

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Select Board

Present: Aaron Hayden, Jim Wald, Alisa Brewer, Constance Kruger, Andrew Steinberg

Absent: None

Staff: John Musante, Town Manager; Robert Morra, Building Commissioner; Julie Federman, Health Director

Other: Bonnie MacCracken

Meeting called to order by Mr. Hayden at 6:30 p.m.

Public Comment

Rob Kusner of Van Meter Drive suggests the Town of Amherst consider development of tax incentives for developers, including in the downtown to include affordable housing. Suggestion that CPA funds be considered as a source.

Traci Lee Boutillier presented a letter to the Select Board requesting appointment to the Amherst Housing Authority as a tenant representative, which she claimed is required per updated MGL. Mr. Musante noted that the Housing Authority is a separately elected Board and that he would look into implementation of the change in law.

2014 Taxi Licenses

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Brewer) to approve the application of Scott Brissette for a 2014 Taxi Driver license on behalf of Funky Cab Company.

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Brewer) to approve the applications of Josh Robinson and Nicholas Robinson for a 2014 Taxi Driver license on behalf of Celebrity Cab.

Parking and Street Closure Requests

Amherst Area Chamber Commerce and Amherst Business Improvement District

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Brewer) to approve the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District's request for reservation of metered parking and street closures for the Merry Maple tree lighting ceremony on Friday, December 5, 2014, as follows:

- Close the Main Street parking lot from 12:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- Close the Spring Street parking lot from 2:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- Close Boltwood Avenue, between Spring Street and Main Street, from 12:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. and Spring Street from Churchill Street to Boltwood Avenue from 2:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. to allow for Horse Drawn Carriage rides.

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Brewer) to approve the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District's request for:

- Free parking throughout the downtown Amherst area for Small Business Saturday on Saturday, November 29, 2014 and Annual Greeting Card Day on Saturday, December 6, 2014; and
- Free parking in all the parking lots with the new pay-by-space parking machines (Boltwood Garage, Amity Street lot, Spring Street lot, Main Street lot, Town Hall lot and the Town portion of the CVS lot) on the subsequent Saturdays before Christmas: December 13, 2014 and December 20, 2014.

Amherst Police Department Food Drive

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Brewer) to approve the Amherst Police Department's request for reservation of two metered spaces on the eastbound side directly in front of the Police Station at 111 Main Street, on Tuesday, November 25, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for the 2014 Fill the Wagon Food Drive.

Minutes

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Brewer) to approve the minutes of October 20, 2014 as presented.

VOTED 3-0, 1 Absent (Brewer), 1 Abstention (Wald) to approve the minutes of September 22, 2014, as amended.

Liquor Licenses Off-Premise Retail License 10 a.m. Sunday Opening

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Brewer) to approve the application of Shilpa Enterprises Inc., d/b/a Cousins Market, 11 East Pleasant Street, License #002400051, pursuant to MGL c. 138, §15, for a change in hours, permitting the sale of alcoholic beverages on Sundays beginning at 10 a.m., effective immediately.

VOTED 4-0, 1 Absent (Brewer) to approve the application of All Things Local Cooperative Market d/b/a All Things Local, 104-106 North Pleasant Street, License #002400115, pursuant to MGL c. 138, §15, for a change in hours, permitting the sale of wine and malt beverages on Sundays beginning at 10 a.m., effective immediately.

Public Hearing Liquor License – Ginger Garden Application for Transfer of Stock

Public Hearing Opened at 6:45 p.m. Attorney Kristi Bodin summarized the request, confirming that there has been no change in management. Public Hearing closed at 6:47 p.m.

Ms. Brewer entered the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

VOTED 4-0, 1 Abstention (Brewer) to approve the application of Amherst Gourmet, Inc. d/b/a Ginger Garden, 351 Northampton Road, License #002400059, an all alcoholic annual restaurant liquor license, to transfer all of the stock of Chu Hua Liang to Tsai Bao Cheng; Hsiu Hui Chang, Manager.

Rental Property Permitting Update

Mr. Musante introduced the topic. The Town is nearing the one-year anniversary of implementing the Rental Property Permitting Program. Mr. Musante recognized the work of Building Commissioner Rob Morra, Inspections staff and most notably Jon Thompson, and Health Director Julie Federman that have been integral to the team approach with Building, Health, and Fire Departments.

Mr. Morra and Ms. Federman summarized the steps that had taken place to bring the program to life. The focus was establishing compliance with life safety, health codes, and increased awareness for tenants, renters and owners. Accomplishments noted were the associated web page with all the necessary documents presented, video tutorials and an online application process that was well received. Updated contact and property information for all rental properties as well as the GIS mapping tool are excellent tools for staff as well as the citizenry. The ability to review all information for specific addresses, including tracking of complaints, code violations, and special permit and parking conditions, providing transparency for all involved.

Bonnie McCracken came forward from the audience to thank the Town, as a member of the Housing Committee for the NAACP. She said it is beneficial to know that the tool is available to assist tenants.

Town Meeting Wrap-Up

Mr. Hayden asked Select Board members if they had any issues to bring forth to wrap up discussion following Town Meeting. Ms. Brewer reiterated a concern regarding insufficient number of microphones, the time required for counting votes and that providing greater information to petitioners ahead of time about expectations before presentation to the Board on articles did not appear to make a great deal of difference. However, she feels as if it is the right thing to do. Mr. Steinberg noted the Town did have information that the Town of Arlington has

implemented electronic voting and has been very successful, which should be made known to TMCC so that a study can be done and put a system in place as soon as possible. Ms. Kruger said she was very much in favor of moving to electronic voting and asking that the Select Board take a lead role and suggested putting a placeholder in the budget for the purchase so that it is in place for Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Musante recalled the discussion and prior study that had occurred and would follow up on the recommendation. It was noted that it could be placed in the capital plan for review by JCPC, Budget Coordinating Group and discussion by TMCC. Mr. Hayden noted that an exchange of emails did occur at least a week prior to the meeting that petitioners were to appear, outlining questions that they might expect to respond to so that they would be better prepared and we have a better understanding. TMCC could participate in the drive to have petitioners meet more with boards and committees which are involved in review. Mr. Hayden will take the suggestions and draft a draft letter to TMCC for the next meeting as follow up from the Select Board.

Town Manager Report

Mr. Musante reported we have received word from the State that the Town of Amherst will once again be categorized as a mini-entitlement community for purposes of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and able to apply for up to \$725,000 annual funding. The CDBG Advisory Committee has developed a calendar and will meet on December 4, 2014 to receive comments for a strategy, priorities for funding and target projects. The Town will issue a RFP due in early January for funding, which will be ranked and prioritized with recommendation for proposals to the Town Manager by mid-January, similar to prior years. Mr. Musante is working with staff to identify appropriate capital projects. Ms. Brewer applauded the work on webpage to make information available to applicants. Staff has followed up directly with DHCD to obtain appropriate guidance regarding potential for supplanting of social services funding and the use of Town funds in the intervening years.

U3 Advisors, the consultant hired by the Town and the University of Massachusetts for the Town-Gown Study on shared opportunities for housing and economic development made a final presentation on November 3, 2014; a series of recommendations were noted. A final report is expected in the weeks ahead.

Amherst Together next steps include a community survey on quality of life including targeted interviews. Feedback should be available in January and expectation is that information will be used to form a plan of action.

Mr. Musante recognized the members of the Amherst Police Department, specifically Officer Marcus Humber, noting he has been working with college students by facilitating a number of meetings with tenants after noise complaints.

Late October public safety results showed the number of serious calls were down versus recent years, and Mr. Musante credited pre-planning efforts including collaboration with various UMass students and administration/public safety, and Hampshire and Amherst Colleges, all reporting no major issues.

The Planning Board voted on November 12 to approve two special permits for One East Pleasant Street development height and side and rear setbacks, and is expected to complete site plan review on November 19.

Recent and Upcoming Activities included a report on his attendance on November 13-14 at the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association Fall Conference at UMass Amherst with 60 other city and town managers, noting specific sessions attended. Mr. Musante also participated on November 15 as a guest auctioneer at the Annual Rotary Auction. He also attended a press conference at the UMass Life Sciences Center with Ms. Brewer for an announcement by Governor Patrick of award of a \$4.1 million Federal grant to create a national center for research aimed at assisting small-sized drinking water systems. Governor Patrick is expected to announce a plan to reduce current year state spending with midyear cuts of \$325 million. Mr. Musante is working with MMA to avoid cuts targeted at cities and towns.

Chair's Report

Mr. Hayden reported on his attendance at the Veterans' Day Ceremony and the Town-Gown Study Steering Committee meeting following the November 3 presentation that Mr. Musante noted.

Mr. Steinberg asked the Chair to recognize members in the audience, continuing public comment as needed.

Members' Reports

Mr. Wald introduced Bonnie MacCracken, a Trustee of Amherst Historical Society who spoke on a planned event called Forgotten Drinks of Colonial New England. The Society is in need of a Special One Day license for this Saturday, November 22 for the Simeon Strong House. A Special Meeting will be scheduled in the latter part of the week to address the request.

Tracy Lee Boutillier presented a letter regarding a recent change in law, 121B of Chapter 5, regarding membership of Housing Authorities, requiring a state assisted tenant serve as a board member, noting her interest in serving. Ms. Kruger said the Board is awaiting guidance on implementation from the MA DHCD.

Mr. Steinberg reported as a member of the Audit Committee as to the need for awareness related to conflict of interest/fraud, suggesting Finance Committee include it in its financial policies. The Recycling and Refuse Management Committee reported on efforts in downtown collection and issues that have arisen and examination of transfer station fund. An Agricultural Commission meeting is planned for tomorrow evening and will include a meeting with Saturday Farmers Market members.

Ms. Kruger reported on attendance at recent Public Works Committee and Transportation Plan Task Force meetings. They included discussion on how complaints are handled and what can be done to make the process/system work better. They are expected to come before the Select Board with a recommended plan. Attendance at a recent Council on Aging meeting included a request for assistance and guidance on capital planning needs. Mr. Musante noted his belief that senior services changes need to be focused on programmatic strategies rather than bricks and mortar. Ms. Kruger also participated in a Public Arts Commission forum held recently, which looked at initiatives to bring more public art to Amherst, as well as the possibility of creating a Cultural District. Mr. Musante noted it was not meant to be a one-time discussion, with more to come.

Mr. Wald cited the wonderful energy of Public Arts Commission, with mapping of public art and grant applications in process. He reported the need for additional members to be appointed to the Lincoln-Sunset Local Historic District Study Committee as well as the North Amherst LHD Study Committee proposed.

Ms. Brewer spoke about an inquiry on the ability for remote participation in public meetings, reminding that the Select Board needs to approve to move forward, which has not yet occurred. Ms. Brewer noted that work with Mr. Wald on committee appointments is difficult due to a lack of available applications for available openings. She made a plea to those watching to apply or help recruit applicants. Ms. Brewer said she is finding the BID monthly meetings very informative. A Hampshire Council of Governments Legislative Summit held recently in Florence was useful, and they are working with the UMass Donahue Institute as to how working together we can frame legislation to help the County.

FY 15 Town Manager Goals

Mr. Hayden noted a revised draft in the Select Board's packet this evening and was looking for feedback, hoping to have the document adopted. Members provided minor edits. Mr. Hayden and Mr. Wald will work to complete suggested edits and provide a final copy to members and the Town Manager as amended.

VOTED unanimously to approve the FY 15 Town Manager Performance Goals, as amended.

FY16 Budget Policy Guidelines

The Select Board reviewed the draft policy guidelines presented. Chairman Hayden said he would take suggested edits and incorporate into a final draft for adoption at the December 1, 2014 Select Board meeting.

The Select Board reviewed correction drafted by Ms. Brewer relative to minutes of September 22, 2014.

ADJOURN - The meeting adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Submitted by John P. Musante, Town Manager

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting – Available in the Online Packet for the Meeting Date

Agenda

Draft Motions

Amherst Gourmet Inc. d/b/a Ginger Garden Application and Legal Ad for Transfer of Stock

Rental Program Update from Building Commissioner

Amherst Together Press Release 11-11-2014

CDBG Mini Entitlement Program Summary

FY 15 CDBG Process Outline

MMA Legislative Alert 11-13-2014

Shilpa Enterprises Inc. Change of Hours Application for Package Store Sales on Sunday

All Things Local Coop Market Change of Hours Application for Package Store Sales on Sunday

FY 15 Town Manager Goals 11-17-14 Draft

FY 16 Budget Policy Guidelines 11-12-14 Draft

Amherst Area Chamber and BID Holiday Accommodations Request and Map

Request for Reservation of Metered Parking for 2014 Police Food Drive and Map

Draft Minutes 10-20-2014