

**Town of Norwell
Select Board
Open Meeting
1/24/24**

Present: Jason Brown, Brian Greenberg, Andy Reardon, Peter Smellie, Darleen Sullivan

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. All rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Motion; made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Brian Greenberg, to approve the agenda, with the exception of agenda item g), which will be postponed to a future meeting.

Unanimously voted

Approval of Minutes

Motion; made by Brian Greenberg, seconded by Jason Brown, to approve the minutes for the Open Meeting on 1/10/24. Unanimously voted

Select Board Reports

Mr. Reardon reminded all who might need emergency assistance during storm events to register with the Town. Call the Fire Department or the Council on Aging to register.

The State of the Town breakfast will be held at the public library tomorrow morning. All are invited. The cost is \$10 per person.

Town Administrator Report

Eight bids were received from architecture firms responding to the RFP for the fit out of the new Town Hall.

Citizens Comments

Jane Moore, 33 Lincoln Street, read a prepared statement to the board summarizing her feelings about the May 2022 Town Meeting Article vote to put the Carleton property parcel abutting Lincoln Street into conservation instead of using it for an AH project. She is "definitely against" developing this property, opining that it will contribute to the ruin of this small town.

Mr. Brown asked for a point of clarity. The Town Moderator had a show of hands vote first, and then later in the meeting called for a "tab vote". The first vote passed, but the second vote failed. Discussion ensued about proper voting sequence and procedure. Ms. Moore and the board opined that residents should commit to remaining at the meeting until it is adjourned, especially when controversial Articles are on the Warrant. The point of view was that a second vote should only be allowed if a substantive change or presentation of new information is made. The board gave Ms. Moore the procedure to file a petition.

Committee Applications

Tucker Matheson was present to give a summary of his background and reasons for applying to the Capital Budget Committee. His strong accounting and tax background are a good fit for this committee. The other candidate was unable to be present at this meeting and will attend the next meeting for a short interview before the board makes its decision on who to appoint to the single vacant seat.

Winter Storm Recap – 12/18/23

Mr. Brown summarized this event and reasons for this discussion, which will serve as a learning exercise for upcoming such events.

The poor cell coverage was of particular concern as portions of the Town lost service and couldn't call 911. Backup generators at cell towers would provide some security.

Chiefs Kean and Lee were both present to give storm summaries.

Chief Kean recapped their discussion with Verizon about the poor cell service. Per the Verizon rep, cell phone systems are not designed for storm situations. He compared it a scenario where all of the Town residents turn their water faucets on at the same time, which would create low to no water pressure. He reported that the generators at the 3 cell towers in Town were running throughout the whole storm. The rep concluded that until the cell phone systems are upgraded to accommodate such extreme use during storms this situation will continue to happen. Since landlines are now connected to the internet (VOIP) for a large number of homes this will continue to happen. More cell towers could help but won't solve the problem. The chiefs expressed concern about this, noting that there is much larger cell tower capacity demand in recent years, especially since COVID.

Chief Kean reported that there was an excellent level of interagency collaboration. The water wells and treatment plant operations went down but came back up, some issues with the schools were solved, the highway department was right on top of the road conditions.

In answer to questions about ongoing tree issues in the Town, Chief Kean replied that a large number of trees have been cut down but there are still many that need to be addressed. The wind direction was and is also a factor in assessing both the actual and potential tree damage.

The decision was made to keep kids in school during the worst part of the storm. The School Department coordinated with the bus company to get everyone home safely.

There were 131 calls during the height of the storm with very little overlap. The majority were weather related, or "Monday morning medical calls". About 12 hours after the power goes out, alarms start to trigger. 74% of the Town was without power during the height of the storm, Thursday morning 94% of homes were back in service and the whole Town was back up by Friday morning. National Grid did a much better job. Representative Joe Carroll was present at the meeting and thanked the board for their comments. In response to Mr. Brown's request, Chief Kean and Chief Lee rated the Town's response to the storm as A- to B+.

Water Supt. Jason Federico reported that the storm response went well and thanked everyone for their help with restoring water service. There were some generator issues which were resolved.

Kudos from Police Chief Lee to all the departments and inter-agencies that helped the Town. He reminded all Town residents to be courteous drivers, especially during storms, which is Not happening. Be mindful of the dangerous road conditions and slow down!

Mr. Reardon invited residents to register for emergency notification using the Exceptional Needs list. This list is not limited to the COA and is available to anyone who requires additional assistance. Sign up is available on the Town website. Residents may also upload photos of Alzheimer's or dementia patients so that Public Safety can distribute the photo in the event of a missing person search to assist in their recovery. Residents may cancel participation at any time. Registration is also available by calling the COA or the Fire Department.

Zoning Articles for Referral to Planning Board for Public hearings:

A few questions were asked and answered about the following Articles to be referred back to the Planning Board for public hearings.

Motion; made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Jason Brown, to refer the following Articles back to the Planning Board for a public hearing; FEMA, Senior Housing Overlay district, Personal Wireless Service Facilities. Unanimously voted

LIP MOA Draft – 144 Washington Street

Property owner Gregg Webb and Attorney Peter Freeman were present to recap this project proposal for a mixed-use building with first floor retail and 8 1BR apartments, 2 of which will be AH. The Town will get AH credit for all 8 units.

In response to the board's question, Mr. Webb has not had any negative comments and has worked with the one neighbor on the landscaping agreement.

The board commented that this is a great mixed-use project for the Town. Hopefully the retail space will rent well!

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Brian Greenberg, to authorize the Chair to sign the amendment and endorse the memorandum of agreement on behalf of the Select Board. Unanimously voted.

This proposed project will require a public hearing with the ZBA.

Open Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Brian Greenberg, to open the 2024 Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Unanimously voted

Park View license Extension

Ms. Sullivan updated the board on the recent meeting to address the ongoing issues with the property's condition and the license renewal. The group will reconvene in 60 days for a status update. The owner has made a little progress and understands that they need to keep improving. Per Ms. Roy, the owner will try to comply with the list of repairs and upgrades and also address the major problem issue.

Ms. Sullivan recommended extending the 2023 license to 3/13/24. If no progress has been made the board has the option to withhold or terminate the license renewal. The consequences could include eviction of the tenants or rehoming.

The board's major concerns are for the compliance with fire and health codes to ensure the optimum safety of the tenants. Mr. Brown would like to fully understand the implications of shutting the property down as there is no housing available.

Ms. Sullivan noted that the gravity of the situation was communicated to the owner. Mr. Brown is willing to work with the owner but stressed that emergent items need to be fixed. Periodic updates have been requested.

Motion; made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Jason Brown, to extend the 2023 motel license for the Park View Motel at 350 Washington Street, Norwell, MA to 3/13/24.

Unanimously voted

The board reminded the owners that they need to "act like a motel with appropriate amenities; a daily guest log, regular unit cleaning, etc."

Future Meeting Agendas/Dates; February 7th, February 28th

Adjournment

Motion; made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Jason Brown, to adjourn at 8:10pm.

Unanimously voted

Peter W. Smellie, Chair