

## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Ms. O’Keeffe at 6:30 p.m.

### ATTENDANCE

Present: Stephanie O’Keeffe, Anne Awad, Diana Stein, Alisa Brewer (6:44)

Absent: Gerry Weiss

Town Manager Larry Shaffer

Planning Director Jonathan Tucker

Walter Wolnik, Jim Wald, Vince O’Connor

### OPENING REMARKS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. O’Keeffe announced that she would serve as Chair in Mr. Weiss’ absence, and that he would be present for the Town Meeting session to follow. She also announced: that Select Board meetings would resume at Town Hall on Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>; that the Planning Board’s Zoning Subcommittee would hold a forum to review zoning priorities and receive citizen input on Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall; and that the 2009 Fourth of July Parade will be discussed at the Monday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> Select Board meeting. She congratulated the Amherst Regional High School softball team for its Division 1 championship, and the boys’ and girls’ ultimate Frisbee teams for their State championships.

Ms. Stein inquired about Town officials following up with the Department of Agricultural Resources regarding herbicide application near sensitive areas along the railroad tracks, as per a letter received in the Select Board packets. Mr. Shaffer will look into that.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Walter Wolnik suggested posting Select Board packet materials on the Town web site, and utilizing the Town Room’s digital projector to display documents and motions during meetings, in order to better inform those following the proceedings.

### SELECT BOARD’S ACTION

#### **Street Closing – Block Party**

**VOTED** 3 in favor, 2 absent (O’Keeffe, Stein, Awad supporting; Weiss and Brewer absent) to approve a street closing of Blue Hills Road on Saturday, July 26, 2008 from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (rain date: July 27, 2008) for a block party.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

**VOTED** 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, 1 absent (O’Keeffe, Stein, Awad supporting; Brewer abstaining; Weiss absent) to approve the minutes of the May 19th meeting as amended.

**VOTED** 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, 1 absent (O’Keeffe, Stein, Awad supporting; Brewer abstaining; Weiss absent) to approve the minutes of the May 21st meeting.

**VOTED** 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent (O’Keeffe, Stein, Awad, Brewer supporting; Weiss absent) to approve the minutes of the May 28th meeting as amended.

**VOTED** 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, 1 absent (O’Keeffe, Stein, Awad supporting; Brewer abstaining; Weiss absent) to approve the minutes of the June 2nd meeting as amended.

### **MMA Letter Opposing Pension COLA Increases**

Ms. Brewer said she was waiting to hear back from State Senator Stan Rosenberg and State Representative Ellen Story regarding COLA increases for municipal pensions included in the budget passed by the State Senate. She said the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) had written a letter to legislators opposing the increase due to the additional expense it would impose on local budgets, and she had sought our legislators’ opinions on whether the Select Board should take action, such as endorsing the MMA letter. Ms. Stein said she would also try to contact Sen. Rosenberg and Rep. Story.

**No action taken.**

## **LICENSES AND PERMITS**

### **Special Wine and Malt Liquor Licenses – University of Massachusetts**

**VOTED** 4 in favor, 1 absent (O’Keeffe, Stein, Awad, Brewer supporting; Weiss absent) in one vote to approve four Special Wine and Malt liquor license for the University of Massachusetts for events to be held:

June 17, 2008 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on the Library lawn for a dinner;

June 18, 2008 from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the Berkshire Dining Hall for a reception;

June 23, 2008 from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Fine Arts Center Atrium for a dinner;

June 27, 2008 from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the Fine Arts Center Atrium for a dinner.

## **TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mr. Shaffer provided a handout and made a presentation on economic development goals and strategies. Goals include: increasing the town’s total taxable assessed value by 1% per year over ten years by increasing new growth from 1.5% to 2.5% and developing strategies consistent with the Master Plan. Strategies include: forming partnerships with Amherst College, Hampshire College, UMass, the business community and others; identifying land parcels that meet criteria for large-scale projects; creating a job description for an Economic Development Director; and connecting with the private sector to determine what the Town can do to help businesses develop and grow here. He described the Patterson property in North Amherst and the proposal for a transferable option that would give the Town three years to seek an appropriate project for the site. Town Meeting would need to approve the option, which would require an annual payment for three years. The Town would not purchase the land; the option would allow the Town to lease the land, and to transfer that ability to another entity. Details of the proposal are complex and still being worked out, but include elements such as an 80-year lease with options to purchase, and life estate for the property owner.

Mr. Shaffer discussed some specifics of the property: it is primarily zoned as Professional Research Park (PRP); there are no plans to seek zoning changes or allow an outlet on Montague Road; if an agreement is reached with the Pattersons, agreements will be sought with owners of abutting parcels on the north and south ends of the property to create roughly 40 acres of space that would support up to 500,000 square feet of development. He said he would seek a project requiring a minimum of 250,000 square feet. Infrastructure costs are estimated as high as \$12 million, but the actual amount would depend on the specific project. He noted that the plan has been favorably received by many, including State entities who believe it is a good candidate for Chapter 43D grants and other State assistance. He said that if Town Meeting doesn’t approve the proposal, it would mean that economic development will need to be pursued differently, such as through redevelopment of downtown and of brownfield sites, both of which he said would be more complicated.

Ms. Brewer said it was important to make this project work, and said that the Master Plan process indicated broad community support for development in the PRP zones.

## **WARRANT ARTICLES**

### **Article 20, Part B – CPA Historic Preservation Main Street Hills Mansion Lots**

Previously discussed at the April 23<sup>rd</sup>, May 28<sup>th</sup> and June 2<sup>nd</sup> meetings. Mr. Tucker said the appraisal figures for the property had come in at \$135,000 per lot, less than the original \$200,000 estimate, and that the motion on the article had been changed accordingly. He said the property owners were no longer interested in selling only one lot and would accept \$270,000 from the Town for both, while pursuing private donations to increase the total. He said that Amherst qualifies for the highest level of self-help grant, and if approved, it would fund 70% of the total – \$189,000 – and that Community Preservation Act funds would be used for the remaining \$81,000. He said that language in the donation agreement would be altered to reflect its application to both lots, rather than one or both.

Vince O'Connor expressed concern about the motion's borrowing language being too broad, and perhaps referring to an incorrect section of the Massachusetts General Laws. Mr. Shaffer and Mr. Tucker said that neither was the case.

The Select Board considered the new motion and determined that no action was required. The April 23<sup>rd</sup> unanimous vote to recommend Article 20, Part B would stand.

**No action taken.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

*Approved at the June 16, 2008 Select Board meeting.*