

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Open Meeting Minutes  
4/10/19**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWNE CLERK  
2019 JUN 17 PM 3:59  
RECEIVED

**Present:** Ellen Allen, Alison Demong, Jason Brown

Peter Morin attended the Planning Board's hearing on the proposed sign bylaw and was not present.

Both Gregg McBride and Joe Rull were absent due to other commitments.

Chair Ellen Allen called the meeting to order at 7:00pm in the BOS conference room. She updated the board on the meeting with the town of Hanover representatives re: the Hanover Mall project. She recapped the "wish list" of mall related projects that the towns would like to include: Mill Street bridge, the Mill/South Street intersection, traffic signals, paving, the YMCA intersection. Some of these projects are in Norwell and some are in Hanover only. Per Ms. Allen, the MassWorks grant application total ask is now greater than \$3M. Sen. O'Connor will be involved in guiding this application process. This is really the town of Hanover's grant request so it does not preclude Norwell from asking and receiving another MassWorks grant elsewhere in the future. All are anxious to address traffic mitigation at the intersection of South and Main Streets with a traffic signal and would like it included in the ask. The price tag per traffic signal is ~ \$200-\$500K. This is therefore expected to be too expensive to be included in the grant application. All noted that this is currently the biggest development project on the South Shore. Hanover wants the South Street overpass bridge to look better. Discussion ensued about potential developer responsibility for these amenities.

Ms. Allen will announce future options for the Grange property tonight at the meeting. The Town will reach out again to the Legion, as they did in 2016 and 2017, and Ms. Laiosa has agreed to share all of her building repair estimates with the them.

In preparation for the upcoming discussion about the Sgt. Samuel Stetson house the board discussed the problems and potential next steps, noting that the Cemetery Committee has stated that it does NOT want the building at the entrance to the Stetson Meadows cemetery.

**Open Session at 7:30pm – Osborn Room, Town Hall**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:33pm. She reminded all that the meeting is televised and recorded. All rose to recite the pledge of allegiance.

**Approval of agenda, unanimously voted**

*Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the agenda as written.  
Unanimously voted*

**Citizen Comments – None**

**Selectmen Announcements**

Ms. Allen announced that the transfer of the Norwell Grange Hall has fallen through. The Preservation Restriction Agreement (PRA) was approved by the state, but the buyer thought that the cost of restoring the property would be too high. The BOS will reach out to the American Legion to ask again (as they did in both 2016 and 2017) if they are interested in this property for a meeting place and community center for their organization.

In preparation for this year's Town Meeting, electronic voting demos will be held at the Council on Aging (COA) Monday, April 29 at 1:30pm and Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. A smart device will be provided if you don't have one. Call the COA to make a reservation.

The Carleton property work day to clean up the stone walls will take place this Saturday from 9am to 3pm. Dress in work clothes, use permethrin for tick protection and bring tools.

The Board would like to give a shout out to Harbor Media and the Cable Committee for the Norwell Spotlight event last Thursday afternoon. They are asking residents to contact them with upcoming program ideas for broadcasts on the Town's cable channels.

Ms. Allen gave a short summary of last night's meeting to present the draft update to the Town's Affordable Housing Production Plan.

### **Town Administrator Report- None**

#### **Plumbing Inspector appointment – Howard Mekler**

Mr. Mekler was present at the meeting to give a summary of his background and credentials for the position of On-Call Plumbing and Gas Inspector. He is recommended by the Building Inspector.

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to appoint Howard Mekler as the On-Call Plumbing and Gas Inspector for a term ending 6/30/20. Unanimously voted.*

#### **Inspector of Animals Appointment**

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to appoint Brian Willard as Inspector of Animals for a term ending 4/30/20. Unanimously voted*

#### **Junk Collectors License Renewal**

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to renew the Junk Collectors license for Stonehouse Antiques, expiring 4/30/20. Unanimously voted*

#### **Resignation – All Are Welcome Committee**

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to accept with regret the resignation of Betsy Hilsinger from the All Are Welcome Committee. Unanimously voted*

#### **Public Hearing – Forest Ridge Street Acceptance**

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to open the Public Hearing at 7:40 pm. Unanimously voted*

The notice of public hearing in the Norwell Mariner was read by Ms. Demong.

Ms. Allen gave a background summary and list of all departments that have signed off on this street acceptance. All taxes are current.

No public comments were made.

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, that the board accept the layout of Forest Ridge as a Town Way with the boundaries, measurements and courses and distances on the plan therefore attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. Unanimously voted*

All signed the Forest Ridge documents for this street acceptance.

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to close the Public Hearing at 7:48pm.*

#### **Public Hearing – Henry's Lane Street Acceptance**

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to open the Public Hearing at 7:50 pm. Unanimously voted*

The notice of public hearing in the Norwell Mariner was read by Ms. Demong.

Ms. Allen gave a background summary and list of all departments that have signed off on this street acceptance. The outstanding taxes must be paid as a condition of this street acceptance.

No public comments were made.

*Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, that the board accept the layout of Henry's Lane as a Town Way with the boundaries, measurements and courses and distances*

on the plan therefore attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, subject to payment in full of the outstanding taxes. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Jason Brown, to close the Public Hearing at 7:54pm.

### **Status of Jacobs Farmhouse/Sgt. Samuel Stetson House – Update from the Norwell Historical Commission**

Noel Ripley, Chair of the NHC, gave a brief summary of the Jacobs Farmhouse project. The NHC hired TBA Architects to do a conditions report and then gave them a list of project priorities. A status list of pending project items from the NHC is attached to these minutes. They will be getting cost estimates shortly, starting with the de-leading and the farmhouse roof. The timeline is bids first, then award the contracts two weeks later. Contracts will be signed at the end of May, work to start in June. There are four phases of the project; this part is phase 1. The next parts of the project involve the chimney, ADA bathroom, etc. but there is no timeline yet. Some of these projects will hopefully happen simultaneously. Facilities manager Ted Nichols gave details about the project completion phases and timeline. The hope is to be mostly done by the fall. Mr. Ripley added that once TBA gets the bid process going the NHC will have a better timeline estimate. The Norwell Historical Society is also pushing to get their portions of the project done at the same time.

### **Sgt. Samuel Stetson House**

Mr. Ripley updated the board on the status and problems with this project. The attached status sheet also lists the updates. The NHC has decided on a location for the house, on the left side of the cemetery road. (See sheet for details)

The Cemetery Committee recently advised the NHC that it no longer wants the house sited at the entrance to the cemetery. However, the NHC recently voted unanimously to complete the project and gave a power point presentation on the house and their reasons for wishing to preserve it for the Town. Two CPA Articles to preserve and move this structure passed at prior Town Meetings: one for \$35K which has been spent and one to move the house to the cemetery site for \$114.5K, of which about \$91K remains. The house could be moved and restored for a total of \$148.5K, so the NHC would need additional funding of \$57.5K. They would like to request this at the fall town meeting if one is held.

The options being considered are:

1. Demolish the house, sell it to someone or move it. The NHC would like to preserve it for the history of the Town.
2. Dismantle the house, move it and then reassemble it in the new location. All agreed that this option would be very expensive and time consuming.
3. Find a buyer. It would cost about \$100K for someone to package and move the house.

Discussion ensued about the dilemma of preserving a historically significant structure and the lack of a viable plan. There is some potential for the North Bennett Street School to use the house as a teaching site, but how would that be a benefit to the Town? Estimates to restore the antique side of the house (without the ell) would be about \$13-15K.

The plan would be to move the house by the end of the summer, and ask for more funding to complete the restoration at the Special Town Meeting in the fall. One option being considered is to make the house a monument instead of a viable dwelling, restoring only the exterior. Some are in favor of preserving the house, but are reluctant to spend more money on it since it won't be used. This is a house with no home trying to move to a place where it will be an awkward fit. Discussion ensued about the poor shape of the house. NHC defended the house, saying it's not finished yet.

TOWN OF NORTHAMPTON  
1500  
PM 4:00

The board would like the NHC to work as a team to get some clarity on a plan going forward and make a decision. Do a cost estimate for fall town meeting with this in mind. Any future plan would still need another ~\$50K to finish the monument approach.

Ms. Allen invited Cemetery Committee Chair Wendy Bawabe to speak on this topic. Ms. Bawabe explained that she had been a major advocate of saving the house when this was brought to Town Meeting. She noted that there was no specific plan back then, just a stop-gap measure to save the house. There was no Stetson cemetery at that point 8 years ago. Today there is a cemetery there with burials that occur on a regular basis. When the committee was informed that the NHC was moving the house to the cemetery in its shrink wrapped state, they were appalled. They cannot have a shrink wrapped house at the entrance to the cemetery where people go to mourn and have funerals. The Cemetery Committee would be open to a comprehensive plan from the NHC. They are not in favor of the monument plan because the house would still need a great deal of maintenance. Who would pay for that? The Town is typically not a good steward of historic properties. All would like to investigate whether the revolving funds for the Jacobs Farmhouse and the Stetson Ford house could be repurposed to include this house for maintenance. Ms. Allen noted that the revolving funds for the Stetson Ford house are currently under discussion with the finance director. It might be possible to close some of the money out to the general fund and repurpose it to the Stetson house, but that would probably require a Town Meeting vote. Further discussion ensued about these revolving funds for the historic houses.

The motion at the Town Meeting in 2013 stated that the property will remain under the care and custody of the BOS, who could therefore decide what to do with the house. The board agreed that its future should be a Town wide decision at the fall Town meeting, not a decision by a quorum of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Brown advised the NHC to at least have a purpose for the house when presenting this request at the fall Town meeting.

Resident Vin Bucca reported that he had talked to the North Bennett Street School to see if the house could be moved to a location near the Stetson Ford house. Mr. Ripley opined that this idea would be starting all over again. Janet Watson reported that the house survey done by Michael Burrey is available for anyone to read. The house would have to be dismantled and re-assembled as it is too expensive to move whole.

Ms. Demong proposed a deadline for the blend of these committees to come up with a decision. She suggested working with the Cemetery Committee. Further options and parameters were discussed along with suggested dates to return to a BOS meeting for further discussion.

Gregg McBride arrived at 9pm. The board discussed and appointed Jason Brown as the BOS liaison to the NHC and Cemetery Committee for this project. The board thanked the NHC for their hard work.

### **Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn at 9:04pm.  
Unanimously voted*



Ellen Allen, Chair