

**Norwell Board of Selectmen
Open Meeting Minutes
9/12/18**

TOWN OF NORWELL
2018 OCT -4 AM 9:44

Present: Jason Brown, Gregg McBride, Alison Demong, Joe Rull, Peter Morin
Ellen Allen called in to participate in the meeting.
Town Counsel Bob Galvin

RECEIVED

Open session; 7:02pm

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Gregg McBride.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the 6/27/18 and 7/25/18 Open Session Meeting minutes. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the 7/25/18 Executive Session Meeting minutes. Unanimously voted

All discussed the correspondence received regarding replacement of the truck limit signs on Bridge Street. Mr. Rull noted that the town of Hanover did not sign off on these truck limits.

Future Meeting Agendas

- 9/19/18 - signs on Bridge Street; impact on River Street
- State Auditor discussion – status update and next steps

The board will discuss the 40 River Street project in Open Session. Mr. McBride updated all on ZBA hearing last night.

Discussion ensued about the Hanover mall plans affecting the Town as an abutter. This project will provide further reasons to get a handle on Town traffic in addition to the prospective Simon Hill development. Mr. Morin spoke to the lawyer for the mall development, who is aware of the Town's issues. Ms. Demong reported that the Pathways Committee wants to extend the Pathway from South St. to the back of the Hanover Mall. They're scheduling a meeting in the near future with the NSRWA and others about this.

The board paused the meeting to move from the BOS conference room to the Osborn Room at 7:25pm.

Open Session, Reconvened at 7:30pm

All rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. McBride reminded everyone that the meeting is televised and recorded.

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

Citizen Comments – No non-agenda items

BOS Reports - None

Town Administrator- Mr. Morin invited all residents to attend the first Norwell movie night this Friday on the Town Common. The family movie will be "A Bug's Life". Donations from the Town's merchants helped to underwrite this fun event.

John Adams Drive Issue and next steps

This street has been affected by the State highway project widening Rte. 3. The removal of a large number of buffer trees have created unsightly views of Rte. 3 and added more road noise to the neighborhood, especially at night. The Town would like to invite Mass DOT to a BOS meeting to discuss the possibility of some type of mitigation. Mr. Rull and Mr. Brown said that State Representative Dave DeCoste has been speaking to street residents. Ms. Demong shared a letter she had drafted to Mass DOT about this issue. Mr. Morin explained the lengthy mitigation process. A joint meeting would be the first of many steps. Mr. Rull added comments from Highfield Lane residents about the same Rte. 3 issues.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to support coordinating with the State Representative and State Senator and sending a letter to Mass DOT under the signature of the BOS Chair, to address these mitigation issues. Unanimously voted

Ms. Demong would like to make sure that all residents affected by this project are notified about scheduled meetings.

40 River Street Transactional Documents

Mr. McBride gave a short update on last night's BOS meeting with the Community Housing Trust (CHT) and the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Building permit fees reductions were discussed for this project. Mr. Morin confirmed with the Building Inspector that an amount of \$15K was sufficient to cover the Town's costs. ZBA member Ralph Rivkind suggested that Metro West set up an escrow account on which to draw for these permit expenses. Most of the project documents have been signed and notarized as required. Metro West is expected to sign off with the ZBA to obtain the building permit tomorrow so that they can close on their loan on Friday.

Mr. McBride asked for further questions from the board. Mr. Brown summarized his issues with the Metro West financial documents with regard to the PILOT document and the project as a whole. He is still supportive of the project concept instead of a "predatory 40B". The board reviewed the project's migration from a proposal for a private for-profit development of 14 affordable units to a 501(c)3 non-profit project of 18 mixed income all affordable units, which completely reconfigured the financial statements. Mr. Brown voiced concern over the financials from Metro West because their operating losses are sometimes covered by non-income funds. He also cited examples of other Metro West projects with "paper operating losses" and asked for the opinions of other board members. In response to Ms. Allen's question about board members who had reviewed the financials or this project's pro forma budget statements, Mr. Brown answered that he gave the statements a cursory review. Other board members noted that their areas of expertise do not include financial statement review. Mr. McBride stated that the statement line item 'Grant Money' is the contribution from the Town agreed to by the Community Housing Trust.

He also reminded all that the sole mission of Metro West is to provide affordable housing for communities. The Town received only 2 responses to the RFP, and this nonprofit company was a better choice for the project than the inexperienced for-profit developer. Mr. McBride maintains that this will be a good project. If it should fail, the Town will own everything; property, land, all plans and documents, etc. If the project moves forward, it will continue to be supported by the state and the lender, who is Eastern Bank. The board further discussed the reputation of Metro West, noting that they are well respected by DHCD, which is one of the three state entities providing a combined \$2.6M to the project. Those agencies will be monitoring the project. Mr. McBride concluded his comments by stating that this is a much needed and requested project in Norwell. It will be a rare opportunity for residents to remain in the Town and age in place.

Ms. Allen reminded the board the supporting subcontractors have strong reputations and are experts in their fields. She also noted that Eastern Bank has stepped up to lend \$2.5M to this project, which demonstrates that they are confident with the financial projections. She and Mr.

McBride added that there have been several BOS Open Sessions discussing the fact that this project is composed of 100% affordable units.

The board continued to discuss pros and cons for PILOT payment options with regard to caps, fixed and variable expenses, timing and payment strategy. Ms. Allen reminded the board that the PILOT must still be approved at Town Meeting.

In response to Mr. Brown's continued financial concerns, Ms. Allen informed the board that banks are required to invest in these types of affordable housing projects under the Federal Community Reinvestment Act. This is a unique form of lending that is done by lenders that specialize in affordable housing project loans. The goal is to make this project succeed. She added that this PILOT represents a small percentage of the Town's revenue, which would also be true if this were a for-profit developer paying normal property taxes. In her opinion, the nonfinancial benefits far outweigh the small revenue reduction from a PILOT. Ms. Demong stated that the increase in the Town's number of AH units is a tangible benefit. Board members also expressed appreciation for the hard working members of the Community Housing Trust, who generously donate their time and expertise in the AH field for the benefit of the Town. Mr. Rull would like more project details for himself and residents. He stated that he can't support the project at this time because several residents have told him that this project would be 100% for Norwell residents. He suggested that the town start on a new plan for the property. Per Ms. Allen, this is the Town's only shot at affordable housing on this site. If this project fails, there won't be any senior housing there. Mr. Brown agreed with Ms. Allen that the 2015 Annual Town meeting vote accurately reflects the wishes of the Town to have senior affordable housing at this site. Mr. McBride reminded all that the state has endorsed this project, adding that this is a typical implementation process for this type of project in Massachusetts. He again thanked CHT members Liz Hibbard and Rob Charest for holding Metro West to a high standard during negotiations.

Ms. Allen summarized the meeting goals for this evening, adding that there are still some project documents to be signed.

She reminded all that Local Preference doesn't mean Norwell residents only, adding that the project was never advertised with that statement. The lottery will prioritize Norwell veterans and Norwell seniors but cannot be reserved 100% for Norwell residents. Discussion ensued about the structure of Local Preference. There have been several project meetings to which residents were invited at venues such as the COA, Cushing Center and the Fire station. It was stated that the Town needs to initiate affordable housing projects to try to avoid unfriendly 40Bs and this is a good first step. The CHT will come to the BOS in October with an AH plan update.

Mr. Morin noted that last week's BOS vote addressed building permit fees, not the PILOT payment plan.

Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Ellen Allen, to approve the PILOT payment plan as defined in the side letter of agreement updated this week. As Ellen Allen is voting by phone, a roll call vote was taken after the general vote of 3-2 in favor of the motion.

Roll call vote: Rull – no, Brown – no, Demong – yes, McBride – yes, Allen – yes. Motion carried

The paperwork will be signed as needed.

Adjournment

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn at 8:30pm.

Unanimously voted


Ellen Allen, Chair

