

**Norwell Select Board
3-16-22
Open Session Minutes**

TOWN OF NORWELL
TOWN CLERK
2022 APR -7 PM 2:30

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

Mr. Graham called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the Open Session Meeting minutes of the 3/2/22 meeting. Unanimously voted

Select Board Reports and Announcements

Ms. Allen asked that the American flag in the Osborn room behind the Select Board table be double checked for its location in the room.

Mr. Brown reported that the Traffic Study Committee (TSC) met yesterday to discuss the draft traffic policy. The pending Market Basket opening and new apartment complex led to discussions about the South and Mill Streets intersection and ideas to deal with the expected increase in traffic. The potential for a 30% increase in this traffic, which will also impact the high school traffic flow led to a suggestion to circle back to the Veda Engineering study for ways to deal with the expected traffic flow. The TFC will update the board when the new apartments are done.

Mr. Reardon gave a shout out to the parents and friends who helped with the Pinewood Derby last weekend. Everyone had a great time during this event in the Town Hall Gym. Thank you!

Town Administrator

Mr. Morin would like to join the town of Cohasset in sending condolences to the family of Officer Mark Jenkins of the Cohasset Police Department. Cohasset is a member of SSRECC, so our departments work closely with the Cohasset personnel.

Citizen Comments

Sean Brennan, 7 Lot Philips Lane: Mr. Brennan thanked Mr. Smellie and Mr. Reardon for putting forth the Article to transfer the last piece of the Carleton property to conservation. He also hoped that this vote will encourage Mr. Reardon to change his vote for the Wildcat property transfer to conservation. He also hoped that the board members who voted no on the Wildcat transfer to conservation would consider changing their votes to yes and make it unanimous.

Kevin Cassidy, 7 Hemlock Drive: Mr. Cassidy read a statement prepared by Katelyn White, 59 Lincoln Street, asking the board to please vote no for the competing motion for an Article to transfer the remaining Carleton property to the Community Housing Trust. Her statement commended those who voted for the Article to transfer the land to conservation.

Accept Resignation from Norwell Historical Commission – Janet Watson

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to accept with regret the resignation of Janet Watson at the end of her term (6-30-22), with gratitude for her service.

Traffic Study Committee (TSC):

Traffic Calming Policy/Traffic Calming Request Form (drafts)

Mr. Ferguson was present to give a recap: the committee is trying to develop a tool to facilitate the traffic calming policy with a standardized method for dealing with traffic issue calls. This

would allow a group of residents with a consensus opinion on a particular street to submit a request form to respond to repeat issues. The drafts are similar to other towns' policies. The board liked and endorsed this policy, which also highlights the difference between traffic calming and speeding violations referred to in the policy. Chief Ed Lee was present to comment on this policy and noted that any traffic complaint will be addressed by the police, who absolutely respond to every call.

The draft specifics refer to a cumbersome process which might need streamlining. Ms. Allen expressed concern about the process of "public meeting" Any budget requests for this implementation should go to Mr. Morin.

Mr. Reardon likes this policy, which is a step in the right direction, citing the many complaints about speeding on Main Street as an example.

Mr. Graham asked for examples of these measures, which can be hard to work with in the winter. Mr. Ferguson cited the Otis Hill solution: in response to a letter signed by the majority of the street's residents, he installed a solar powered blinking sign for a blind curve. It is a question of finding the right balance between speed enforcement and traffic calming. This policy is a better way to address the issues.

Next steps: the TSC will work through this draft one more time, making it less technical and more user friendly. They will ask the board to review it again at that point.

The board thanked the committee for their hard work.

All Are Welcome Committee (AAWC) Update

Jennifer Coyle., Clerk, and Jamila Kielhorn, Chair, were present via Zoom to update the board on past and current activities to promote tolerance and acceptance. Many of their programs are broadcast by Harbor Media. Upcoming programs include:

- Community Zoom discussions on different topics such as gender equity in education, local causes and upcoming events.
- Programs include race amity and diversity program appreciation, a history of the Jewish community on the South Shore.
- Thank you to NSTV staff at Harbor Media and the library who has provided several educational opportunities. The library presented several educational activities, including a Meet and Greet with the committee and collective book reading about racism.
- Upcoming programs include; We The People at the library, ABC's of racism (targeted towards parents) and a Juneteenth celebration in conjunction with First Parish Norwell. The AAWC will participate in Summerfest and host a second race amity day/picnic-weather permitting.

Mr. Graham thanked the committee. This upcoming event information will be posted on the Town website when it is received by the Town Administrator's office.

Crisis Debriefing Policy – draft review

Mr. Brown gave a short recap of the background for this draft. The board reviewed the draft, making comments. The official practice is in line with FEMA policy. A debriefing meeting with relevant stakeholders could be posted for the Select Board meeting following an event. Mr. Brown read the policy out loud for all. This SB policy could work to interact with school policy as needed. Discussion ensued about draft edits, which are attached to these minutes. The board will review the draft at a future meeting and vote to accept the policy.

Town Hall Renovation Update and next steps

Mr. Morin recounted his history of "meeting" this building in 2015 to find the third floor already in a condemned state. There was no capital plan and limited Free Cash. As the Town is retiring debt on other projects, he identified two projects that needed to be done: the Highway barn update and addition and the renovation of Town Hall. The highway barn is already out to bid. This building is not very good news. The Select Board has been given two documents with Town Hall renovation project components identified by the architects. When the project was first

discussed, the available budget of \$5M seemed adequate for the purpose. The estimated cost is now three times that number due to the pandemic and limited supply of building materials and labor. Electrical work and HVAC rehab in the building are complicated by its concrete construction, which also makes it hard to run new wiring. Mr. Morin requested direction from the board on this project. He would like to look at alternate office space for lease, rent or purchase, which would be a much cheaper option. The Town could purchase a new building for about one third the cost of renovating the current Town Hall. Should the Building Committee continue or change direction? Mr. Morin feels that he has a responsibility to the board and Town residents to reduce the cost, which would make more sense.

Board members were in total agreement; an existing building will be much more cost effective. All advised him to ensure that any new location has adequate space for a functional Town Hall with room to expand as needed. This building has suffered greatly from neglect and is neither a historic site nor a much loved landmark. The board added that it is a perfect time to consider a purchase with so many buildings available for sale or lease. This option would also avoid the prevailing wage requirement for the rehab of Town Hall. Mr. Morin added that the offices are already beginning a storage reduction campaign through a Community Compact grant. Next Step – put out an RFP for proposed Town Hall office space.

CPC Grant Update, proposed Preservation Restriction: Jacobs farmhouse

Wendy Bawabe and Ted Nichols updated the board on the status of the state's matching grant for this property of up to \$100K for buildings suffering from deferred maintenance. The hope is to use CPA funding of \$253K plus grant funds to do the last part of the rehab. Per Ms. Bawabe, this should have been the obvious process before asking the Town for more money. Because the lack of building materials has delayed the currently funded portions of this rehab, the NHC has chosen to pull the CPC Article for the farmhouse funds on this year's Warrant. They will reapply for the grant and CPA funding next year. They are applying for an additional Mass Historical Preservation Restriction to cover the rest of the property. The request is to authorize Town Counsel to begin working on this preservation restriction and then authorize Mr. Morin to sign the restriction along with Mr. Graham. Mr. Morin has the restriction application forms. Ms. Bawabe asked the board to take this under advisement.

Reopen Town Meeting Warrant to include Articles:

Ms. Allen summarized her reasons for asking the board to consider putting an Article on the Warrant to transfer the Carleton property acreage under discussion to the Community Housing Trust, in conjunction with the Article to put the land into conservation. She would prefer to wait a year to disperse the emotional energy that surrounds this topic so the Town can have some clarity. However, it would be fair to put forward the only TWO options for the land together. She gave the history of the prior Town Meeting vote. She would like to give the CHT the opportunity to express interest or not. If they have interest, they could then come back with a smaller project idea for neighborhood input. It would be better to do none or both Articles. All discussed some options for smaller AH projects.

The board discussed the pros and cons of putting both Articles on the Warrant, citing feedback from discussions with residents along with the history of the previous votes. Some board members are willing to wait, others insisted on the conservation option only for the Warrant. The suggestion was made to look at the Town's Affordable Housing Plan to see what would make the most sense for the Town.

Motion: made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to include an Article to transfer the remaining Carleton property parcels to the Community Housing Trust. Allen, Graham voting yes, Brown, Reardon, Smellie voting no. Motion fails to carry.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to reopen the 2022 Town Meeting Warrant. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to include the following Articles as listed in the Warrant. Unanimously voted

- Charter Change – Advisory Board Quorum- ATM

- SPED Stabilization Fund Transfer – STM and ATM - 2
400K to the schools for unanticipated increases from Free Cash (STM)
Transfer to School fund (ATM)
- Carleton Property to conservation – ATM
- Remove the CPC Article for the Jacobs farmhouse project - ATM

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RECEIVED

Motion; made by Jason Brown seconded by Pete Smellie, to close the 2022 Town Meeting Warrant. Unanimously voted

Future meeting agendas

Ms. Allen asked for board volunteers to explore options for the St. Helen's property. Mr. Reardon and Mr. Smellie will work on this together. The plan is to get the facts first and then provide updates and education for the community. The board is just getting started on this project and welcomes respectful feedback. All are welcome to attend meetings and get involved.

Adjourn

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Pete Smellie, to adjourn at 8:50pm. Unanimously voted



Bruce W. Graham