

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Select Board
Tuesday, January 12, 2021
Remote Online Meeting (Meeting ID 846 6634 4292)
Called to Order at 7:00 p.m.**

Remotely participating were Board members Harvey Boshart, Christopher Houston, and Laurie Bent, Chair. Also present were Town Manager Leon A. Gaumond, Jr., Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis, and Recording Secretary Kara Fleming.

Ms. Bent called the remote meeting to order and read the following:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Weston will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. We will strive to provide access to such meetings via a link to call in, or other similar option. In the event we are unable to accommodate the same, despite best efforts, we will post recorded sessions of the meeting as soon as possible following the same. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings.

Executive Session: Exemption 6 – to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property on 83 and 85 Newton Street

MOTION: Ms. Bent moved that the Select Board vote to go into executive session for the following purposes: Executive Session: Exemption 6 – to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property on 83 and 85 Newton Street. 2nd Mr. Boshart.

Ms. Bent declared that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Board. And further, that the Board will resume in open session.

Roll call vote: Mr. Boshart, Mr. Houston and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously**

State Senator Michael Barrett and State Representative Alice Peisch

- a) 2021 Legislative Session
- b) Route 20 and Route 30 TIP Projects
- c) Local/School Aid Outlook for Fiscal Year 2022
- d) Challenges for Local Elections and Town Meetings in 2021

Representative Peisch commented that a very productive session ended last week, January 6th. Accomplishments include, transportation, climate bill, economic development bill as well as legislative action relative to the pandemic (elections, remote town meeting protocol, contractual requirements relative to paying vendors such as bus companies). Also passed were bills for school breakfast and lunch programs. Not many brand new initiatives, however the Student Opportunity ACT implementation will be a focus.

Senator Barrett discussed the Clean Energy Bill, which was approved in both the House and Senate. The climate Bill is awaiting Gubernatorial approval. Issues significant to Weston are increasing gas leaks and hence approving the Futures Act which is part of the Climate Bill. Net Zero energy emissions with new construction at the municipal level is a priority and is being discussed.

Senator Barrett inquired how the Select Board felt about early voting and implementing early voting as a future option. Ms. Bent commented on voting and the fact that early voting expires March 31, she inquired if this could be extended. Mr. Houston supported early voting to spread the opportunity to vote

beyond election day. Town Clerk Davenport supported early voting and stressed that residents would appreciate early voting even post pandemic. Mr. Houston inquired about the flexibility of Town Meeting and the potential of remote Caucus. Representative Peisch asked the Select Board for a list of requests. Attorney Goldberg commented that KP Law would be able to offer guidance.

Ms. Bent discussed the outdoor Town Meeting in September which worked out well, and an outdoor venue could be a solution for Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Houston stressed a request to extend the remote participation order for both Board Members and Participants. Ms. Bent echoed this thought stressing that having more choice for how to function is helpful.

Route 20 and Route 30 TIP Projects

Steve Fogg, Department of Public Works

Mr. Fogg discussed the intersection improvement project at Route 20. The project includes signaling the intersection. A 25% design hearing will occur in the early Spring.

The Route 30 project is a corridor project from the Natick to Newton lines, including building a shared-use path and new drainage. The 25% design submission was in October, MASS DOT will respond by early March. Ms. Bent commented that the Route 30 project is a regional project allowing many residents across communities to cycle in via the shared-use path. Mr. Houston commented on the dangers of the current intersection at Route 20, stressing that the improvements are very important to Weston.

Representative Peisch and Senator Barrett encouraged the Select Board and DPW to attend future transportation hearings and perhaps prioritize the two projects. Representative Peisch will reach out to the MPO, but it may be worth focusing on the larger project, and perhaps Weston could manage the (smaller) Route 20 project. Representative Peisch also addressed the train station requests and the importance of keeping the stations as train stops. Mr. Houston discussed that the stops (Silver Hill & Hastings) are a low-cost request, and hopes that the closure is temporary. Representative Peisch made the point that the changes were communicated as temporary, and should be temporary. Senator Barrett expressed concern that a number of cutbacks may become more long standing. The unknown variable is, will commuter patronage bounce-back?

Local/School Aid Outlook for Fiscal Year 2022

Representative Peisch discussed the recent Fed funding for MA is \$730 million in education aid for k-12, which will be distributed through Title One. An additional \$40 million dollars is at the discretion of the Governor. In the FY21 budget created a \$55 million fund to help with Covid; it is general and being distributed as \$25-\$75 per student. The consensus revenue numbers are coming out this week and will be good. The hope is to make a dent in an implementation in the Chapter 70 dollars within the time frame that was outlined. Cuts are not likely. Representative Peisch will keep an eye on school enrollment as there has been a decline in school enrollment due to the pandemic.

Resident Comments

There were none.

Town Caucus, Town Election, and Annual Town Meeting

Attorney Goldberg discussed the upcoming election and Town Meeting respective to public safety. Changing the date of the caucus will require special legislation as requested by the Select Board. The Select Board could approve a special act to be prepared by Attorney Goldberg and sent to the Governor's office. Having the Senator and Representative sign on to the special act is helpful. Another route could be through showing support for a general special act which apply to all city and towns. Ms. Bent asked if Weston could partner with other Towns with the special act. Town Clerk, Deb Davenport, will contact Town Clerks from surrounding Towns. The committee on election laws will have a high volume of work upon return, however as of now with gathering limits of 25, a municipal caucus cannot be held in accordance of law. Chapter 93 (which was passed last year) ratified, validated and confirmed any delay in dates of elections or Caucus which sets a precedent. Attorney Goldberg will send a special act draft

for review. Attorney Goldberg stressed that in addition to changing dates, early voting and flexibility of polling hours are something that should remain on the radar.

Newton Street Order of Takings

Mr. Gaumond is working with Town Counsel and the DPW Staff to work with residents of Newton Street to allow the project to continue. The project is nearing completion.

MOTION: Mr. Houston moved to approve and execute orders of 83 and 85 Newton Street to be finalized and recorded by Town Counsel in accordance of ongoing negotiations with property owners. 2nd Mr. Boshart. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Boshart, Mr. Houston and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously**

Revised Grant of Location Agreement for 99 North Avenue

Mr. Gaumond reviewed the grant of location which was issued to the Hersums in February. The work on town property was to be completed by end of 2020. Attorney Beth Nolan is seeking an amendment to the agreement which the DPW has reviewed and have no objection to the request. The work plans have been amended, but not significantly.

MOTION: Mr. Boshart moved to approve an extension of the grant of location agreement for 99 North Ave to April 1, 2021. 2nd Mr. Houston. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Boshart, Mr. Houston and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously**

Proposed Revisions to the Commercial Dog Walking Regulations

Ms. Bent discussed that the Commercial Dog Walk licenses are up for renewal in February. In advance of license renewal, ideas surrounding the regulations and improvements have been shared with current commercial dog walkers. Feedback from the commercial dog walkers has been aggregated and reviewed. The trails are being used at high volume, and the goal is to minimize conflict and maintain the safety of residents and commercial dog walkers.

Mr. Boshart reviewed the issues with abandoned dog bags and the necessary clean up. The question was raised to increase the \$25 dog license fee to take into account the services needed to keep the trails clean. Mr. Houston asked if the guidelines (of dog behavior) apply to dogs of both residents and commercial dog walkers. Ms. Bent responded that yes, the dog must be within control of either the resident or commercial dog walker.

Sanford Whitehouse of 119 Radcliff Road asked about the new regulation time-frame. Ms. Bent responded that the Commercial Dog Walker must sign up by end of February, so any new regulation under the bylaw will be put in place by mid-February.

Signage Project Update

Mr. Houston discussed establishing guidelines for unified signage. As a joint project of Planning Board and Select Board, a consultant has been identified to assist in creating font/color and consistency guidelines. Next steps are for the consultant to aggregate feedback and draft a proposal for the working group. By the end of February, the guidelines should be established.

Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Houston moved to approve the consent agenda. 2nd by Mr. Boshart
Roll call vote: Mr. Boshart, Mr. Houston and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously**

Approve a request from the Weston Public Library to accept a donation of \$400 from Ms. Elizabeth Brew Boyd and Mr. John McCoy Boyd to be applied to Weston Art & Innovation Center gift revenue account.

Approve a request from the Weston Fire Department to accept a gift of \$500 from Maria Buttolph to be applied to the Fire Department's gift account.

Approve a request from the Weston Police Department to accept a gift of \$25 from The Kraft Family Blood Donor Center, which will be used for coffee or miscellaneous items during community and training events.

Approve a request from the Council on Aging to accept \$3,886 in gifts from multiple donors, \$250 from Robert L. Birnbaum, \$500 from Andrea & Paul Pettinato, \$100 from John & Marsha Tucker, \$250 from Carol & Gene Ott, \$50 from Verna B. Rankin, \$100 from Henry & Susan Reeder, \$750 from Jean E. MacQuiddy, \$100 from Ingeborg Uhlir, \$36 from Debra B. Darling, \$50 from Jean Thurston, \$250 from Vida & Arthur Goldstein, \$100 from Arthur & Jean Jones, \$1000 from William F. Johnson, \$100 from Gail E. Monahan and \$250 from Lucy Saunders to be applied to the miscellaneous gift account.

As the Licensing Authority for the Town of Weston, approve a request for a 2021 Common Victualler's License, issued under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 140, Section 2, Ye Olde Steve LLC d/b/a Ye Olde Cottage.

Adjourn Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Houston moved to adjourn. 2nd by Mr. Boshart

Roll call vote: Mr. Boshart, Mr. Houston and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously**

Regular Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Harvey R. Boshart
Clerk

Note: A copy of all documents, explanatory material, and exhibits presented to and used by the Select Board as part of this meeting are attached to the approved minutes