



# Select Board

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Select Board Meeting Minutes

July 30, 2020

21 State Line Road, Town Hall

Meeting Minutes for Thursday July 30, 2020, Special Selectboard meeting which was conducted as a virtual meeting on Zoom.

Quorum present was:

Roger Kavanagh, Selectboard Chair, Kathleen Keresey and Eric Shimelonis, Selectboard members

Also in attendance: Curt Wilton, Director, DPW

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 PM

Roger reviewed the agenda and introduced the first agenda item:

## **1. Briefing from the Planning Board about next steps for the Master Plan development**

Since Dana Bixby was unable to meet with the full Planning Board before today's meeting she asked to move this item to a future meeting.

Eric provided an update based on prior discussions with Dana regarding the Master Plan committee which would provide some insight into potential next steps toward developing the Master Plan.

The first step previously discussed would be getting Berkshire Regional planning to start researching map overlays, which would create one place to see all our green spaces and BNRC lands as a reference for the planning process. Berkshire Regional planning is ready to get started on this and they're looking forward to working with us.

Kathleen noted that the Master Plan Committee is loosely organized now and asked Eric if Dana had given him any indication about when the Planning Board would have some ideas about what they want their role to be and how they would incorporate the current Master Plan committee members and the work they had done to date.

Eric responded that the Planning Board has a pretty clear sense of how to structure this effort. Dana's hope is that they will come to a consensus on how to proceed at their Aug 3 Planning Board meeting which she would document and forward to the Board for discussion at a future meeting.

Roger asked Eric if it is right to assume that the Planning Board is going to be taking the lead role on the development of the West Stockbridge Master Plan. Eric said he believes that is true but thought it would

be best to hear directly from Dana about how she envisions the process working and the structure of the team that will be developing and communicating the plan.

## **2. Briefing about next steps for the Shared Streets and Spaces grant application**

Kathleen briefed the Board about:

- People she has been in contact with from Mass DOT and from Kittelson & Associates, one of the consulting firms (funded by the Barr Foundation) who are providing support to towns preparing grant applications for the DOT Shared Streets and Spaces program.
- The list of potential projects that she, Eric Shimelonis, Curt Wilton and Dana Bixby had developed in a brainstorming session earlier in the week that could be included in the Shared Streets and Spaces grant application.
- Her conversations with folks at Mass DOT who told her that the program is really young, that they have funds they want to get to municipalities and that they suggested applicants should be thinking broadly, innovatively and should be pro-active.
- Her conversations with Liz Flanagan, a consultant from Kittelson & Associates, who thought that some of the things on the potential project list don't really fit in within confines of program, but the program is new and consultants are figuring it out as they go along.
- Liz suggested that it's really important for West Stockbridge to work directly with Mass DOT because our town center has two state highways going thru it so Mass DOT may need to be consulted more in depth than they might otherwise be consulted. She added that we should keep in mind the program is really about the roads, roadways, shared spaces, bike lanes and walkways, so its important to keep in mind that Mass DOT is funding the program so everything needs to be looked at through that lens.
- She noted that we can apply for up to 3 grants for a total of \$300K. Mass DOT likes the projects to be related / interconnected, to dovetail into one another. If they determine that one of the grants does not meet their criteria, they won't turn down the whole application – they'll just cross out the part that doesn't fit.
- She thought we have 3 really obvious things that would fall into what DOT does:
  - Traffic calming – state would be interested in and would help you with it. Examples included curb extensions, raised crosswalks, striping, rumble strips
  - Cones, barricades, signage
  - Reallocating parking to create open spaces

Kathleen stated that there is a lot of conflicting information regarding the application process and that more research needs to be done and coordination with Mass DOT is essential . She will take the lead to set up a teleconference with Mass DOT and Kittelson to get the application completed.

Roger noted that Kittelson has been providing support without a formal agreement and asked if something needed to be done to formalize the arrangement. Kathleen answered that Kittelson's contract is with the Barr Foundation and that Kittelson can provide us with up to \$15K of consulting services under that contract.

Roger asked Curt to share his thoughts since he is in the group that is working on the grant application. Curt asked about the deadline for applications, stating that he is concerned about missing out. Kathleen said she thinks the deadline is the beginning of Sept so there are still a few weeks to complete and submit the application.

Roger asked Kathleen if she is driving the revision to the application. She said she is and that the consultants would be particularly helpful in this process

### **Selectboard speak**

Roger spoke about the agreement with Rouge restaurant covering the closure of Center Street for outdoor dining and the process he and Kathleen were following to bring the agreement to abutting merchants and get their feedback. He noted that all those contacted supported the agreement and one merchant, Queensboro Package Store had an issue about parking that he would speak to when we get to Citizens Speak on the agenda.

Roger spoke about the Board's intent to share information about the agreement with all downtown merchants and that Joe Roy, the leader of the Downtown Merchants Association would facilitate that process. He also mentioned that the Board would be contacting downtown food businesses to see if they would be interested in doing something on Center Street on the nights that it is closed. Kathleen said that she had started that process, that Truc's and No. 6 are not interested and she is working on getting a response from SOMA and the Tap House.

Roger shared that the Board had discussed and approved a one weekend trial of an additional police patrol in the downtown area for Friday July 31 and Saturday Aug 1 during the hours of the Center Street closure. The Board will assess the cost / value of the patrol at its next Board meeting before authorizing any additional weekend patrols.

Eric suggested doing a Press Release to make the general population aware of the Center Street closure and to create some good publicity for joining neighboring communities in coming up with innovative solutions for street closures. He will draft the press release and circulate for Board review and approval.

Eric mentioned a letter the Board had received from one of his neighbors about an increase in heavy truck traffic on Great Barrington Road. He said he had noted the same thing and asked Curt, since he was attending the meeting, if he was aware of this and had any information to share.

Curt responded that the increase in heavy truck traffic was the result of a change in ownership of the Formel Salvage yard in Housatonic. The former family business has been sold to a company that is turning it into a major junk car recycling location, bringing in trucks with 3-4 cars per load or 18 wheelers, 8 -10-12 times per day. Trucks are crossing the center lines and the white sidelines; they are just too big for the road. He sees it as a patrol issue.

After a broad ranging discussion about truck traffic going thru town, j-braking down hills and speeding, Curt suggested that the Police Chief visit the salvage yard to talk to management about West Stockbridge residents' concerns and find out about the new company's long term plans. Kathleen thought it would be more appropriate for the Board to send a letter to the company rather than have the Chief speak to them. The Board members agreed and a motion was made and seconded to draft a letter from the Board.

### **Citizen speak**



Steve Dixon spoke about the impact of the Center Street closure on the 20 minute parking spots in front of his store. He is concerned that people coming to dine outdoors at Rouge will park in the 20 min spots and their cars will be there for hours, making it difficult for his customers to park and shop in his store. He suggested that the police should enforce the 20 minute parking. A discussion ensued about the 20 min parking signs being informational only, that there can't be enforcement. As an alternative, Steve asked if he could mark 2 of the 20 minute spots as "reserved for Queensboro Package store". After discussion, the Board agreed that this is a reasonable accommodation to make on the nights that Center Street is closed and that they would make that authorization formal at the next scheduled Board meeting. Curt agreed to provide the cones and said that he may have signs that could be used.

On the subject of the town providing tables for people to eat take out from local food businesses which was an idea discussed as part of the Shared Streets grant proposal, Frank Landsberger cautioned the Board to think about incremental costs to the Town for maintaining / cleaning those tables if they are provided.

He also asked about spending money in anticipation of grant money from the Shared Streets program and Kathleen assured him that the money would have to be in-hand before expenses are incurred because the grant doesn't cover reimbursements for prior expenses.

Robin Schmitt asked about placing detour signs to direct people where to go when Center Street is closed. Curt answered that the only signage currently planned is for road closure but he would monitor the situation to determine if additional signage might be useful.

With no other citizens asking to speak, Roger asked for a motion to adjourn. Eric made the motion, Kathleen seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Kavanagh