

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 15, 2020 SELECT BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Board Members Chair Mike Houghton, Vice Chair Joe Lovejoy along with Town Administrator David Moore and Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau were present at the Municipal Center.

The Board Chair opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The Board Chair opened the Public Hearing on the 79-E Application for 82 Portsmouth Avenue.

Mr. Moore directed attention to a memo that Town Planner Tavis Austin had previously provided which outlined the program, the application and the process steps to move the application forward, which he briefly reviewed. The application meets all the criteria and the decision to grant by the Board needs to be made along with the number of year to extend relief. Bob Daros, owner of 82 Portsmouth Avenue, reported on the progress of renovating the house. He was appreciative of the Board's consideration of their 79E application. Dave Canada, representing the Heritage Commission spoke in support of the application, commending the work Mr. Daros is doing on the house. Mr. Daros invited the Board to view the home and the progress being made. Mr. Moore pointed to communication sent by the Heritage Commission to the Board noting it was the only public comment received.

Mr. Houghton motioned to close the public hearing. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion.

Mr. Lovejoy wanted to hold off on a decision on the application in order to hear Ms. Knab's input on the application. He expressed appreciation for the work Mr. Daros has done on the home.

Mr. Houghton had some of the technical questions and confirmed the work was being carried out in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior standards for rehabilitation. Mr. Daros responded it was. Mr. Daros detailed some of the issues he's encountered in renovating the home while continuing to retain its historical nature. Mr. Houghton yielded to Mr. Lovejoy's request. He also voiced support for the work Mr. Daros has done on the house.

Next, Mr. Houghton directed attention to Town Clerk Joyce Charbonneau who came before the Board to discuss holding elections during a pandemic. She's been monitoring the State's guidance and believes there will likely be new legislation regarding election procedures. She expressed concern over many aspects of the voting process during this health crisis. Ms. Charbonneau anticipates an overwhelming number of absentee ballots. There are very specific laws pertaining to processing absentee ballots and she questions the logistics of completing the task in a timely manner during the day and evening of the election. They debated whether the Municipal Center would have sufficient physical space for required social distancing. The possibility of holding the elections at the elementary school was raised. Doing so would pose additional issues which would need to be investigated. Ms. Charbonneau emphasized the amount of time and work involved in verifying absentee ballots. It was decided to broaden the conversation with other staff and election officials to discuss the many facets of holding the elections. Ms. Charbonneau made the Board aware of some potential conflicts within the law

about holding an election in a school. Mr. Moore will investigate the possibility of holding the election at the Memorial School. Ms. Charbonneau is looking into the acquisition of another accu-vote machine, which could be dedicated to absentee ballots expected to be high in number for this election. They further discussed maintaining public safety as well as voter rights. Ms. Charbonneau speculated on voter turnout. They briefly discussed logistics of holding the September election at the Municipal Center while adhering to social distancing protocols. Mr. Houghton expressed appreciation for the work the Town Clerks have been doing to accommodate the public during this difficult time.

A letter from the Salt River Condos regarding curbside collection was the next agenda item that Mr. Houghton addressed. Mr. Moore explained the arrangements the Town has with some condos to manage their trash disposal. He confirmed that the Curbside Collection Advisory Committee has always been aware that some modifications would need to be made if we decide to begin automated collection. .

Mr. Houghton said that he had received some monthly Department Reports. Both board members would like to address them at the next meeting.

Next, Mr. Houghton inquired about phase I of re-opening the town offices. Mr. Moore reported it is going well. Small committees will be invited to meet in the building. The next step would be to have the teleworkers come back to the office.

Library Director Lesley Kimball joined the meeting. Mr. Houghton invited her to give her department report. Ms. Kimball began by describing the range of comfort her employees have expressed about returning to work. She's been working with Building Inspector Shanti Wolph on protective measures which has eased some of the anxiousness of the staff. By the end of next week, all staff will have worked in the building for at least 10 hours a week. Curbside lending has been very successful with many people taking advantage of it. The DPW crew did a great job installing the plexiglass. However, she expressed sadness at the necessity of it. Mr. Houghton commended her and her staff on their creativity and the ways they've met the community's needs. Ms. Kimball went on to explain how she'd like to take small steps to begin to re-open the library, in coordination with the re-opening of the Municipal Center. Mr. Houghton was supportive and recognized the many challenges she will encounter with safely re-opening. Mr. Houghton made a motion to appoint the alternate trustees, Kathy Bower, Beth Rohloff and Michael Deutsch to the Library Board of Trustees as recommended by the Library Director. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion.

Ms. Kimball presented salary compensation adjustments. Mr. Moore gave additional explanation indicating he was working with Ms. Kimball on the revised budget.

Mr. Houghton called on Dante Mulcahy who called in to the meeting to discuss his Eagle Scout project. He is proposing to build a gaga pit. He has been working with Parks & Recreation Director Seth Hickey on the proposed project. The connection was then lost with Mr. Mulcahy. The Board continued to discuss the project. They would like to discuss it with Mr. Hickey and generally obtain additional staff input. Mr. Moore will give the Board's feedback to Mr. Hickey to pass along to Mr. Mulcahy.

Mr. Houghton addressed the next agenda item - curbside collection. Mr. Moore reported that the Curbside Collection RFP has been approved by the CCAC and is ready to be sent. He advised keeping the CCAC involved once the proposals come in.

Mr. Moore reviewed the logistics for Town Meeting. They discussed tent rentals and accommodating the public, should they want to speak at the meeting and Covid related protocols. The costs, which may be up to \$10,000, is the type expense anticipated by the Municipal Relieve Recovery fund established by the State.

Mr. Houghton directed attention to the budget. Both Board members discussed the budget materials distributed to the Board the previous week. The Board had a discussion final appropriation amount and asked for additional information, including how to get the budget closer to a zero percent increase. The Board discussed how the effect of the pandemic is ongoing and likely to cut deeper and last longer than we have seen so far, that means we have to try to plan not only for this year but the next as well. The Chair asked how we have been operating in the Town Offices can inform future operations and if we can reflect savings associated with this change in approach. After much discussion, it was decided to meet next week to further review the budget.

The next item for discussion was the Route 108 Facebook Live event on Wednesday. Mr. Lovejoy hasn't received any feedback despite Mr. Moore's publicizing the event. They felt it was important to give the public the opportunity to learn about the issue in every manner possible. They reviewed the logistics for the event.

RESERVATIONS

Mr. Moore requested the Amateur Radio Club be allowed to use the top of the hill at Stratham Hill Park provided social distancing measures are in place. The Board agreed to their use.

Mr. Moore presented a request from the Census Bureau to use Room A. The Board didn't object to the use. The Board noted the wisdom of collecting additional cleaning fees at this time.

9:59 pm Mr. Houghton made a motion to go into a non-public session. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion.

At 10:24 p.m. the meeting reconvened in public session and Mr. Houghton moved to seal the minutes finding that, failure to do so would render the proposed actions ineffective. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Lovejoy moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Houghton seconded and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Richard
Recording Secretary