

**Norwell Select Board
Open Meeting Minutes
4-13-22**

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

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Jason Brown at 7:01pm.

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Ellen Allen, to approve the agenda as presented. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the minutes of the 3-30-22 Executive Session. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the minutes of the 3-30-22 Open Session. Unanimously voted

The board offered heartfelt condolences to the Coffey family on the passing of Mary Ellen Coffey, who was a much beloved resident of the Town. It was a life well lived. Mr. Brown commented, "the phrase 'civil discourse' is a popular topic today, and Mary Ellen exemplified that phrase. It never became acrimonious to disagree with her. It is important to keep in mind the 'bowl of fruit perspective'. People viewing the bowl from opposite sides of the table are both right." Ms. Allen added that Mary Ellen had a very busy daily life, but still found time to volunteer to serve the Town. Her passing is a huge loss to our community.

Mr. Morin added that she and husband Bill grew up in Braintree and were incredibly generous in donating their time to public service tasks. Mary Ellen served on the Advisory Board for many years and Bill was the Town Moderator. Mary Ellen will be very much missed by all.

Junk Collector License Renewal

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the renewal of the Junk Dealers license for Stonehouse Antiques, 244 Washington Street, Norwell, MA, expiring 4/30/23. Unanimously voted

Inspector of Animals Nomination/Reappointment

The board noted that they make this annual appointment for the Town, per the Town's bylaws. They also nominate the Inspector, who is then appointed by the state.

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to appoint Josh Kimball as the Inspector of Animals for a term expiring 4/30/22. Unanimously voted

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to nominate Josh Kimball to be the Inspector of Animals for the Town of Norwell, for a term expiring 3/30/22. Unanimously voted

Re-Vote: Annual Town Election Hours

Town Clerk Pat Anderson was present to explain the reduced voting hours. There are no contested elections this year, and voter turnout is expected to be low.

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to amend the Annual Town election polling hours from 8AM – 6PM to 10AM – 2PM on May 21, 2022. Unanimously voted.

Debriefing Policy – review and vote

Mr. Brown updated the board on this policy draft, noting that Chief Dave Kean reviewed the draft and made suggestions. Mr. Brown gave a summary of his concept for meeting attendees. This will become a standard operating procedure after major events in the Town, both planned and unplanned (such as significant storms, Summerfest, road races, power outages, etc.) A copy of the policy will be posted on the Select Board web page.

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to adopt the debriefing policy as updated and reviewed. Unanimously voted

7:15pm – Public Hearing; Motor Vehicle Class II license, Norwell Auto Center, 154 Washington Street, Norwell, MA

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to open the public hearing for Norwell Auto Center at 7:15pm. Unanimously voted

Mr. Smellie read the notice of public hearing.

The board stated that this is a change of ownership for this business, which has been operating in the same location for many years. The business will continue operations in the same format and location.

There were no public comments made.

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to close the public hearing at 7:20pm. Unanimously voted.

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the Class II Motor Vehicle license for Norwell Auto Center, 154 Washington Street, Norwell, MA, owned by Mohamed Zeidan, expiring 12/31/22. Unanimously voted

St. Helen's Property Committee – composition and next steps

Mr. Brown welcomed everyone attending the meeting to discuss this topic. He stated that this meeting will not address what to do with the property, just discuss ideas to create a committee to review all of the use options if the Town does purchase it. This is only an administrative meeting to determine next steps.

He opened the discussion to the board, reminding all that the Town has been given a "loose right of first refusal" for this property from the Diocese of Boston. If this happens, the board would like to be prepared with feedback from Town residents, obtained and discussed well before any decision deadline. Many concepts have been proposed, with both wants and needs for its use. There are no preconceived ideas. The plan is to develop a committee to explore these possibilities.

Mr. Reardon and Mr. Smellie volunteered to assist in creating this committee with a composition similar to the Carleton Property Committee. The Town also needs a backup plan in case the property is not affordable. Mr. Brown reminded everyone about the following facts:

- *The property is currently zoned residential only*
- *It is a perfect target for a 40B developer*
- *By law, the Town cannot pay more than the appraised value of the property.*
- *The Community Housing Trust has funds to pay for a formal appraisal but has not voiced any opinion on what to do with the property.*
- *The Diocese has the right to decide to sell to anyone "tomorrow". There is no formal agreement with the Town.*
- *The Town has NO plan in place at this time.*

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A lengthy discussion ensued about other board representatives who should have a seat on the committee, including the Select Board, Planning Board, Council on Aging, Recreation, Community Preservation Committee, Community Housing Trust, etc. The board again noted that this would be a very costly investment *if* the Town could acquire the property. The purchase would need the support of the whole Town. The important thing is to include the neighborhoods in this decision-making process. Depending on uses, the challenge is the need to have certain Town officials participate but not lose efficiency because of the committee's size. One option would be to create a committee with a subcommittee structure. Committee reps would have "constituents". The committee chair should be a person with a fair amount of time and ability to be a strong quarterback. The board would like to ask the Town Planner Ilana Quirk to play a leadership role. She will be full time starting 7/1/22. Discussion ensued about committee and size. Leadership group created, with support from subgroups. Mr. Morin and Mr. Reardon both cautioned all that the Diocese could sell the property to someone else tomorrow. Options to organize community input include; 1) MAPC assistance, which might have a fee, 2) a college intern program for municipal activities.

Mr. Brown invited residents' comments:

1. Rick Carmody, 18 Knollwood Road – asked if the anyone has spoken to the church. Per Mr. Morin, conversations about this topic started three years ago and have had annual updates. Town Counsel Bob Galvin spoke to his colleague who is the legal counsel for the church to inform them of the Town's interest in the property. He also obtained permission for the formal appraisal.
2. Raleigh Zbinden, 98 Brantwood – would like a committee to come up with financial ideas to purchase this property. Mr. Reardon summarized the research that has already been done and agreed with the need for a strategic plan. The board assured the group that all aspects are being looked at. Mr. Brown noted that the strategic use of funds will be a big part of this process. Much depends on the proposed usage as some funding has restricted uses. Per Mr. Morin, this is heavily dependent on how much the Diocese is asking. He added that the Town does have a 10 - year capital plan. If the best use of the property is an allowable CPA project, the Town has the ability to borrow against CPA funds. If not, conventional funding would have to be used. There are many needs coming up in the next few years from the schools and other projects such as a new Town Hall that would make this a challenging ask in the priority list.
3. Joe Carroll, 25 Knollwood Road – "There are many neighborhood folks here tonight, which is great." Mr. Carroll gave a short recap of committee issues with St. Helen's when the parishes were merging. The hope is to try to work through the project asks in conjunction with this big potential purchase. It will be important to see where the Town stands on this potential purchase. Representatives to this committee will need to address many issues, from potential traffic problems to property use. How does any plan impact this land? The group will need advice and assistance with project planning. Good representation is key, maybe a "ward structure with ward captains". Maybe have each neighborhood pick a rep. to the committee. Mr. Reardon cited the successful MAPC-run meetings where residents were invited to the Cushing Center to discuss proposed zoning

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changes and plans for Queen Ann Corner. Informal open neighborhood meetings might be a good place to start this process.

Mr. Brown reminded all that the board still doesn't know the appraisal value or the selling price that the Diocese has in mind.

Ms. Allen would like to get the basic property facts out to everyone along with the zoning rules, water issues, wetland buffers, etc. Mr. Morin added that the COA/Rec project is not on a specific timeline.

Reminder: *there is no plan in place at this time.*

4. Ann Brennan, 11 Tyler Street - Ms. Brennan asked that the COA/Rec presentation be put on the website before Town Meeting. (Per Ms. Curtin, the presentation needs some edits before being put on the website, which will happen before Town Meeting.) Perhaps the Town could also look at other Town-owned parcels as potential sites for this project.

Mr. Reardon asked all to provide feedback about the best time to hold workshop sessions or meetings; week nights, weekends, etc. Please let the board know.

5. S. Piassa, 79 Brantwood – Please keep the information flowing out to residents.

6. Brendan Fogarty, 23 Brantwood Road – Mr. Fogarty would like the board/Town to have some idea of how to use the property before spending this large amount of money. Hopefully the plan will include residents' input and a spending range for projects. He asked what the Town might be willing to pay for the property.

Answer: it could not exceed the appraised value. Mr. Brown noted that tonight's goal is to establish next steps. Ms. Allen would like to see a written proposal from Mr. Reardon and Mr. Smellie for the next meeting. Mr. Morin cautioned all about adhering to the Open Meeting Law. If a "ward structure" is adopted, it will be better to keep the meetings informal so that no violations occur.

The board advised neighborhoods to organize themselves, separate from any formal meetings. Discussion ensued about organization options. An informal session to exchange ideas would be allowable.

Mr. Brown thanked everyone for participating. Mr. Reardon and Mr. Smellie will prepare a draft for the Select Board meeting in two weeks. They will also prepare a basic fact sheet.

RFP-Town Hall

Mr. Morin reviewed the draft RFP for the purchase of a building within Town limits to provide adequate space to host the current offices of Town Hall with plenty of room to add space.

- The goal is to be as flexible as possible. The minimum amount of space is included in the RFP, including 3000SF of meeting space and 500SF per desk. Along with the ability to add space as needed, a building which could be changed to provide flex space would be desirable. Mr. Morin added, "We are looking for a location in our price range that meets code, is accessible and is a safe and healthy location to work in."
- Questions were asked about Recreation and where they could have space (not the school buildings, which are already shared with Recreation as much as possible). Other department spaces were discussed, with Mr. Morin noting that his plan will find locations for departments/groups not included in a new Town Hall space.

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- FYI, this RFP was prepared by Town Counsel. This is just an invitation to bid. The RFP allows adjacent properties or contiguous properties. Timelines for this RFP were discussed.
- Similar to the Carleton property purchase, any transaction financing would be contingent upon approval at Town Meeting. An option to purchase or even rent or long-term lease would be acceptable. This project would merit a Special Town Meeting. The bid opening will take place in a public meeting.
- The Town Hall Committee will vet the eligible spaces and make a decision, along with the current OPM's assistance. The architect firm offered to help as well, which could be helpful to retrofit the new space.
- The board advised Mr. Morin to ensure that there was enough space for all planned and future activities, especially with meeting rooms so that multiple meetings could be conducted at the same time. Video and recording options should be included. Hopefully new building space will already include this technology. The library is now an option for meeting space, which will help with demand for updated spaces.
- In response to the board's request, Mr. Morin will have a timeline ready for the next meeting. The board voiced concerns about staffing this project. Mr. Morin will be available in a consulting capacity through the end of the next fiscal year.
- Mr. Morin would like to get this done now and have a Special Town Meeting for the project. Funding strategy would be to do this under the levy for about \$5M, with an additional \$2.1M to address short term needs, which would provide financial flexibility. He is looking to stay under the dollar amount already budgeted.
- There is no obligation to accept any of these bids. The space must be in the town of Norwell.

Future Meetings

- Traffic study proposal from the Beta Group for review
- Traffic calming, traffic complaint policy

Adjournment

Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to adjourn at 8:28pm.

Unanimously voted



Jason Brown, Vice Chair