



Select Board

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Select Board Meeting Minutes Meeting via Zoom April 26, 2021

Open Meeting

Quorum present: Roger Kavanagh, Select Board Chair, Eric Shimelonis and Kathleen Keresey, Select Board Members, and Marie Ryan, Town Administrator.

Other Attendees: Police Chief Marc Portieri and Public Works Director Curt Wilton

Roger called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The Board will approve minutes from April 12, 2021 meeting at the next meeting.

Kathleen made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 29, 2021 meeting, seconded by Eric.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes

Motion Passed.

Town Administrator Updates:

- Reminded voters about Town Meeting which will be an outdoor meeting on Monday, May 3rd at 6 PM.
- Voters can obtain a ballot for the Annual Town Election for Early Voting by Mail by printing an application for the EV ballot from the website.

SoMa request for BYOB on their property:

SoMa owner, Loretta Tennuta, asked that the Board to approve her request for a "Bring Your Own Beverage" (BYOB) permit at her establishment, SoMa. She read the request she had sent to the Board which included the dates, timeframe and all restrictions and guidelines they will follow. She requested the permit for Monday-Wednesday from 4pm to 8pm, from April 27 through October 31 for their 7 outdoor tables. The Board and Loretta agreed to expand the permit to 7 days a week from April through the end of November, should circumstances allow them to expand service. SoMa will also adhere to the strict COVID safety guidelines.

Roger made a motion to approve the BYOB permit at SoMa in their outside table service for 7 days a week from 4pm to 8pm, from April through the end of November, seconded by Kathleen.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes

Motion Passed.

Parking Issues:

Roger asked the Board to discuss;

1. Recap of logistical and parking issues identified from the last meeting on April 12, 2021 related to the street closure and entertainment events
2. Agree on key issues, solutions and discuss pros/cons
3. Develop a plan of action

Eric proposed a more coordinated and intentional program of municipal parking, and estimated that more effectively demarcated parking lots - along with better signage - would do a lot to alleviate parking issues in town. He reported that he has started the process for negotiating a possible agreement between the Town and the owners of No. Six Depot and the Tap House to use their parking areas as large municipal parking lot which the Town DPW will develop and maintain. This plan alone will greatly increase the number of available parking spots in the town center.

Terry Dixon from the Farmer's Market asked if the Town could mark the parking spots near the public restroom. Marking the spots will enable a more efficient use of the parking lot. She also stated that her vendors, all the volunteers and staff all park in Truc's Harris St. lot. The Farmer's Market also will post signs for available parking on their website but also feels signage is the key. Hotchkiss Mobiles and Turn Park have stated they will allow use of their parking lots as well. She will ask the Local Yokel to include parking suggestions in their paper. The Farmer's Market will close an hour earlier to allow for more parking for the restaurants.

Roger asked Terry how the street closure worked for them last year when Center Street was closed for Rouge to have extra outdoor dining. Terry responded that it worked fine and that Rouge was very helpful with making signage. This year Jeremy Kenny, Rouge Manager, said they will not close the street until 5:30 this year. This should help alleviate traffic congestion and parking issues.

Curt agreed that signage is a top priority and will help alleviate parking issues. He suggested that with marking the parking spots, adding signage and ticketing violators, will help. He then asked the Board to approve allowing DPW and Police Chief Marc Portieri to work on marking

on-street parking around Town and create on street parking spots on Moscow Road, Oak Street and Old Great Barrington Road.

Roger feels strongly that there needs to be a police presence to assist with parking and public safety during the large events in town. He said the Police budget can not support it financially and that perhaps the businesses should help pay for the police presence. The estimated cost for the detail would be about \$5,400 per season. The Police are offering to do it for \$47 per hour, normally they get paid \$70 per hour for a detail. Amy Brentano, Foundry owner, stated she cannot afford to assume these costs, and that they are barely surviving. She felt this is an unexpected unfair added cost after all her plans have been discussed and approved. Kathleen and Eric agreed with Amy and feel the Town has the responsibility to properly allocate emergency service manpower and budgets to provide for public safety, especially since we are still under COVID precautions. They do not want to pass the cost of public safety on to the merchants.

Curt, speaking as a tax payer, asked the Board to consider the burden of the success of the businesses on the tax payers like himself and the elderly in Town by increasing taxes to pay for a police detail for the businesses.

Police Chief Marc Portieri stated he wants the businesses to succeed but not at the cost of public safety.

Roger asked the Board if they wanted to carry the discussion of the businesses paying for the Police Detail to another meeting or simply decide to kill the idea. Eric and Kathleen both agreed to kill the idea, and not levy additional fees on businesses for needed police protection.

Eric then made a motion to allow Curt and the DPW to work with Police Chief Marc Portieri to study the feasibility of creating on street parking on Moscow Road, Oak Street and Old Great Barrington Road, to open a dialogue with the residents on those streets, and if advisable, to establish such parking. Roger seconded.

Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes
Motion Passed.

Select Board Speak:

Eric discussed a few items:

1. He announced that the Town officially has been designated as a Green Community. In the short-term, the Town will be receiving grant money to pay for new LED lighting, and a new boiler at the DPW/Fire Station building. The town will also be exploring
2. Mr. McGrath has cleaned up the trash on his property on Swamp Road near the pond on his own.
3. He thanked Peter Thorne for a very successful Earth Day clean up as well as Curt and the DPW for picking up all the trash bags.
4. Update on the appointed positions – He found that most of the Select Board appointed positions are by statute and there is no need to try to eliminate them. He would also like to invite different committee appointees to Select Board meetings throughout the next year to keep an open dialogue and to get updates from them.

5. Class II and Class III Licenses – He will be meeting with Ricky Klein on Tuesday to discuss the new amendment to the Town Bylaw. He will also get an update from Ricky on the court case and his plan to remove the junk cars from his property. Eric will report back on that at the next meeting.

Citizen Speak:

Jeremy Kenny, Rouge Manager – He asked the Board to please get signage up to help with the parking issues.

Joe Roy said he was stunned and delighted with all the positive thoughts about improving the parking situation in Town. He told the Board that the Village Association has maintained the two signs in Town, one off Mass Pike and the other by Berkshire Bank. They are in bad shape and need to be removed. The Association cannot afford to continue to maintain them and he hopes that possibly the Town will consider adding an item to the next fiscal year budget to replace these signs.

Eric made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 PM, Kathleen seconded.
Roll call vote:

Eric, Yes Roger, Yes Kathleen, Yes
Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

Email from SoMa with their set up plan and guidelines for BYOB