



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF SELECTMAN MINUTES March 16, 2016 – 7:00 PM Town Hall

***Vision Statement** – The Town of Ashland will be a prosperous and fiscal sound community with a full range of housing, business, cultural, educational and recreational opportunities in a safe and attractive environment for residents and visitors.*

Call Meeting to Order

Joe Magnani called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Present at the meeting were Chair Joe Magnani, Vice-Chair Steve Mitchell, Yolanda Greaves, Rob Scherer, Carl Hakansson and Town Manager Michael Herbert.

Joe Magnani announced that the meeting is being taped and broadcast live on WACA.

Joe Magnani led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizen's Participation

Robertta Soolman, 28 Woodridge Ln., asked the Board when comments concerning the Rail Transit District will be allowed.

Skip Peterson reminded the Board that today March 16th is the town's birthday.

Scheduled Appointments

Eagle Scouts

Joe Magnani welcomed representatives from Scout Troop 2 who are working on, or have recently completed Eagle Scout projects. Scout Matthew Franklin reported that he built two benches for Marathon Park with materials supplied by local businesses. Scout Dan Cunis reported that he made color coded trail makers from donated materials and installed them in Warren Woods. Scout Ricky explained that he has plans to make a bench to be installed in front of the Ashland Federated Church. Scout Jacob Sewell explained that he is in the process of repainting roughly 500 storm drains throughout the town.

Skip Peterson, Assistant Scout Master of Troop 2, provided an update on the requirements prospective Eagle Scouts must be complete before their 18th birthday in order to earn the designation. Yolanda Greaves asked how many Eagle Scouts have there been in Ashland. Mr. Peterson responded that since 1964 approximately 26 boys have completed the process.

FY15 Audit

Karen Burke, representative from Melanson and Heath, provided an overview of the town's FY15 audited financial statements. Ms. Burke reported that the audit went extremely well, as there were no significant audit entries and the biggest estimates noted were the net OPEB obligation of \$15.9 million and the implementation of GASB 68 that is approximately \$25 million. Ms. Burke reviewed the long- and short-term perspective financials.

Steve Mitchell asked about relevant rating agency benchmarks. Ms. Burke explained that one favorable benchmark is evidence of a large percentage of debt service future payments paid within 10 years, and the

town's standing against this target is very favorable, since approximately 90% of Ashland's outstanding bonds will be paid off within a 10-year range.

Michael Herbert asked for an explanation of an unfunded liability. Ms. Burke explained that actuaries estimate future costs of retirement benefits for all members active in the retirement system and the town's unfunded liability assessment is those benefits to be paid within a certain scheduled timeframe.

Yolanda Greaves asked if the town should consider moving monies from the OPEB stabilization fund to the OPEB trust. Michael Herbert responded that doing so in the fall may be advantageous.

Joe Magnani asked for an example of a material weakness. Ms. Burke responded that an example would be a payroll function with no controls, such as checks and balances.

Rob Scherer asked for an example of charges to revolving funds. Michael Herbert explained that the town periodically reviews opportunities to charge off certain municipal costs to revolving fund accounts and the majority of revolving accounts are in the school department, such as school bus and recreation fees budgeted by the Assistant Superintendent, based on the previous year's receipts.

Impact Study and RTD Update

Lloyd Geisinger, President of Thorndike Development, appeared before the Board and representatives from Campanelli Construction were also present. Mr. Geisinger explained that approval of the site plan modifications was obtained from the Planning Board and filed with the Town Clerk. In addition, the Conservation Commission also approved the project and issued an Order of Conditions and a Storm Water Management Permit. Mr. Geisinger reported that they are scheduled to close on the property on April 29th.

Mr. Geisinger explained that MEPA recommended filing an expanded Environment Notification Form (ENF) with an emphasis on traffic, given the MBTA road is a state maintained road and therefore an access permit would be required via a single EIR filing. The EIR comment period ends April 8th and the expectation is to report the EIR in the 3rd week of April.

Mr. Geisinger reported that development plan still includes 398 apartments arranged in 9 buildings. The condition to provide shuttle service to the commuter rail was added in perpetuity to encourage residents to use the service instead of driving to and parking their cars at the rail station.

Carl Hakansson asked how many residents are projected to use the commuter rail on a daily basis. Mr. Geisinger explained that approximately 15%-25% of the population is expected to use the rail service.

Mr. Hakansson asked and Mr. Geisinger responded that sewer connection permits triggered the additional EIR. Mr. Hakansson asked why the EIR did not include the impact the blasting plan would have on the superfund landfill cap and the culvert. Mr. Geisinger responded that the EIR scope and process focused on traffic, based on the required access permits. The Board stated its opinion that blasting could affect the cap and culvert and the potential should be included in impact study. Mr. Geisinger stated the blasting plan will be completed in time for the public forum, and he is also in favor of extending the comment period.

Rob Scherer asked about pedestrian and bicycle access around the development. Mr. Geisinger reviewed the planned walkways and easement. In addition, the Board suggested the project consider arranging for the MWRTA bus service for the development.

Mr. Magnani opened the meeting for public comment concerning the project.

Kate Jurczyk, 11 Rodman Rd., spoke in favor of making sure the comment period for the EIR permit is after the public hearing.

Roberta Soolman, 28 Woodridge Ln., questioned why DEP, MEPA and EPA have not raised concern regarding the superfund impact and are not requiring appropriate due diligence. Ms. Soolman also asked when the public forum and comment period will be scheduled.

Jim Hanna asked Mr. Geisinger to locate the MEPA study that was completed years ago that detailed what activities are allowed in the vicinity of the superfund site and culvert.

Craig Seymour, Managing Principal of RKG Associates, described the market feasibility study that was previously done on the RTD. Mr. Seymour suggested completing a development model that will look at all types of uses and analyzes the fiscal viability and impacts, and focus on the most realistic development from a market perspective. Mr. Seymour explained that capacity planning, the associated cost parameters and the bearers of those costs would be included in the model.

Mr. Geisinger reiterated that the focus of the report, as contracted with the Board, is the fiscal impacts. While sewer, water and traffic are out of scope, it may be possible to look into expand the scope a bit to accommodate the Board's request for basic information regarding those points.

Joe Magnani concluded that Mr. Geisinger and Mr. Seymour will contact MEPA to extend the comment period until April 15th and the State of the Town Report will be presented on April 12th at the Ashland High School and will include the RTD public forum.

Acceptance of Minutes

Yolanda Greaves made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 17, 2016. This motion was seconded Rob Scherer by with a vote of 4-0-1 (Magnani-absent).

Selectman Appointments

Capital Improvement Committee – Resignation

Yolanda Greaves made a motion to accept the resignation of Michael Herbert from the Capital Improvement Committee. This motion was seconded by Steve Mitchell with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

Mr. Scherer suggested that the Board review the Committee's role and scope and consider having resident's make-up the Committee and town staff participate to make recommendations and provide input.

Steven Morgan, CIC member, asked for more diversity on the Committee and feels the Committee's scope is well defined in the bylaw and should stay as is.

Mr. Mitchell suggested the Board schedule a meeting with the Committee to review the charter and to better understand its recent struggles.

Capital Improvement Committee – Appointment

Yolanda Greaves made a motion to appointment of Brittany Iacaponi to the Capital Improvement Committee with an expiration of 8/31/16. This motion was seconded by Steve Mitchell with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

Old / New Business

Planning Board – Resignation

Yolanda Greaves made a motion to accept the resignation of Vanessa Alison Charles from the Planning Board effective May 21, 2016 with thanks for her service. This motion was seconded by Steve Mitchell with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

Board of Selectman Scholarship

The Board of Selectman Scholarship is given to two Ashland residents graduating from high school and going onto college. The deadline for applications is May 16, 2016. Applications will be posted online and the schools will be notified.

Yolanda Greaves and Steve Mitchell will serve on the committee.

Town Clerk – Voting Machines

Yolanda Greaves made a motion to discontinue the use of the AccuVote voting machines effective immediately and approve the use of the ImageCast voting machines effective immediately. This motion was seconded by Steve Mitchell with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

Surplus/Deficit Policy

Michael Herbert explained that the policy will establish a formula that the three committees and the administration will use to review their budgets. FinCom and the School Committee have voted to approve the policy.

Steve Mitchell made a motion to approve Surplus/Deficit Policy as presented and authorize the Chair to sign on the Board's behalf. This motion was seconded by Yolanda Greaves with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

Progress on Short-Term Downtown Items

Michael Herbert reviewed the plan to improve the appearance of the traffic medians in town, such as painting the concert and adorning planters. In addition, sixteen hours of summer help was added through the FY17 budget to address cleanup tasks in town. Mr. Herbert explained the implementation will begin at the end of the month and run through July.

The Board will communicate the date when the current wooden signs will no longer be allowed and provide guidance regarding the new requirements for traffic island design and materials.

Skate Park

Michael Herbert provided an update concerning the relocation of the skate park to Cherry St. and Summer St. The CPC will be required to put on a Warrant Article to request funding. The proposed skate park design will include input from young residents who will potentially use the park.

Curbing and Flower Wall

Carl Hakansson reported that an estimate was obtained for the flower wall site cleanup and installation costs, and an application was submitted for BAA funding. Mr. Hakansson explained that Cathy Rooney and Lois Bennett are collaborating on the installation plan, and given that CSX is likely owns the fence were the wall will be installed; the Board should inform them of this plan.

Mr. Hakansson also submitted a BAA application for Green Square and the War Memorial general repairs. In addition an estimate was requested for repairs to 125 Front St. curbing from the library to the bank, and a BAA application was also submitted for this effort. Each of these grant requests will come before the Board in the near future.

Yolanda Greaves made a motion to continue tonight's BOS meeting beyond 10PM. This motion was seconded by Steve Mitchell with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

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This item is tabled until an upcoming meeting.

Land Stewardship Budget Request

Carl Hakansson explained that the annual request for an appropriation for the Northeastern mitigation funds for land stewardship activities at Warren Woods are before the Board, including a request for \$2,800 for brush hogging, \$2,000 for mowing and \$2,000 for an additional mower. Yolanda Greaves requested an update on the fund's balance. Mr. Magnani asked if a fence barrier is needed to control parking. Mr. Hakansson replied that a fence may negatively impact the pastoral feel and also may inhibit bringing maintenance equipment on site.

Steve Mitchell made a motion to appropriate \$6,800 for the Warren Woods mitigation fund for the Land Stewardship budget request as submitted. This motion was seconded by Yolanda Greaves with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

Town Naming Policy

Steve Mitchell explained that an effort is underway to recognize the past Selectman and Town Clerks. Mr. Magnani suggested including town department heads and employees who have worked at the Town Hall over the years. Yolanda Greaves asked Steve Mitchell to edit the old policy with the recommended changes for the Board's review. Mr. Mitchell asked for their Board feedback in order to respond to the request from the Lions to recognize former Town Clerks.

Ashland Youth Baseball and Softball Annual Parade

Yolanda Greaves made a motion to approve the annual AYBS parade on April 30, 2016 starting at 9:00 AM at Stone Park and ending at Gryncel Park. This motion was seconded by Steve Mitchell with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

Town Manager Reports

Snow and Ice Deficit

Michael Herbert reported that this year's snow costs were \$350,000, the budget amount was \$285,000 and the deficit will be taken care of through the reserve budget. Mr. Herbert suggested adjusting the future budget higher, due to the increase costs of salt and contractor's fees.

FY17 Budget Update

Michael Herbert reported that budget preparations are underway in anticipation of the TriBoard meeting on March 30, 2016 at 6:30 PM. Mr. Herbert reviewed the changes as compared to last year's budget, such as the use of the operational override and tax revenue. The Board will discuss at a later meeting the impact on the five-year plan if an override stabilization fund is not established and the full levy is not realized.

Mr. Herbert also explained that the FY16 cherry sheet numbers are still being used, and the revised indirect cost calculation changes that include an increase the percentage of direct charges. Mr. Herbert reported that the water enterprise fund includes an increase of \$95,000, the solid waste enterprise fund increased \$50,000 and an opportunity to renegotiate the contract is coming up, and the Field Management fund increased \$2,000. Yolanda Greaves asked Mr. Herbert to provide an update on the Field Stabilization Fund balance.

Mr. Herbert will revise the plan based on the Board discussion and feedback in time for the TriBoard meeting.

2016 Annual Town Meeting – Warrant Update

Michael Herbert provided the Board with the latest copy of the Warrant, including approximately 25 Articles that will go forward. The first night meeting is May 4th and the second meeting for the regular general articles will be held on May 25th.

Steven Morgan appeared before the Board and raised points addressed at the CIC meeting, including Articles the CIC put forth for Town Meeting.

Tax Relief

Michael Herbert explained that he has worked with Rich Ball from the Assessor's Office to try to spread the word about Tax Relief. They decided that having Rich go to the Senior Center to explain the program would be helpful. Rich will be at the Community Center on March 28 and will continue to do outreach there on a regular basis.

Town Manager Forum Recap

Michael Herbert explained that he held a Town Manager Forum on Saturday which was attended by a small group. Michael explained that some great questions came up and Michael explained the next forum would be held in 3 months.

Board Reports

Carl Hakansson

Nothing

Rob Scherer

Rob updated the board on the bike trail. He thanked David Manugian for his assistance looking at the area of the High School to find the best way to carry the path thru that area.

Yolanda Greaves

Steve Mitchell

Joe Magnani

Adjournment

Yolanda Greaves made a motion to adjourn. This motion was seconded by Steve Mitchell with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.