

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Select Board
Tuesday, July 11, 2023
Remote Online Meeting (Zoom 824 5721 9606)
Called to Order at 6:30 p.m.**

Remotely participating were Laurie Bent (Chair), Christopher Houston and Thomas Palmer, Select Board Members. Also present via zoom were Town Manager Leon A. Gaumond, Jr., Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis, Assistant to the Town Manager, Michelle LeBlanc, and Council on Aging Board Vice Chair, Joan Heilbronner. Present via zoom were COA Candidates Laura Whitehouse, Karin Ott, Karen Kirk, Anita Ramen and Alexandra Vacroux. Also present via zoom were Affordable Housing Trust Chair Sarah Rhatigan and Town Planner Imaikalani Aiu.

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

Under current state law public bodies may continue holding hybrid and fully remote meetings, without a quorum of the public body physically present, as long as adequate, alternative access is provided. Information about how to join a hybrid or fully remote hearing will be included in the required Open Meeting Law posting.

Resident Comments: None

Interviews to fill the vacancies for the Council on Aging:

Ms. Heilbronner described what experiences and qualities they were looking for in their candidates. For experience the COA seeks leadership experience of corporate, municipal, or non-profit boards or committees, an understanding of town governance in Weston, experience in Strategic Planning or established connections with other organizations and leaders in Weston. The COA wants its members to have a deep interest in the mission of the COA and a willingness to serve as a COA ambassador in the community; recognition and appreciation of the broad range of generations the COA serves and the diversity of their interests and needs; enthusiasm and the time to fully participate in Board activities including meetings, committee work, and events; and a willingness to serve as a leader.

Ms. Kirk stated she and her family have been residents of Weston for 18 years. Ms. Kirk stated that she has three daughters, and the youngest has just finished high school. Ms. Kirk stated she is close with her elderly mother, and elderly neighbors. Ms. Kirk is aware of how to improve the quality of life for the elderly population. Ms. Kirk has a background in Fidelity Investments, Real Estate Sales, and working with students with Special Needs.

Ms. Ott stated she has always had an interest in working with the elderly here in Weston. Ms. Ott is an active volunteer at the COA and is a member of the Elderly Housing Committee. She enjoys working with the older population. She is approaching the age of retirement and would have the ability to be involved. Ms. Ott has previous work experience at both the Brook School Apartments, and with assisted living. Ms. Ott has an Accounting background and was active in various Town social events including at the High School.

Ms. Raman has served on the School Committee and was Chair of it. She has knowledge and understanding of how Town Government works. She has relationships with other Weston Committee members. Ms. Raman is interested in working with the older population because she is involved with them. She does the meal delivery service Meals on Wheels to the elderly community. Ms. Raman noted that the COA is an important place for the elderly population to gather. Ms. Raman wanted to give back to the Community, and working with the COA was the best fit for that.

Ms. Vacroux moved to Weston four years ago. She stated that she wants to remain engaged in the Community by offering service and outreach. She currently volunteers with High School students and is involved with the US Navy Sea Cadets. Ms. Vacroux has reflected on her own life, and volunteer work and felt that she wanted to give back to the older population. Ms. Vacroux noted how invaluable senior services were for her single grandmother and would like to give back to the older population.

Ms. Whitehouse grew up in Weston. She is passionate about advocating for the older adult population, specifically those who are unwilling or unable to advocate for themselves. She was the sole caregiver for her elderly mother as she suffered from Alzheimer's for almost 10 years. She wants to incorporate her business experience as a former Senior Executive at Biotechnology, and her current occupation as a Registered Nurse to help identify opportunities to make a difference in the older population. She has completed specialized training to become a Geriatric Resource Nurse. This specialized training has provided additional education in dealing with older adults. She has increased awareness and understanding of both the medical and psychosocial needs of the older adult population. Ms. Whitehouse is continuing her higher education specializing in Geriatrics.

Mr. Palmer noted that all the candidates are qualified, and it is a tough decision to narrow it down to three. He said the COA Board Members have previously interviewed all the candidates, and those in attendance today are the finalists.

Mr. Houston wanted to recognize that all the candidates present are good, qualified candidates. He stated that given their backgrounds and experiences, he would recommend Ms. Whitehouse and Ms. Raman to be two of the three candidates selected.

Ms. Bent stated that generally when candidates are interviewed, the Select Board does not decide at that time. Ms. Bent noted, however, that the COA was hoping to fill their membership openings this evening.

Mr. Houston mentioned that those who do not get appointed to the COA, can still volunteer their time with the COA, including being an Associate Member.

Mr. Palmer said he would recommend Ms. Whitehouse, Ms. Raman and Ms. Ott as the three chosen candidates.

Ms. Bent also recommended Ms. Whitehouse, Ms. Raman and Ms. Ott as the chosen candidates. Ms. Bent also observed that Ms. Vacroux and Ms. Kirk have impressive experience and backgrounds. She recommended that if they still wanted to be part of the COA, they could contribute in other ways. She also encouraged them to look at other volunteer opportunities within the Town that would be a great fit for them.

MOTION: Mr. Houston moved to appoint Karin Ott, Anita Ramen & Laura Whitehouse to the Council on Aging to fill the vacancies to expire on June 30, 2027. 2nd by Mr. Palmer.

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

Discussion on All-Committee Meeting

Ms. Bent explained that Pre Covid, the All-Committee Meeting was about all the Boards/Committees gathering at Regis College the first Saturday in November to discuss their current projects. Those members with a lot of active projects moving would have the opportunity to inform others about the

projects, status, considerations of their projects, and to answer questions. It was also a time for those involved with the Town, to be social and engage other members from other Boards/Committees. Ms. Bent is in favor of bringing this event back.

Mr. Palmer feels it is a worthy social setting. He recalls when he participated in this meeting when he was part of the JST Committee. He said it's a casual meeting that is posted, open to the public. He also felt that it was a nice way to thank the Committees/Board Members for all they do, and to see other Members you normally would not have the chance to interact with.

Mr. Houston stated the initial purpose for creating this All-Committee Meeting was because many of the Boards/Committees had limited or no knowledge of what other Committees/Boards were working on. In the past, members of Committees and Boards became unhappy if, at Town Meeting, they lacked prior knowledge of important projects, or they did not have enough time to review materials. The All-Committee Meeting brought everyone together so projects, questions, and other information could be shared.

Ms. Yanakakis noted that she recalled prior to the All-Committee Meeting, people at Town Hall Meeting standing up vocally expressing that there were projects and items they had never heard of being presented by Boards and Committees. She believes there is more of an ongoing communication now among the Committees/Boards, and everyone tends to share what they are doing. She provided the example of how the Fire Station Study has multiple Boards/Committees involved and there is communication. She feels the lesson was learned where people realize the importance of communicating with one another.

Ms. Bent said that it is more important now to have the All-Committee Meeting since we no longer have a newspaper that can help publicize projects and publicize what Committees and Boards are working on. She noted that attending All-Committee Meetings in the past has helped her learn about projects she had no knowledge of. Ms. Bent said she would be open to other ideas on how this event is organized.

Ms. Bent said a vote is not necessary, however the sense of the meeting is that all the Select Board members want to have the All -Committee Meeting on the morning of November 4th, 2023.

Meet with Affordable Housing Trust on the Greatlands project and general update.

Ms. Rhatigan said the Housing Trust have been eager to get things going for the Greatlands Parcel (Riverside Drive area). The Housing Trust has been interested in moving forward with next steps in terms of figuring out what type of housing might be built on this land. The land is not large, however is over an acre which is buildable. They would like it to be either affordable Housing, or work force housing. The main goal is to provide multi-family housing on the site in a location that is convenient for commuting whether via highway or public transportation. Ms. Rhatigan said part of the agreement is the developer is required to pay up to \$100,000 to the Town to help with a feasibility development study, or for a pre-development study to see if housing can be built on the lot. Due to the Development Agreement, no more than twenty housing units would be proposed for the site.

Ms. Rhatigan was suggesting either the creation of a working group or a Committee to help with launching the feasibility study, using the funds from the developer. She would like to hire a Consultant to help with evaluating the site. Ms. Rhatigan outlined who the Affordable Housing Trust Members would like on the working group or Committee; Two Trustees from the Housing Trust who have experience and would be a good fit for it, a member of the Planning Board as an Ex officio, Imai Aiu (Town Planner), The Town Building Inspector as an Ex-officio John Field, possibly a Select Board Member as a Liaison, and possibly one or two at large members (neighbors from the proposed site). Ms. Rhatigan stated that having members from the community where the site is located would be invaluable.

Ms. Rhatigan stated the project would be twenty units or less, and an architect would have to figure the housing layout, where the septic system would go, and what kind of construction would be used. Once this is evaluated, then the group or committee can go ahead with the type of housing in terms of income level (affordable housing or workforce, or both).

Ms. Bent said this seems to be a logical next step for this process. Ms. Bent stated that \$100,000 is a start to get the process going. Ms. Rhatigan asked Mr. Gaumont for further clarification with respect to the developer and the \$100,000. She wanted to know if she was supposed to supply the developer with an invoice, or just transfer a sum of money and a budget to work with. Mr. Gaumont spoke with the developer and indicated that the language in the development agreement states the applicant agrees to pay all the Town's costs and expenses associated with creating a multi-family development, including but not limited to costs of consultants, legal and other professional services and the like up to a maximum of \$100,000; such total to be held by the Town consistent with Massachusetts law.

Mr. Houston said a neighbor or two (who have knowledge and understanding of the project) on the Committee who could help assist the rest of the community with understanding the project and would make the process easier. Mr. Houston said Mr. Harvey Boshart (former Select Board Member) was involved in this project as an AHT Trustee and wants to reach out to him to see if he is still willing to be a liaison on this.

Mr. Palmer stated that it would be great if Mr. Boshart was willing to still be involved with this project. Mr. Palmer said he would have no issue with stepping up and being a liaison to ensure there is direct Select Board involvement. Mr. Palmer asked if Greatlands wanted to part of the Committee, and Mr. Gaumont said no.

Ms. Bent said the State is attempting to encourage new housing developments near public transportation. She asked if there are any implications for the State's Transit-Oriented development initiative with this project. Mr. Aiu stated that he did not believe so because the Riverside T stop is no longer part of Weston's Transit-Oriented Development housing requirement. Furthermore, the new construction guidelines require at least twenty-five contiguous acres and this lot is too small to meet that requirement.

After some further discussion, the Working Group should consist of; two Affordable Housing Trust Members (one being Harvey Boshart), one Planning Board Member (as Ex Officio), one Building Inspector (Ex Officio as needed), up to four At Large Members (including some neighbors to the property), one Select Board Member as a liaison and to check to see if someone from the Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee. Mr. Gaumont checked with Ms. Rhatigan to see if this seemed like a good plan, and she was pleased with it.

Mr. Gaumont will create a charge for the Committee and bring it back to the Select Board at a future meeting.

Ms. Rhatigan provided a general update from the Affordable Housing Trust. They have been working on reconstituting a program, the Home Improvement Fund, which was active in the past. This program aims to assist owners of affordable deed-restricted properties, and help with repairs/improvements in their homes. The owners themselves qualify as income-eligible due to their limited income. These owners need repairs/improvements to their homes which would be deemed health and safety related (i.e., maintaining the structure). Previously, the funds were from the Town, and are not CPA eligible. Ms. Rhatigan is asking the Town for funding to get the program up and running again. Ms. Rhatigan stated she was looking for around \$100,000 for this fund. Ms. Rhatigan stated they have the application, and everything else is all set up. Mr. Gaumont is checking with Legal Counsel to ensure that the Affordable Housing

Trust can operate the program again. Mr. Gaumond noted that regardless of the fund amount, Town Meeting approval will have to appropriate funds. He said ARPA Funds would have a lot less restrictions. Ms. Rhatigan is hoping to get to Special Town Meeting with this request.

Ms. Bent asked if the deed-restricted properties also have an asset limit. Ms. Rhatigan stated that the Regional Housing Services Office uses the State's method evaluating a person's income. They take a percentage of a person's assets, and the person is not allowed to own another residence. Ms. Rhatigan stated that the application also asks questions about a person's assets. Ms. Rhatigan noted that there are some people in the Community who could really use their help with this program.

Ms. Rhatigan provided another general update. The Housing Trust has launched an evaluation of the Town's accessory dwelling unit by-law. They are in the process of working with Planning Board Members, to propose a liberalization of the accessory dwelling provisions to allow homeowners to have an easy path to an accessory dwelling unit in their home if they meet certain criteria. The homeowner would apply for a building permit, and if all the criteria are met, they would be able have construction done. One criteria is that the owner must live in either the house, or accessory dwelling unit. Ms. Rhatigan said the details are still being worked on. Once they are ready to roll out the details, a joint meeting with the Planning Board will be scheduled.

Ms. Rhatigan gave a final update on the Village at Silver Hill, which had one affordable housing unit in it. She said the lottery for the application was picked, and they had 116 applicants. They created a waitlist due to the high volume of applicants. Ms. Rhatigan noted that there are a lot of families/individuals who could benefit from affordable housing.

Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Palmer moved the Consent Agenda as follows. 2nd by Mr. Houston.

- Approval of minutes
- Vote to observe Veteran's Day on November 11th to be closed on the day after Thanksgiving.

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

Meeting Adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Thomas Palmer
Clerk