

MINUTES –VERSION 3

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Mr. Weiss at 6:18 PM.

ATTENDANCE

In attendance were Gerry Weiss, Chair of the Select Board and the members of the Select Board, Anne Awad, Alisa Brewer, Diana Stein and Stephanie O’Keeffe. Also, attending were Larry Shaffer, Town Manager, Charles Scherpa, Police Chief, Epi Bodhi, Health Director, David Ziomek, Director of Conservation and Planning, Ruth Hazzard, Vice Chair of the Agricultural Commission; Sandra Sulsky Chair of the Board of Health, Terry Forrest and Richard Mudgett.

OPENING REMARKS

The Chair commented on the great sadness in Town Hall over the death of the son of the Gail Weston, Executive Assistant to the Select Board and the Town Manager. The Chair also reported the joy associated with the birth of Ms. Weston’s first grandchild on Sunday.

Ms. Awad reported as the liaison to the Pioneer Valley Transportation Authority, that public hearing will be held to gain public input on the proposed fare increases. In Amherst, the public hearing will be held on May 29, 2008 in the Bangs Center at 12:00 PM.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Rob Kusner announced that a breakfast will held on May 17, 2008 beginning at 7:00 AM to advocate bicycle travel. The breakfast will be held on the Amherst Common. Mr. Kusner requested that the Select Board support forward funding of the PVTA by the State Legislature and follow-up on a proposal to consider new parking policies, recommended and supported at a February meeting.

SELECT BOARD’S ACTION

Article 47 – Bylaw – False Alarm Fees

VOTED unanimously, OR to recommend Article 47 – Bylaw – False Alarm Fees.

Chief Scherpa along with the by-law sponsor Stanley Gawle advocated the adoption of the by-law in order to reduce the number of unnecessary Police calls. Chief Scherpa reported that there are approximately 1,000 such calls per year requiring 2,000 police cruiser responses – 2 per call and those communities that have adopted a similar by- law experienced a reduction in false alarm calls by 80%. The by-law calls for a graduated series of three warnings and increasing fines designed primarily to change behavior and not to raise revenue. The fines should encourage violators to correct alarm deficiencies.

Article 46 – Bylaw – Right to Farm

No Action Taken – Place on the next agenda after investigation of what the term “farm” means and how the dispute resolution aspect of the by-law will be addressed. David Ziomek and Ruth Hazzard attended and provided the background behind the by-law that attempts to establish policy for the community on the role and rights of farms in Amherst.

Article 39 – Bylaw – Rescind Recombinant DNA Bylaw

VOTED unanimously, to recommend Article 39 – Bylaw – Rescind Recombinant DNA Bylaw.

Epi Bodhi, Health Director and Sandra Sulsky, Chair of the Board of Health stated that after considerable study, input from the University, discussions with experts and a public hearing, the Board of Health adopted new rDNA regulations on April 17, 2008, a copy of which was distributed to the Select Board. Ms. Sulsky stated that such adoption rendered the rDNA by-law, adopted by Town Meeting on October 23, 1978 unnecessary and potentially confusing. Ms. Stein expressed her support for having a by-law that runs parallel to the regulation and would advocate that such a by-law be adopted in substitution for the one that is proposed for rescinding. Mr. Shaffer stated that the Town Counsel has advised that such a by-law is appropriate and would further advise that it be closely coordinated with the regulation. Mr. Weiss and Ms. O’Keefe expressed concerns about confusion and inefficiency of having both a Town by-law and a Board of Health regulation on the same issue.

Article 33 – Petition – Request Planning Board to Develop Zoning Bylaw Amendment

No action taken.

The Select Board heard a presentation from Nina Weyl that requested that a by-law be adopted to incorporate energy conservation principles as identified by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design into the Planning Board requirements.

Article 35 – Petition – 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee Appropriation

No action taken.

Time did not allow for this item to be discussed

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 7:40 PM.