

MINUTES

Members Present: Stephanie O’Keeffe, Alisa Brewer, Aaron Hayden, Diana Stein and Jim Wald

Members Absent:

Staff: Acting Town Manager Dave Ziomek

Other participants: Sam Andrews, Rob Kusner, Ellie Manire-Gatti, Stan Maron, Carol Gray, Reikka Simula Gooden; Bob Romer, Steve Connor (Veterans Agent) Julie Federman (Health Director), Jennifer Gundersen (APD Captain)

Meeting called to order by Ms. O’Keeffe at 6:35 p.m.

Public Comment

Sam Andrews spoke in favor of maintaining the Committee On Homelessness because it is as important as other committees. Rob Kusner spoke in favor of maintaining the COH because it was needed when the Select Board formed it several years ago and remains necessary. Ellie Manire-Gatti spoke in favor maintaining the COH because the committee cared deeply for the needs of the homeless. Stan Maron spoke in favor of maintaining the COH and suggested that more criteria was needed to regulate shelter visitation by COH members. Carol Gary spoke in favor of maintaining the COH because it is important to maintain citizen control and committees shouldn't be penalized for being zealous. Reikka Simula Gooden spoke in favor of maintaining the COH because she believed it provided oversight the Town neglected to provide.

Christopher Lyons inquired about the status of his taxi driver application for Celebrity Cab, which he had been told was ready for approval. Lacking information, the Select Board was unable to act and indicated the office would contact him.

Parking/Street Closure Requests

VOTED unanimously to approve the reservation of parking spaces on the West side of Boltwood Avenue and the East side of South Pleasant Street from Spring Street to College Street on September 17, 2011 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. for the Stavros Center for Independent Living’s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Celebration.

Ceremony to Honor Amherst's African American Civil War Veterans: Bob Romer and Veterans’ Services Director Steve Connor reported on plans for a ceremony to be held on Sunday, September 18 at 2:00 p.m., rain or shine, at West Cemetery to honor five veterans. They spoke of the circumstances and research that led to making this possible. The ceremony will include descendants of the soldiers.

Committee Structure for Housing/Homelessness Issues

Building on past discussions, the Board reiterated the key elements identified as areas needing to be covered by the Town in addressing its role in homelessness issues: 1) review and feedback on Shelter RFP; 2) mechanism for continued collection and processing of feedback on Shelter operations; 3) focus on assuring future emergency shelter while needed; 4) focus on securing future permanent shelter; 5) focus on permanent housing; 6) focus on transitional support necessary for successful permanent housing; 7) focus on Regional efforts and how Amherst fits into that. The Board discussed structures to best address those elements, quickly agreeing to the concept of a model that incorporates element #s 3 - 7 into a committee that deals with sheltering and housing issues, working with a draft Ms. O’Keeffe presented that collected the elements of previous discussions and documents, particularly Ms. Brewer’s document and draft charge of 7/25/11. More discussion focused on element #s 1 - 2, and how to have a body that is available to management and the team as a resource, and to the community as a point of contact for specific needs: RFP review, refining report data requests, relaying questions or concerns, as well as to help deal with occasional problems as appropriate, being mindful of privacy, etc. A working proposal based on previous discussions and Ms. Stein’s recommendation of 7/29/11 was drafted with the goal to assist Town staff and not to fill an oversight role. The Board coalesced around the idea of a body that meets formally a couple of times per year, but is mostly available to management as a group or as individuals, if and as needed, using the Water Supply Protection Committee as a reasonable analogy.

Board agreed without formal vote to pursue a plan to clarify intent and charge details for two new bodies: a committee tasked with comprehensive assessment and planning of Town sheltering and housing issues; and a committee to meet occasionally and as-needed to assist Town staff's emergency shelter management team with issues such as RFQ plans, refining requested operator report data, and other issues that might arise. Ms. O'Keeffe will work on draft charges for consideration at the next meeting.

VOTED unanimously to dissolve the Committee on Homelessness and the Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee, effective immediately.

Town Manager's Report

As Acting Town Manager, Mr. Ziomek reported on the following:

Update: Town Manager Musante is home from the hospital and progress continues. Ms. O'Keeffe added praise for how well everyone stepped up in his absence, praising Town staff in general and thanking Mr. Ziomek, Chief Livingstone and his Assistant Debra Roussel, among those who had been particularly helpful to her since the accident.

Temporary Construction Detour: Country Corners Road will be closed at West Street from 9/12 to 9/30 as part of the Atkins Corner reconstruction work; the area was becoming a dangerous detour for construction and other traffic, following a short-term detour necessitated by the accelerated pace and other factors of the work. Superintendent of Public Works Guilford Mooring has informed the neighborhood, as many of the residents had requested such a closure from the Public Works Commission.

MassWorks Grant: Application will be submitted this week for Pine Street/North Amherst infrastructure improvement project.

CDBG Process: Requests For Proposals (RFP) for 2012 are due September 15. A hearing on applications will be held September 20, followed by a public meeting to discuss them on September 22. Recommendations to the Town Manager are expected to occur in mid-October. Ms. Brewer noted that Amherst would receive \$900,000 rather than \$1 million this year, and that the reductions will come from administration, capital and social services categories proportionally.

Shelter RFQ Update: One application was received by the Request for Proposal deadline from the new local non-profit Craig's Doors. Staff will review the proposal over the next few days to see if it is complete and meets requirements.

Annual Town Report

VOTED unanimously to approve the FY 11 Annual Report for the Select Board, as presented by Chair Stephanie O'Keeffe, dated September 12, 2011 and titled "Draft 2."

Minutes

Board members were requested to submit suggested edits in "track changes" mode, for easier comparison to the original document.

VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of January 24, 2011, February 7, 2011, April 4, 2011, June 13, 2011, June 27, 2011, July 05, 2011, and July 18, 2011, as amended.

Taxi Licenses

VOTED unanimously to approve the new Taxi Driver/Chauffer License for Cheikth Oussman Diedhiou, 13 Arlington Street, Easthampton, MA on behalf of Taxi Express.

VOTED unanimously to approve the new Taxi Driver/Chauffer License for Kristie A. Speck, 101 State Street, Amherst, MA on behalf of Green Transportation.

VOTED unanimously to approve the new Taxi Driver/Chauffer License for Christian Kayego, 59 Skyline Drive, West Springfield, MA on behalf of Ziqui Taxi Company.

VOTED unanimously to approve the new Taxi Driver/Chauffer License for Sarah Hickey, 27 Montague Road, Amherst, MA on behalf of Tik Tak Taxi.

Member Reports

Confirming Liaison Assignments: Mr. Hayden agreed to accept Zoning Subcommittee upon Ms. Stein's surrender and Mr. Hayden relinquished Kanegasaki Sister City Committee to Ms. Stein. Mr. Hayden also agreed to accept responsibility for Recycling & Refuse Management Committee, which previously had no liaison.

Liaison issues: Ms. Stein suggested a letter be sent to committees without liaisons informing them that the Select Board is available as an information resource, or to attend meetings on an as-needed basis to deal with issues like preparing for a Town Meeting article, or some similar need. It was agreed that providing them with such a point of contact would be useful. Mr. Hayden agreed to draft a letter on behalf of Ms. O'Keeffe, for her signature.

Recent activity: Ms. Stein reported on attendance at various events including the International Student reception, with Ms. O'Keeffe and Mr. Musante on September 1; the First Day Celebration with Ms. O'Keeffe and Mr. Hayden also on September 1; a new school year assembly with Ms. Brewer on September 2, which brought forth high praise from both for student performance; and a ZBA administrative meeting with Ms. O'Keeffe on September 6, 2011.

Joint Capital Planning Committee: Ms. Stein reported on the first meeting of the FY 13 budget process. In FY 12, capital comprises 6.45% of the property tax levy, which is only 3% of the budget. Finance Director Sandy Pooler reports that is a little low compared to comparable communities. Some departments have not fully expended past years' capital funds and while often for good reason, there is some concern a project might fall through the cracks. Mr. Wald expanded on this aspect, indicating that the money is either ultimately expended for the purpose approved, or else reverts back to free cash as unspent funds. He reminded the Board that JCPC is not meant to be an oversight group, but will monitor past allocations. The group's main goal moving forward is to increase the percentage secured for capital.

Town Commercial Relations Committee: Mr. Wald indicated the group wishes to stay in existence, however not meet as regularly. Their goal is to bring forth a proposal for charge changes, including membership size.

Historical Commission: Considered and did not support an application from Hampshire Council of Governments for a Community Preservation Act grant to help fund restorations to the county court house in Northampton. The COG will be informed of the status of their request and other opportunities in the CPAC process.

Design Review Board: Mr. Wald indicated the group is continuing their work, reviewing signs, etc.

Recycling & Refuse Management Committee: Mr. Hayden reported the group is dealing with issues associated with the transfer station closing a year earlier than originally planned

Amherst Redevelopment Authority: Mr. Hayden reported that the group is working on final recommendations drawn from the visioning process and how the focus of the development area shifted closer to downtown with the expectation of funding requests for studies at Fall Town Meeting.

ZSC/Planning Board: Mr. Hayden reported on presentation of form-based code held at the September 7 meeting, as part of preparation and informing the community about zoning articles expected for Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Wald encouraged viewing of the presentation, and said that he, Mr. Hayden and Ms. Brewer, as Comprehensive Planning Committee veterans could be additional resources for questions about form-based code.

Town Meeting Coordinating Committee: Mr. Hayden reported he met with the schools' tech representative, Brian Ecclestone, and Jim Lescault from Amherst Media on sound issues in the ARMS auditorium, noting his plan to report the results of that meeting to the Committee when they meet again this week.

COH and HP/FHC: Ms. Brewer reported status was clear from earlier discussion.

CDBG Advisory Committee: Ms. Brewer reported that they had two new members, which is helpful as they get into the CDBG hearing schedule

DAAC: Ms. Brewer reported on her hopes to be able to attend meetings more often

LSSE Commission: Ms. Brewer said they will meet Wednesday and will be seeking an update at Town Meeting on the status of plans for reopening War Memorial Pool next summer

Amherst Housing Authority: Ms. O’Keeffe said she will work to obtain an update on search for a new Executive Director.

Conservation Commission: Ms. O’Keeffe reported meeting scheduled for September 28 to discuss policy for off-leash dogs on Town Conservation land -- currently only allowed at Amethyst Brook and Mill River -- in the wake of a growing frequency of problems and dangerous incidents.

Budget Coordinating Group: Meeting in October, sometime after the Four Boards Meeting, which will be October 13, 2011.

Council on Aging: Ms. O’Keeffe reported meeting on September 13, 2011.

Open Meeting Law Update: Ms. Stein is pursuing resolution of the question of how a quorum is defined with the Attorney General’s Office.

Chair’s Report

Ms. O’Keeffe indicated intent to attempt to clarify confusion regarding recent Town Meeting mailing via e-mail and the Town web site.

October 7 meeting conflict: The planned 9:00 a.m. meeting on 10/7 to sign the warrant needs to be moved, due to conflict with the MMA Legislative Breakfast in Sunderland. Board agreed without formal vote to meet at noon, rather than 9 a.m. on Friday, October 7, 2011 to sign the Special Town Meeting warrant.

September 11 Ceremony: Reported it was lovely, offering thanks to attendees, participants from AFD, APD and UMPD, and to Chief Nelson for putting it together.

Collegian column: While welcome to students has not been written yet, indicated still planning to do so.

Applewood Event: Attended 20th anniversary event September 7 on behalf of Mr. Musante; lovely event, noting attendees very concerned about Mr. Musante’s condition.

Special Licenses

VOTED unanimously to approve Special Wine and Malt Licenses for Meredith Schmidt, Campus Center Director, on behalf of UMass Amherst for receptions to be held at the Fine Arts Center from 6:30 – 10:00 p.m. on October 12, 2011; October 19, 2011; November 8, 2011; November 10, 2011; and November 16, 2011.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra A. Roussel, Assistant to the Town Manager

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting

Draft Motions 09-12-2011

Invitation for Ceremony to Honor African American Civil War Veteran

Handout for Ceremony Honoring Civil War Veterans

Stavros ADA Event Parking Reservation Request

COH Draft Town Meeting Article – third draft

COH Recommendations for 2011-2012 shelter contract

Oldham, Simula, Noonan and Reikka’s Letters to Editor

Root Letter to Board

Staff Memo Re Sheltering

Stein Housing and the Homelessness Problem

Weiss Email on COH

Stephanie O’Keeffe thoughts on Structure

Draft Minutes of 1-24, 2-07, 04-04, 06-13, 06-27, 07-05 and 07-18-2011

Select Board Annual Report FY 2011 draft

Taxi Drive Applications Lyons, Speck, Kayego, Diedhiou and Hickey

UMass Special One-Day License Applications