

**Norwell Select Board
11-3-21
Open Session Minutes**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK
2021 NOV 18 AM 8:59

Present: Bruce Graham, Jason Brown, Ellen Allen, Andy Reardon, Pete Smellie, Peter Morin

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Graham at 7pm.

Approval of Agenda

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the agenda. Unanimously voted

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the Open Session Meeting minutes for 10/20/21. Unanimously voted

BOS Reports and Announcements

Ms. Allen passed along a reminder from the Conservation Commission for everyone to use caution on the trails after this past week's storm. The Highway/Tree and Grounds Department is doing a wonderful job clearing all the damage, so please be patient.

Congratulations to the COA (Susan Curtin, DeeDee Rogers and Debbie Blackington) on the receipt of their award from Norwell Spotlight TV. The final program of their Live Well series will be held on November 16th at the library.

Mr. Smellie sent kudos to the Highway/Tree and Grounds personnel who worked tirelessly throughout the Town during the storm. Well done!

Mr. Graham reported that this storm caused record damage in the Town and other communities on the South Shore. He echoed Mr. Smellie's comments about the hard work of the Highway/Tree and Grounds people. Well done!

Mr. Brown voiced his major concerns about the utility companies' response times, specifically National Grid and Verizon. He was disappointed with the management level of response and executive leadership as well as the interactions between Verizon and the police and fire departments for phone service issues. It is time to bring this service provider to account. There have been a number of really bad storms, and this one had the most negligible cell service yet! All voiced concerns about a probable number of 911 calls that did not get through in addition to the 150 calls that were answered. Communications basically failed. Especially disappointing was the fact that just over the Town line into Hingham the cell service restoration was immediate.

Storm preparedness will be on the meeting agenda in two weeks. Our staff, Highway/Tree and Grounds, Police and Fire did a stellar job! Every storm provides a learning opportunity, and all of these issues will be addressed on 11/17/21.

Mr. Reardon also voiced serious concerns in anticipation of the upcoming winter storms. Imagine if the storm had been in February! Public safety leaders are frustrated by the lack of support from utilities and communications were terrible.

Town Administrator

Mr. Morin thanked Mr. Ferguson and his Highway/Tree and Grounds staff for going above and beyond to help the Town recover from the storm. He also thanked the police and fire departments, who handled 137 calls in the first 24 hours of the storm. Kudos for a job well done! In the past, when storm response has been lacking, the cause was different each time. This time National Grid management is to blame for the delay. Many thanks to Sen. Pat O'Connor for contacting National Grid to get a timely response within an hour. Thank you to Rep. DeCoste as well.

Citizen Comments

None

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7:15 – Public Hearing – IRA Collision Center Norwell – Class II Motor Vehicle License
Business owners Randy Ellis, Robert Kennedy and John Zillioux attended the meeting via Zoom.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to open the public hearing at 7:23pm. Unanimously voted

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

IRA Collision Center Norwell business owners answered questions about the business. This is an ownership transfer of a well reputed business that has been running for years with no reported problems.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to close the public hearing. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the Class II Motor Vehicle License for IRA Collision Center Norwell, 154 Washington Street, expiring 12/31/21. Unanimously voted

As there is only one month left in this licensing period, there will be no fee for 2021. The annual license will be renewed on 1/1/22, with the applicable fee.

Town Clerk: Boards and Committees; open meeting/public records law, ethics updates

Town Clerk Pat Anderson was present to review the information packet that is given to all Town employees and committee members.

- Ms. Anderson sends a yearly letter to all departments, boards and committees for members to acknowledge receipt of the ethics and open meeting materials.
- Each new committee member is given a packet with current information when sworn in. Each must acknowledge receipt of the letter and take the state ethics test.
- The Town conducted in person training in 2017 and 2019 for open meeting laws and conflict of interest.
- There is no legal requirement for in-person training, only receipt of information. Various webinars are available, through the state and other agencies. Some have a cost (\$15) and some are free.
- Town Counsel could do a training session and record it for viewing on the website.
- 2020 was a tough year to schedule training with COVID and 4 elections.
- Ms. Allen suggested an annual reminder for all committee Chairs. To ensure that people are aware of the basics, maybe remind everybody once a year. Ms. Anderson does send a letter annually and gets calls with questions. She reminded all that the Attorney General's office is also available to answer questions addressing such topics as violation of the open meeting law.
- There are 2 ethics tests, state and municipal, which must be retaken every two years. Ms. Anderson will incorporate the test requirement into the annual reappointment letters.

Conservation office Color Printer Donation

Con Com Chair Marynel Wahl generously offered to donate a color printer to the Conservation office. The office has regular requests for detailed maps with better definition than black and white copies.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to accept the donation of a color printer for the Conservation office. Unanimously voted

Highway Surveyor/Complete Streets Committee Updates

The Traffic Study Committee update has been postponed until the committee can meet on 11/9/21.

Complete Streets Committee (CSC) Chair Peter Bloomfield was present to update the board.

- Past year's accomplishments: sidewalk grant and Town Meeting Article to continue the Main Street sidewalk to Homestead. Thank you for your support, especially Sen. O'Connor! Mr. Ferguson added a construction update for the sidewalk project – making great progress and will finish in the spring.
- Next year the CSC will continue to seek state and federal grants and ask at Town Meeting for funding to complete the sidewalk to Town Center.
- The state's maximum ask amount has been used for the Town. No new application can be submitted until FY2023 for a maximum ask of \$200K. The CSC will continue to look for other sources outside of the Complete Streets official program.
- No funding is lined up currently. The anticipated cost for 1800 linear feet is about \$350K. Discussion ensued about waiting to fund the project or find current sources. Per Mr. Morin, the Town could fund this right now. Mr. Bloomfield noted that this would not preclude asking for additional state funding in the future.
- Questions were asked and answered about state grants. The CSC could also revisit the priority list submitted to the state.
- Anticipated maintenance costs associated with the new sidewalks were discussed. Per Mr. Ferguson, all sidewalks are cleared with a snowblower or plowed. The incremental cost is not prohibitive. When the Town Center portion is completed, the total length will be 5 miles.
- Mr. Ferguson added that the sidewalks are getting a lot of use. It's safe, more kids walk to school and activities, seniors are out walking.
- Ms. Allen asked about the cost to continue the sidewalk from 40 River to the Town common. Per Mr. Ferguson, about \$200K.
- All discussed other sidewalk projects on the Town's wish list. The priority list of projects is on the Town website. The list could be reordered and expanded as it was created in 2017.
- Mr. Reardon thanked Mr. Ferguson for all the hard work done on Main Street, adding that the sidewalks seem to be having a traffic calming effect. This has also enhanced the Town as a real "neighborhood community".
- Will work with the schools and Pathways Committee to implement the state's safe walking programs.
- Kudos to Alison Demong and Ellen Moshier for their contributions while on the CSC.

Mr. Reardon asked about opening up the memorial stone for Justice Cushing. He was referred to Wendy Bawabe, NHS President.

Town Hall Renovation update

Mr. Morin updated the board on the project, adding that an OPM (NV5) was hired. The next step is reviewing and selecting architects. Seven RFQ responses were received, and the site visit was well attended. All are good companies with a good level of interest. The committee will choose 4 candidates at a brief meeting on Friday and schedule interviews with final four. The hope is to complete this step by the end of the month, with a goal of asking for project funding at Town Meeting in the spring.

Future Meeting Agendas

All discussed the upcoming meeting on November 17 and other agenda items.

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RECEIVED

Adjourn

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to adjourn at 7:58pm. Unanimously voted.



Bruce Graham, Chair