

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
4-21-21  
Open Session – Remote meeting**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK

2021 MAY -6 P 12: 25

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:05pm. She announced that all votes will be roll call votes as the meeting participants are using remote access software. The meeting is being recorded and the audio file will be available on the Town website. Ms. Allen noted that this meeting will be conducted pursuant to the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimously voted by roll call vote*

**BOS Reports and Announcements**

Ms. Allen announced programs offered by the All Are Welcome Committee. Detailed information is located on the Town website. Trash Bash will be held on May 1<sup>st</sup>, with a rain date of May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Deer tick education will be held the same day. See the website for details.

**Town Administrator**

Finance Director/Town Accountant Donna Mangan will be retiring at the end of this fiscal year. She has done an excellent job and served the Town well for many years. The Human Resource Director will be posting the Town Accountant position and will meet with the BOS for a review of candidates and next steps. The board listed many of Ms. Mangan's accomplishments and all wished her well.

**Citizen Comments - none**

**Renewal of Junk Collector's license**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to renew the junk collector's license for Stonehouse Antiques, expiring 4/30/22. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

**Update on Fire Chief/Appointment of Interim Chief**

Mr. Morin announced that Chief Simpson is leaving the Town's employment on 4/26/21. He was informed of the chief's decision to accept the position of Fire Chief in Marshfield last week. The department has a good replacement for this unprecedented departure in the first year of a contract negotiated in good faith. He would strongly recommend Deputy Chief Kean as the Interim/Acting Chief to get the process moving. Ms. Allen wished Chief Simpson well after his 30 years of service to the Town. Mr. Rull stated that he is very angry about the precipitate way that the chief gave his notice, but he has great confidence in DC Kean. Mr. Graham is very disappointed in the chief's cavalier treatment of the Town with regard to giving almost no notice. Mr. Brown noted that Chief Simpson did an outstanding job, but he is extremely disappointed and shocked at the way that he departed Norwell. His actions did not display the character that was expected and not the way this transition should have transpired. However, all wished him well in Marshfield. Ms. Demong said she was disappointed but enjoyed working with Chief Simpson over the years and wished him well.

Mr. Morin advised the board to take a vote to make DC Kean the Acting Fire Chief.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to appoint Deputy Chief Dave Kean as Acting Fire Chief of the Town of Norwell upon the notice of Chief Jeffrey Simpson's resignation, effective 4/26/21 at 4:00pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

DC Kean thanked the board for their support, adding that the department does need this stability. A future appointment is the board's decision. Mr. Morin will determine next steps, and will check with the Town Clerk to see if the Acting Chief should be sworn in.

#### **Public hearing 7:15 – Table and Vine change of stock interest**

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to open the public hearing at 7:17pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote*

*Mr. Brown read the notice of public hearing published in the Patriot Ledger.*

Michael Gold, VP and Secretary/attorney for Table and Vine, stated that this entity is the liquor division of Big Y Foods. They are seeking approval for a change of stock interest, which was approved by the ABCC subject to the approval from the Town.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to close the public hearing at 7:21pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

No questions were asked by the board, and Attorney Gold noted that this transaction is just bookkeeping, with no material changes.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the application for a change of stock interest for Table and Vine, Inc. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Appointment of Special Police Officer Brian Kelley**

Chief Lee congratulated DC Kean, and wished Chief Simpson good luck in his new job.

He introduced Brian Kelley, giving a short recap of his background and reasons for appointment. He retired from the State Police and is ready to serve the Town as a Special Police Officer. Chief Lee outlined the duties of a Special Police Officer for the board.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to appoint Brian Kelley as a Special Police Officer for the Town of Norwell for a term expiring 12/31/21. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **ZBA Committee Appointment – Marshall Doughty: postponed**

#### **ZBA Committee Appointment – Stephen Lynch**

Mr. Lynch gave a summary of his background and reasons for applying.

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to appoint Stephen Lynch as a Board of Appeals Associate member for a term expiring 6/30/23. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) – Implementation Committee membership-discussion and vote –**

Chair Marynel Wahl is out of Town so discussion of this topic will be postponed to a future agenda. Ms. Allen reviewed the background of this committee, people who worked on the plan and the current membership of 8 people. Most agreed that a change in the current committee seat requirements would be in order and all discussed options to rework the makeup. The board would like a full time Town employee as the point person and Chair, such as the Town Planner or Conservation Agent. This topic will be included on a future BOS agenda.

#### **BOS Role in supporting appointed committees**

Ms. Allen gave a short synopsis of the background for this issue, citing the recent controversy surrounding a draft plan for a CHT AH project and a citizens' petition on the Town Meeting Warrant. In the ensuing discussions at committee meetings and on social media, CHT board members have been maligned over their involvement in this project. As the CHT is a BOS

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appointed committee, Ms. Allen asked about the support of this board for the work these volunteers are doing, or indeed for any BOS appointed board. She added that there are no Town resources to provide support to committees, monetary or otherwise.

Some members argued that a big part of the problem is notifying the residents about controversial projects well in advance. The lack of outreach by the committees has been problematic. Failure to get the word out and engage with the abutters should be a priority for future projects. Maybe create a budget line item to allow for public notices or advertising for the next fiscal year. For controversial issues, provide committees with more tools for publicity.

Ms. Allen asked, who would do that outreach? She reminded all that this particular Wildcat AH land has been the subject of publicly posted CHT meetings for many years, with all of the information available to residents who could have attended any of the open meetings. Ms. Demong said that regardless of the efforts of the Town to maintain transparency and provide notice, most people don't pay attention until an issue directly affects them. If they don't like the project, then they will say that the Town didn't provide them with enough notice, although there will never be enough notice. Ms. Demong cited examples of 20 Carleton property public meetings, where personalized attacks still took place and the Town was accused of not acting in good faith or working enough with residents. Ms. Allen said that it is the resident's responsibility to research what the property and surrounding areas is subject to. The Wildcat parcel was voted by the legislature (Town Meeting) to be used for AH at the 2004 Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Rull suggested the use of more social media, but others said that social media options are complex to use as a public forum.

Mr. Morin reminded all that the draft RFP was discussed on a previous BOS agenda. The draft was then given to the Wildcat HOA for review and input. The CHT provided the RFP at the request of the neighbors. There will be plenty of opportunity for input as it moves forward with hundreds of hours of public meetings before a shovel hits the ground.

Mr. Morin continued: "the RFP draft was maybe a little premature on the part of the CHT, but they halted the process the minute the HOA gave feedback. The CHT went beyond the statutory requirement to give information from the Town to the neighbors. It is appalling that volunteers serving in good faith are being accused of rigging the bidding system for working with an architect on a *draft* plan. The board should support the CHT on this and residents should be discussing the merits of the project, not the characters of people involved. The BOS should have the backs of the CHT on this work."

### **FY21 BOS Focus Areas Update**

The board reviewed the list of FY21 Focus Areas, citing the progress and status of each item. The complete list of these Focus Areas is on the BOS webpage.

### **#1 Capital Plans and Property Oversight**

Ongoing progress for the four listed projects

### **#2 Work with Planning Board**

Ongoing – will work with the Planning Board to revise meeting schedules in order to allow members of both boards to attend each other's meetings on occasion.

### **#3 Zoning Work with Planning Board**

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Mr. Graham has worked on this topic with the Town Planner and the Planning Board as time and meeting schedules have allowed. See #2.

#### **#4 Affordable Housing Work with Planning Board and Community Housing Trust**

Mr. Ivas joined the meeting to expand on his charge to the board at a previous Town Meeting to create a plan for the Town to meet the 10% AH inventory requirement within 10 years. Discussion ensued about efforts to move this forward, with Mr. Ivas citing information from other towns that built their own affordable housing projects. Ms. Allen directed Mr. Ivas to the Housing Production Plan that is posted on the Town's website. Mr. Graham and Mr. Ivas agreed to work together on strategies to self-build AH for the Town.

#### **#5 Economic Development**

There is no current plan for improvements to Town Center. Also, a letter was recently received from Federal Realty, owners of Queen Anne's Plaza, stating that they will not be able to move forward with any 40R project or other development projects because of potential septic/drinking water supply issues at the site. They have just signed a long term lease with Big Y so there are no plans for any future development at this time.

#### **#6 Traffic**

Ms. Allen reported that the state's study of Route 53 is almost finished and the Town is waiting for the final report. MassDOT finally reviewed the additional information sent to them by the Town on the road study to lower speed limits on the 3 main routes in the Town. Hopefully their decision will be received soon.

#### **#Public Safety**

Done. Police Chief Lee was hired in January 2021.

#### **#8 Communication with Residents and Civic Engagement**

This is a complicated topic because violating open meeting law is a concern. Any platform can be outbound information only with no comments allowed. Who would do the administration and made decisions about what and when to post. There is not enough staff at Town Hall to have a dedicated person for this task. Because information changes so quickly, the monitoring alone would take a large amount of time. Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of information dissemination methods. The best alternative currently is the Town website. Maybe Beta test 3 social media pages; BOS, AB and the Planning Board. Mr. Brown apologized for not yet drafting a Social Media policy as has been discussed for several years.

#### **#9 Support Town Administrator as appropriate with any COVID-19 issues**

Ongoing

#### **Approval of meeting minutes**

*Motion, made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to approve the meeting minutes for the Open Sessions on 2/24/24, 3/10/21, 3/16/21, and the Executive Session on 3/16/21. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Future agendas**

The BOS/BOA vacancy discussion will be scheduled for 5/5/21.

This meeting will be the last regular meeting for Selectmen Alison Demong and Joe Rull, who are not seeking reelection.

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**Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to adjourn at 9:11pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

*Ellen H. Allen*

Ellen Allen, Chair

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