



TOWN OF NORWELL
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Norwell Advisory Board Meeting Minutes 3/26/2020

The Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Peter Smellie at 7:00 P.M. Also present were Town Administrator Peter Morin and Board Members Mark Cleveland, Susan Darnell, Rick Goulding, Jesse McSweeney, Karen Reynolds, Julie Sim, and Kate Steele. Unable to attend was Harry Solis. The meeting was held remotely, as allowed under the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Minutes – The minutes of the March 19 meeting were distributed and reviewed.

Motion made to accept the Minutes of the March 19, 2020 meeting as submitted. Seconded and passed 8-0-0 by roll call vote.

Bills – Mr. Morin noted that he had signed payment vouchers totaling \$168.75 for the stenographer.

Motion made to approve the vouchers signed by the Town Administrator. Seconded and passed 8-0-0 by roll call vote.

Reserve Fund Transfer Requests – None

Correspondence/Notices – None

Action Items / Discussions – None

2020 TOWN MEETING ARTICLES

Assisted Living Overlay

Petitioner Kathleen Glasco, 21 Douglas Ave, stated she was a long-time nurse who works in continuing care facilities. There are currently no assisted living facilities in town, and a nearby facility in Hingham is already full. She would like to see one in Norwell so residents would not have to leave town to receive such services.

Steve Regan, Ridge Hill Road and petitioner of a similar article submitted last year, indicated that the overlay district in last year's article had been drawn too broadly based on advice from Town Counsel; this new article cut the overlay back to the B4 and B5 districts and adjacent parcels. The proposal would add assisted living as a permitted but not "as of right" use in these districts.

Providers would have to receive a special permit from the Planning Board. The permitting process would involve public hearings at which residents and other interested parties could comment.

All parties briefly discussed what would happen if the article were approved and a possible project for the Marsh property, near Route 53 and the Cole School, did not go forward. Mr. Marsh noted that the overlay would not eliminate the other permitted uses in these districts.

Ali Cash, 18 Hall, expressed concern about a memory care unit being sited on the Marsh property, and asked if the article precluded this. Mr. Regan indicated his understanding was that the company interested in the property did not currently operate memory care facilities. Mr. Regan and Selectman Ellen Allen commented that the noise and traffic impacts of assisted living facilities was very light. Mr. McSweeney felt that these concerns related to a specific proposal, and were beyond the scope of the Board's review of the article.

Ramona Caruso, 30 Grove Street, commented that the Marsh Property was a poor location for an assisted living facility given its location near the Cole School and traffic in the area. Cordwainer Drive, where a memory care facility was in the process of being permitted, was a better location for such facilities. She also questioned whether the overlay constituted "spot zoning" which was not allowable under State law.

Mr. Smellie noted that the Board had no control over any specific project that might be proposed if the article passed, and noted that the article itself could be voted down at Town Meeting even if the Board voted to recommend.

Motion made to recommend favorable action on the citizen's petition to amend the Zoning bylaw to create an Assisted Living Overlay District and amend the zoning map accordingly. Seconded and passed 7-1-0 by roll call vote.

ARC Grant Request

Mr. Morin advised that this article, submitted by citizen petition, requested a grant of \$2500 to allow ARC of the South Shore to expand services to Norwell residents. Brenda Linden, Chief Development Officer noted that currently 16 families in town were receiving services, which included personal and adult foster care.

Mr. Morin added that Town Counsel Bob Galvin had advised that issuance of the grant was allowable under state law provided the monies are spent on services to Norwell residents; this would be ensured by the creation of a town account which the ARC would bill. ARC would have to submit additional articles to receive funding in subsequent years. The Town had provided similar grant funding to other organizations in the past.

Marynel Wahl, 24 Grove, indicated she was on the ARC Board of Directors and confirmed they had the capability to bill the town in the manner required.

Motion made to recommend favorable action on the article creating a grant to ARC of the South Shore in the amount of \$2500 for FY 21. Seconded and passed 8-0-0 by roll call vote.

Pond Street/Accord Park Zoning

Selectman Bruce Graham discussed an article to create three sub-zones in the Accord Pond Park area to increase commercial development and tax revenue. A working group including himself

and Town Planner Ken Kirkland received a state grant to hire consultants from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to assist with the process, which took about a year and included three public meetings and outreach to local business owners and residents. The proposal had been unanimously approved by the Planning Board at its March 11 meeting. A proposal to allow residential development near Queen Anne's Plaza had been tabled and was not part of the current article.

The proposal would create an "Accord Park Loop" subdistrict where the building height limitation would be increased from three to five stories; it would also allow for additional lot coverage if a developer uses low-impact development features such as rain gardens or vegetated swales to improve stormwater retention. Zoning for the areas of the park closest to High Street would remain unchanged to avoid visual or traffic impacts. The districts would be subject to a streamlined permitting process whereby the Planning Board could issue a permit after site plan review.

Mr. Smellie indicated that he supported the project, but suggested that two lots in the Accord Loop subdistrict be moved to the Cordwainer subdistrict, which retains the three-story height limitation, in order to allay the concerns of abutters on High Street. Selectmen Allen felt abutters opposing the proposal would be unlikely to be swayed by this change; Selectman Graham shared this view and cited the loss of potential tax revenue, but was willing to discuss the change with Planner Kirkland and others.

Mr. Smellie reiterated he was in favor of the article and felt the change would give it a better chance to pass at Town Meeting. A majority of the other Board members indicated they supported the article with or without the change. The matter was then tabled to be revisited at the next meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Morin advised that the annual Town Meeting had been moved to June 15/16 and the Town Election moved to June 27. The agenda for the next meeting will include an amendment to an animal control bylaw and an article concerning engineering designs for Norwell Center. Mr. Morin indicated that Elevated Access, petitioner for an article concerning the cultivation of recreational marijuana, had not provided anything in writing concerning their request despite being asked repeatedly to do so.

FUTURE MEETINGS

March 31; April 2; mid-April

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 8:35 P.M. Seconded and passed 8-0-0 by roll call vote.

Peter Smellie, Chair

