of arriving during the pandemic, she had made a significant impact, especially in the areas of policy clarification, technology and transparency. The Board praised her for being not only hardworking and strategic, but also showing enormous empathy toward the staff and issues arising in her first year. Among her many successes was reaching a legal settlement with the Collings Foundation, a suit that had been pending since 2015. The Board supported a resolution which was in the best interest of Stow and the Foundation's abutters.

Our combined workplan focused on six key areas: moving the Stow Acres project forward; establishing a Green Committee; implementation of human resource policies; addressing department structures, specifically in Highway and Facilities; addressing traffic safety needs and moving forward on Lower Village planning. By year's end, we had approved over 14 new policies, primarily in the area of policing and human resources. We commend Chief Sallesse for making it a priority to update police department policies and moving Stow toward department re-accreditation.

As 2021 came to a close, there were a number of projects for which the groundwork had been laid to bring significant opportunities to town. The October Town Meeting, in addition to the Stow Acres purchase, approved a zoning change which will allow for the Masters Academy, a for-profit school, to take over the Bose property. The Board created a Green Advisory committee which will work with Town committees on incorporating "green" design and plans in any future project and working with a consultant to create a Climate Action Plan. Minuteman Airfield, which is already home to a rather unique hydrogen design firm, received our support to apply for expansion plans, not for the runway, but to allow for more business space. Plantation II is finally moving forward, which will bring much needed elderly housing for fixed income individuals, and ARPA funds provide a rare opportunity to fund much needed infrastructure.

The Select Board added a Recognition section to its meetings, as an opportunity to recognize individuals and activities that we felt were newsworthy. In particular, we recognized the retirement from Town boards of Dorothy Sonnichsen, who has volunteered on many boards and organizations for years; and Rosemary Bawn, a long-serving library page as well as master quilter. We were also thrilled to announce that Krista Flinkstrom, a graduate of NRHS and senior at the US Military Academy, had been named a Rhodes Scholar. We encourage residents to submit requests for such recognitions as it sheds light on some of our many impressive residents, most likely not famous but valuable to our town.

No one could have imagined that we'd still be facing the challenges of a worldwide pandemic throughout 2021. Through the use of technology, attending board meetings has become far more accessible, and we encourage everyone to attend not just Select Board meetings, but any of the

committees for which you have an interest. We are always looking for new members of committees, and this is a great way to explore which one may be of interest to you. Thank you all for your input and support toward us and to our staff and volunteers.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen S. Sturgis, Chair
Megan Birch-McMichael, Clerk
Zackory Burns

Cortni Frecha
James H. Salvie

Review & Approve
the Capital ARPA list put forth by
the Town Administrator

ARPA Capital Projects		Total Allocated: \$500,000.00	
<u>Item</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Running Balance</u> <u>Totals</u>
Tasers	Police	\$33,000.00	\$500,000.00
Defibrillators	Fire	\$35,500.00	\$467,000.00
Hold for Defibrillators	Fire	\$49,500.00	\$431,500.00
Surge Protectors at Pompo	Facilities	\$57,500.00	\$382,000.00
Sudbury Bridge	Highway	\$85,000.00	\$374,000.00
Automated Gate at Pine Bluff	Recreation	\$30,000.00	\$289,000.00
Complete Streets Design	Planning	\$35,000.00	\$259,000.00
Body Worn Cameras	Police	\$36,315.00	\$224,000.00
Replacement Vehicle	Building	\$40,000.00	\$187,685.00
Asphalt Hotbox	Highway	\$60,000.00	\$147,685.00
Hartley Road Widening	School	\$42,000.00	\$87,685.00
			\$45,685.00
			\$503,815.00 **

** Will cover excess from TA ARPA funds, if need be

**Review the Existing Municipal
Employee Face Covering Policy
Enacted on 1/11/2022**



Town of Stow
Office of the
Town Administrator

380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775
Tel: 978-897-2927

Denise M. Dembkoski
Town Administrator
townadministrator@stow-ma.gov

Dolores Hamilton
Assistant Town Administrator
assttownadmin@stow-ma.gov

To: Select Board

From: Denise M. Dembkoski, Town Administrator

Re: 1/11/2022 Face Mask Policy for Employees

Date: February 15, 2022

I am requesting that the Board rescind the existing mask policy for employees effective 11:59pm on February 28, 2022. As of that date, the Governor and DESE has rescinded the statewide school mask mandate and will defer to the individual districts regarding any policies.

Town of Stow employees are at a 90% vaccination status. Additionally, I have not sent an employee for testing since mid-January, but prior to that, we were testing multiple employees per day. The Town has an overall vaccination rate of 83% for fully vaccinated residents and an additional 9% with a partial vaccination status. As of February 10th, the town's overall positivity rate for COVID is down to 8%. Using the 80% benchmark that has been widely accepted in Massachusetts, we exceed that on both employee status and resident vaccination status.

The Nashoba Regional School District is planning to rescind its school mask policy effective Feb. 28th. The Town of Bolton's town-wide mandate will end Feb 28th. The Town of Lancaster is reviewing their policy, but expects it will end in the upcoming weeks.

The following is a small list of cities/towns that have repealed their mask mandates:

Bolton – February 28, 2022	Danvers – February 10, 2022
Billerica – February 8, 2022	Northborough – February 9, 2022
Maynard – February 10, 2022	Sudbury – March 7, 2022
Worcester – February 7, 2022	Salem – March 8, 2022
Beverly – February 2, 2022	Wilmington – February 14, 2022 (for fully vaccinated only)

I know there are still employees who are uncomfortable and nervous and will continue to wear a mask and take additional precautions. Dolores and I will continue to address employee concerns and make reasonable accommodations, as needed with regards to the Coronavirus. But I believe we are past the holiday and Delta/Omicron rush and should begin to resume normal operations.

Should there be another variant or influx in cases, I would implement a temporary policy, as I've done throughout my time here to address COVID concerns.

I look forward to discussing this with you.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MARGRET R. COOKE
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
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ADVISORY REGARDING FACE COVERINGS
This Advisory has been updated as of February 14, 2021

The Department of Public Health urges all eligible residents to get vaccinated and stay up to date on COVID vaccinations, including when eligible for booster doses. Vaccination remains the most effective protection against serious illness, hospitalization, and death.

Recognizing that Massachusetts is a national leader in vaccine acceptance, and in light of recent positive progress on COVID-19 indicators, the Department of Public Health now advises that a fully vaccinated person should wear a mask or face covering when indoors (and not in your own home) if you have a weakened immune system, or if you are at increased risk for severe disease because of your age or an underlying medical condition, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease or is unvaccinated.

As a reminder, there are multiple conditions that may put someone at higher risk for severe disease; information on those conditions can be found on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website](https://www.cdc.gov/disease-control-and-prevention/). Your primary care physician can advise you whether you are at increased risk.

For individuals who are not fully vaccinated, it is important that you continue to wear a face covering or mask to help prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to other people.

Individuals who are considered close contacts or who have tested positive must follow the [isolation and quarantine guidance](#) which includes wearing a mask in public for 5 more days after they leave isolation or quarantine on day 5, regardless of vaccination status.

All people in Massachusetts (regardless of vaccination status) are **required to continue wearing face coverings in certain settings**, including transportation and health care facilities. Please see www.mass.gov/maskrules for a complete list of venues where face coverings have remained mandatory since May 29, 2021.

When you wear a face covering or cloth mask, it should:

- Be the highest quality mask that is comfortable and that you will wear consistently,
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face,
- Be secured with ties or ear loops,

- Include multiple layers of fabric,
- Allow for breathing without restriction, and
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

For more information, please refer to the CDC at: [Your Guide to Masks](#). This advisory may change based on public health data and further guidance from the CDC.

MINUTES

Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 8, 2022
Stow Town Building & Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Chair Ellen Sturgis, Megan Birch-McMichael, Zack Burns, Cortni Frecha, James Salvie, and Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski

Chair Sturgis called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

The Chair noted that all five Select Board members are present and 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.

Public Input:

Kelly Lawlor, 170 Hudson Road, thanked the Board for serving the Town and she hopes that they will continue to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in our Town by supporting Mr. Salvie's statement to acknowledge and honor Black History Month.

Board Member Comments:

Member Birch-McMichael said the Friends of the Library will be having a book sale the weekend of April 22-24. Books can be dropped off weekdays at the Randall Library or the Community Center during operating hours.

Chair Sturgis mentioned the article in the Council on Aging's February newsletter about the "very sweet love story" of Marty Sheehan and Chet Jacobs. Also, the February issue of the Stow Historical Society has a great story about the Mapledale Golf Course and its history. Stow TV has a program about it, too.

The information session for Masters Academy is tomorrow night, Wednesday, February 9 at 7 p.m.

The Nashoba Regional School District has a budget presentation on Wednesday, February 16 at 7 p.m. It is also posted as a Select Board meeting in case there is a quorum of members present.

The Town Clerk wants to remind everyone that the Town census is due and dog licenses are due.

Nomination papers are available now through March 30 for many positions and information will be on the Town's website and in the newspaper.

Member Burns noted that the Capital Planning Committee met last Thursday for its initial budget discussion. He and Mr. Salvie met for the Level 3 grievance and they are working on a draft response, with a deadline of Friday. They will provide an update to the Board after they've submitted the final response.

Recognition

Chair Sturgis wished a belated Happy 90th Birthday to Skip Warren, our local sheep farmer.

Town Administrator (TA) Report

- The TA acknowledged the great job done on the roads by the Highway Department over the last few weeks during the weather events.
- Black History Month began on February 1, and the Town's internal Diversity Inclusion & Awareness Team launched a weekly recognition on the Town's Facebook page.
- Stow's current COVID-19 case count is 89, which is a positivity rate of 12.19%; the number is slowly coming back down.
- The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) met and discussed three projects that requested funding.
- The Nashoba Regional School District is currently at a 4.67% increase over the Fiscal 2022 assessment, which is over \$1 million dollars. There are still many unknowns.
- Health insurance estimates have come in at an 8.5% increase for Fiscal 2023.

Statement in Support of Black History Month

Chair Sturgis thanked the people who wrote in to support the Board and this statement.

Board member Frecha moved to approve the statement of support of Black History Month. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Local Initiative Program (LIP) Applications for Stow Acres

Mark O'Hagan of MCO & Associates was present via Zoom.

Mr. O'Hagan said that what was proposed and presented at the public information meetings is the same proposal in the LIP Applications. He needs to submit the LIPs to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to receive their support. The information is still conceptual. The project consists of 189 units comprised of three different types of housing: 40 rental cottages, 25 apartments for age 62+ residents, and 124 detached homes for sale. Each type of housing requires its own LIP application. Of the 189 units, 96 will qualify towards the Town's subsidized housing inventory.

Chair Sturgis said there are letters of support from the Stow Conservation Trust and from the Town Planner, Conservation Director, and SMAHT (Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust). She added that the Green Advisory Committee has asked about solar components. Mr. O'Hagan said he has spoken with some of the members of the committee and there will be a plan for solar on an optional basis.

Board member Frecha moved to approve, and authorize the Chair to sign, the LIP applications for Stow Acres, as presented at this meeting by Mark O'Hagan and MCO & Associates, and further moved to authorize the Chair to sign the Board's letter in support of the project to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Deficit Spending for the Snow & Ice Account

This is precautionary in case the Town exceeds the amount in the account before the next Select Board meeting.

Pursuant to Mass General Law Chapter 44, section 31D, Board member Frecha moved to allow deficit spending of the fiscal year 2022 Snow & Ice account. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Recognizing Diversity and Awareness Topics

The Board liked the model of what was done for Black History Month, with the Board supporting work being done by the TA's Diversity Inclusion and Awareness Team and the Board presenting a statement which highlighted educational and commemorative events and facts. It recognized the current state of affairs, allowed for conversations on the topic, and educated many in the community especially via the Facebook posts.

The Board discussed having residents bring topics to them and then the Board would vote on statements of support. The Board would need the information at least a month or two in advance in order to respond properly with a discussion and a vote. For other topics that the Board is not focusing on as a month of awareness, recognition could be made in the Board Member Comments section of the meetings.

Member Birch-McMichael wants an agenda item for planning months of awareness included in a March meeting so the Board can decide which ones to select and how they can work with other community partners and amplify what is already being done.

In response to questions about the internal team, the TA said the purpose of the team she put together is to focus on the topic of recognizing diversity and awareness. She deals with the departments, what they are doing, and how they will facilitate the message for three or four months during the year regarding diversity. An enormous amount of time was spent on Black History Month. This process may not be carried through to each month chosen. The next focus is Pride Month. She asked that folks be patient as they maneuver through this.

Board member Burns asked the Town Administrator to provide an outlook and update on these initiatives during her TA Report, as a way to connect and communicate with folks and mitigate any criticism.

Update Records Access Officers (RAOs)

Board member Frecha moved to approve the updated list of Records Access Officers (RAOs) as presented at this meeting. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Debt Exclusion Ballot Question – Randall Library Renovation

A draft was presented to the Board, and by statute, a dollar amount does not appear on a ballot question for a debt exclusion. The Warrant will have the amounts listed, including the maximum amount offset by any CPC funds, fundraising, and trust fund allocations. The remaining amount is what would be borrowed through the debt exclusion. The project will take a couple of years, and funds are borrowed as needed. Leading up to Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election, information regarding the tax rate impact and what a ‘yes’ vote means and what a ‘no’ vote means will be forthcoming.

Board member Frecha moved to authorize a debt exclusion ballot question for the Randall Library renovation. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Representation for Nashoba Area Police Anti-Crime Task Force

This is to authorize a multiple representation disclosure that would allow KP Law to represent the Town. The Task Force is primarily a collaborative information project, not a pooling of funds.

Board member Frecha moved to allow KP Law to represent the Town of Stow with regards to the Nashoba Area Police Anti-Crime Task Force, and to approve and sign the Determination form provided at this meeting. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Meeting Minutes

Member Birch-McMichael asked that her name be corrected on page 3 in the “adjournment” section.

Board member Frecha moved to accept the meeting minutes of the January 25, 2022 meeting as amended. Board member Birch-McMichael seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Correspondence

There was an inquiry regarding SpringFest for this year. There are currently only two members on the five-member committee. Chair Sturgis said that if anyone is interested in joining the SpringFest Committee to contact the Select Board office.

Adjournment

At 8:45 p.m., Board member Frecha moved to adjourn. Board member Birch-McMichael 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.