



Select Board

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Select Board Meeting Minutes Open Meeting March 14, 2022

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

Others in Attendance: Police Chief Marc Portieri and Director of Public Works Curt Wilton

Eric called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and listed Select Board members present.

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the February 28, 2022 Select Board meeting will be approved at the next meeting.

Town Administrator Update:

Marie informed the Board that she and Curt are working with the Richmond Town Administrator Danielle Fillio and Highway Superintendent Peter Beckwith on a grant to aid with Stormwater issues in the Towns. The State will pay for 2/3rds of the projects and the Town will need to pay 1/3rd of the costs. The application is not due until May and Marie will keep the Board updated.

The West Stockbridge Board of Health has lifted the masking advisory issued in August 2021. They have stated there is no longer a mask advisory in public buildings, unless people are not fully vaccinated or have a weakened immune system.

Marie reminded the Board and the public that the Town Caucus will be held next week on Thursday at 7 PM in the Town Hall gym.

Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate Member Appointment- Randy Thunfors

Zoning Board of Appeals Chair, Randy Thunfors presented a bio and testimonial for resident architect Robin Bankert, and requested that the Select Board appoint her as a ZBA Alternate Member.

Eric made a motion to approve the appointment of Robin Bankert as a ZBA Alternate Member, seconded by Kathleen.

Roll call vote:

Roger Yes

Kathleen Yes

Eric Yes

Appointment approved.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant:

Marie asked the Board to hold off on approving the Annual Town Meeting Warrant because she has a few more articles to add to it. One of the additional articles will be for the School District. Peter Dillon was present to explain the article to the Board.

Peter explained to the Board that the Massachusetts School Building Authority choose our School District to be in the eligibility field to apply for money to build a new high school. On Thursday, March 10th the School Committee voted to request the three Towns to place an article on their Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The article will be to ask the Towns to allow the School District to borrow 1.5 million dollars for a feasibility and design study. The borrowing will not affect the FY23 budget for the Towns and will be a short-term loan. If the project gets approved then the new larger loan for the new project will roll over the short-term loan into a single loan. Peter stated that the project, if approved, may get started in July 2024. He explained that a new school project will look more favorable and move faster than a remodel or addition to the school. Design costs are less and the project will take less time, therefore he is leaning towards that type of project. Eric thanked Peter for his explanation.

Main Street Pedestrian Crosswalk:

Curt discussed the issues that the Vision Committee listed as problems in regards to the crosswalk on Main Street. The traffic study completed on Main Street in October showed that about 6000 cars go over the crosswalk per day. Visibility is also an issue on Main Street due to angled parking. The speed limit is 25 mph on Main Street in front of all the businesses. The Town has jurisdiction as to the speeding and traffic on Main Street. He said if the Town placed speed bumps on Main Street, the noise could be a negative issue for the residents in that area. He did not feel that lights at the crosswalk would be a good choice. Crossing guards would cost the Town money and liability which would be covered by the Town. Another suggestion was the use of convex mirrors, which is illegal to affix to any pole.

Curt suggested that the Town update the signage with a different color such as neon green and add flashing lights around the sign, which would be placed in advance of entering Main Street area on both ends, north bound and south bound, and on Town property. This would alert the drivers that there is a heavily settled Main Street area coming up and they need to slow down. The police already have added money to their budget (to be approved at Town Meeting) to cover more police traffic control on Main Street, and throughout the town.

The Board agreed that there needs to be community involvement and outreach on this issue. Curt would like to see a large in person meeting for discussion and see what the residents

would like, such as speed bumps. Kathleen suggested placing speed bumps near the crosswalk in front of Shaker Mill where there are no residents. Curt said that could work but a community meeting should take place.

Joe Roy, Vision Committee Chair, thanked Curt for his presentation and discussing all the issues and questions that the Vision Committee had. He disagreed with Curt that lights at the crosswalk are not a good idea. Joe thinks that would be effective. There are speed bumps in Lenox which are more like a rolling bump and make very little sound, Joe thinks these could work in West Stockbridge. He urged Curt to reconsider looking into these suggestions. The Vision Committee is willing to work on this issue if the Select Board would like them to and would like to get going on solutions before the summer months.

Eric mentioned that has seen some low-profile LED crosswalk lights that might serve both the need for warning lights, and Curt's desire to not clutter Main Street with unsightly infrastructure. He committed to sending the links to The Vision Committee, and requested Curt to keep this on the table as an option.

Brian Butterworth thanked the Board and Curt for looking into this issue. He agreed that new signage could help and was pleased to hear that the Police will increase their presence on Main Street. He said this was a good conversation and hopes that the Board will keep working on this issue. Eric stated this will be an ongoing conversation. The Board will have some community meetings to discuss this issue.

The Board asked Curt to get information on new signs to be installed by the spring.

Grant Opportunities:

Eric stated that he has followed up with the USDA about a grant under their Rural Development Program. He is also working with Seth Jenkins at Berkshire Regional Planning on grants as part of the Master Plan Committee. Kathleen offered to work on that with him.

The Board mentioned the Complete Streets grant, and Marie informed the Board that the Town has a grant from them to prepare a study allowing the Town to be on Tier Two of the Complete Streets program and then can apply for even more grants available.

Kathleen said that the issue that the Town has is that we need more volunteers to assist with grants. Eric suggested possible internships for people that would be able to help the Town. The Town could use people to assist in searching for grants, writing grants, and helping to identify grant projects.

The Board decided to keep this as an agenda item each month.

Select Board Speak:

Kathleen asked the Board if would like to ask the Vision Committee to review the draft Noise Bylaw, get others involved and work on the draft. The Board agreed and Joe Roy said they will be happy to work on this bylaw and will make it a priority.

Kathleen mentioned that this is the second winter the Town property purchased through the Shared Streets Grant has been used. She feels the Town needs to update the inventory of what we have and where items are being stored. The picnic tables could possibly be used around the Town and other items could be reallocated.

Eric informed the Board that he should have some drawings of new signage for the Town Hall by the end of next week, which will be sent to town committees and stakeholders for review. Once the new sign design is approved, the form can be used for new signs throughout the Town. Kathleen asked for multiple designs in order to have choices. Eric agreed to ask for an alternate version to choose from.

Roger stated that he was unhappy with a response to an email from a resident. The email asked if the Foundry had a Special Permit for their sign on their building. Roger had discussed this with Marie and she had intended to place this as an agenda item on the next Select Board meeting. Roger inquired as to the status of this and shortly after that received a copy of an email responding the inquiry stating that the Foundry had all their required permits to date. Roger felt this did not answer the resident's question and seemed an abrupt response. Eric took responsibility for Marie's response, stating that the Building Inspector had a thorough process with the Foundry last year of reassessing their building layout and uses, and that further scrutiny by the town would be onerous and unnecessary.

Roger then read a letter to the Board stating that he will be resigning as of May 9th. This will allow for his position for the remaining two years, to be filled at the Annual Town Election.

Citizen Speak:

Joe Roy, Parks & Recreation Member, stated that he will miss Roger on the board and wished him well. He then thanked Curt for his ideas with the traffic issue on Main Street. He suggested using solar lighting at the crosswalks and he would assist if the Board wants help with public outreach on the issue of traffic and the crosswalk on Main Street.

Joe Roy, Jr thanked Roger for his service to the Town and understood his decision to resign. He told Roger that there is always a place on the Vision Committee for him.

Eric made the following motion, seconded by Roger, to enter into executive session;

Anticipated executive session in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A Paragraph 21 (a)(6), to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Select Board (Merritt Way)

Roll call vote;

Roger Yes

Kathleen Yes

Eric Yes

Open Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie U. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

-Email from Randy Thunfors to appoint Robin Bankert

-Draft of Annual Town Meeting Warrant

-Email From Peter Dillon with Warrant Article for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting