

**Town of Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Open Meeting Minutes  
12/12/18  
345 Main St., Norwell, MA 02061**

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2019 FEB -1 AM 8:14  
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**Present:** Ellen Allen, Gregg McBride, Alison Demong, Jason Brown, Peter Morin

**Open Session; 6:55pm, Selectmen's Office**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen.

The state auditor will be invited to a January meeting to discuss the services that could be offered to the Town.

All discussed road acceptance procedures for Henry's Way, which is currently a private road. The board would like to invite the State Representative and State Senator to a January meeting to discuss both the Route 3 noise abatement issue and the Simon Hill proposed project (with a smaller group). The tentative date of 01/2/19 will be confirmed with both Sen. O'Connor and Rep. DeCoste.

**Executive Session 1 – recorded separately**

**Open Session Continued at 7:30pm in Osborn Room**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:30pm. She reminded all that the meeting is televised and recorded. All rose to recite the pledge of allegiance.

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimously voted*

**Citizen Comments - None**

**Selectmen Reports**

Mr. McBride gave an update on Harbor Media, who is off to a great start since they took over the Town's video activities last week.

Ms. Allen reported that the board and invited committee members will be discussing the results of the economic study done by the MAPC this evening, and next week, Jay Ash, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, will be speaking at the BOS meeting. All are invited to attend.

**Town Administrator Report**

Mr. Morin announced that the generator at the Council on Aging is up and running. The building can now be used as a warming station.

**MAPC Economic Development Plan Recommendations**

Background: One way to lower residential taxes is to shift part of the burden to a larger number of commercial properties. At the 2015 Annual Town Meeting some zoning bylaw changes intended to encourage additional development in business districts were proposed to Town Meeting, but voted down. A significant majority of votes were favorable, but not the 2/3 majority required to pass.

More recently, the BOS applied for and received a state grant and additional money from the MAPC to fund a study on ways to expand economic development. Ms. Allen introduced Josh Eichen and his associates from the MAPC, who thanked all of the Town employees and committee members who assisted with the data collection, as well as Peter Forman, President

of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Eichen gave an overview of MAPC's recommendations which were previously provided in writing.

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The study focused on the two industrial parks: Queen Anne's Corner and Accord Park. The MAPC hosted business roundtable discussions and other research activities. Mr. Eichen listed the goals of the study:

1. A fiscally strong town government – residential taxes have increased while commercial taxes have remained relatively flat. All would like to increase commercial tax revenue.
2. Create mixed use and commercial development – Mr. Eichen expanded on the Town's workforce population by age segment as it relates to this topic.
3. Guiding Goals – the study listed priorities for creating a workforce community, noting a projected labor supply shortage by 2025.
4. Address infrastructure capacity – there is no municipal sewer system in Norwell and with that lack of infrastructure, the wastewater capacity should be reviewed and addressed.
5. Maximize efficient use of space in the industrial parks.

Mr. Eichen shared examples in other towns related to two of their recommendations. Rockland's 40R smart growth district was an example. The 40R designation allows mixed use zoning with a financial incentive. Norwood's Vanderbilt area was an example of a 43D district, which gives parcels priority for MassWorks infrastructure development grants. The goal would be to get published on the Mass Economic Development website to obtain grant eligibility.

Norwell's focus for redevelopment should include Accord Park. It is strategically located to maximize development efforts with close proximity to restaurants, shopping and Route 3. The park is a good mix of office and industrial. The properties in the park (industrials) are doing very well as the rise of e-commerce has created a need for warehouse space. The active office space in the park is much softer as businesses are moving towards more modern, updated spaces. The majority of businesses have fewer than 10 employees. The principal strategic sites in the park are 98 Accord Park Drive (old car dealership that has long been vacant), 61 Accord Park Dr. and 101 Accord Park Drive. All are currently for sale. The study's recommendation is to designate this park as a 43D district, which would need to go to Town Meeting for a 2/3 vote.

MAPC also recommends updating the zoning in Accord Park to create a better market for this district. This would require a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting.

A third recommendation is to approve a mixed use (business & residential) 40R overlay district at Queen Anne's Plaza. This site is wholly owned by Federal Realty, which has indicated interest in this possibility. A project of this sort would require waste water improvements. 40R developments require 20% of residential units to qualify as affordable and do not permit any age restrictions. They are eligible for two types of state grants and allow for the town to establish specific design guidelines.

Josh Eichen and MAPC Executive Director Marc Draisen explained why housing is needed to attract commercial development. Today's workforce of millennials want to live within walking distance of their jobs and other amenities. South Shore Chamber of Commerce President Peter Forman, who was in attendance, also spoke about the importance of including housing in any economic development plan.

The study and plan will be posted on the Town's website.

### **Questions and Discussion**

Rick Merritt, Economic Development Committee Chair, asked questions about what the 43D district would attract for businesses. All discussed the availability of state funding for this proposed district.

Susan Powell, Advisory Board Chair, asked about the difference between this proposal and the one that went to Town Meeting a few years ago. Answer: that proposal was nuts and bolts changes, and this proposal would be an overlay on top of the existing zoning. Those older proposed changes may still need to be made and community outreach is needed before Town Meeting to get buy-in from residents about this bigger change.

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The Selectmen's questions were asked and answered with examples of zoning changes that would be needed, e.g. parking regulations, transportation needs, etc. Mr. Brown's concerns were focused on the concept of "urban creep" at Queen Anne's Corner, which comes at a cost to the Town when the changes made are permanent. Residential and mixed use zoning results in a more urbanized community. The board voiced other concerns about the residential portion of this plan. Mr. Eichen answered that communities need proactive planning with elements such as traffic flow. Increased municipal revenue from commerce needs workers, who in turn need a place to live.

Mr. McBride noted that the age chart in the MAPC report doesn't include the Town's under 18 age group, which is very large. They tend to move away as they grow up because they can't afford to live here. When asked which demographic would be the most interested in living in mixed use housing, the answer was that developers feel they can attract both young adults to be near jobs and seniors who want to stay in the community.

Ms. Powell asked for a better understanding of what would make Norwell more attractive to businesses. Per Mr. Eichen, Norwell has a good business location but a serious shortage of housing with compatible affordability. All discussed the housing shortage in the Boston metro and suburban areas. Highlights of the discussion included the changing factors in people's work preferences; shorter commutes, recreation, quality of life, etc. This topic will be part of a community discussion in the future.

Bruce Graham talked about planning goals for the community and ways to make changes. It's for the Town to decide these goals and then better quantify the expected results. One goal is to move the needle on commercial development. Mr. Eichen used the example of the \$5M grant from MassWorks for the project in Norwood. Mr. McBride, who works in that development, qualified the differences between Norwood and Norwell. Further discussion ensued about various avenues to explore for these changes. The MAPC could provide the board with examples of comparable towns. Norwell would need a consistent, multi-year effort to produce a gradual increase in the commercial tax base.

Next steps for work with MAPC:

Begin working on some of the changes that were suggested tonight: transportation, land use and housing areas could be explored. Per Mr. Eichen, progress is hard to quantify but changes, with a good economic climate, would be evident about 5 years down the road. "Start with step one."

Further questions were asked and answered about the nature of the earlier plan, improvement at Queen Anne's Corner, potential wastewater issues and the current infrastructure. The MAPC representatives noted that the current wastewater infrastructure could be expanded to accommodate additional housing units. Costs could be managed by shifting the burden to MassWorks and/or the developer.

In answer to Ms. Allen's question about how to initiate a robust community engagement process, suggestions were made to hold community meetings at a variety of sites such as the Company Theater in Accord Park to present this plan and process. Start with zoning change proposals.

Ms. Allen thanked all for coming in. The board will deliberate on next steps at one of their January 2019 meetings.

## **2018 License Renewals**

### **Retail Package Store – All Alcohol**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to renew the Retail Package Store All Alcohol Licenses for the period 1/1/19 to 12/31/19 for the following: Norwell Package Store. Unanimously voted*

### **Retail Package Store – Wines & Malt:**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to renew the Retail Package Store Wine and Malt Licenses for the period 1/1/19 to 12/31/19 for the following: Express Mart. Unanimously voted*

### **Common Victualler – All Alcohol:**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to renew the Common Victualler All Alcohol Licenses for the period 1/1/19 to 12/31/19 for the following: Door Knock Dinners, Norwell Package Store, Pour Café, Press Juice. Unanimously voted*

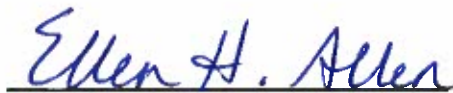
### **Lodging House:**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to renew the lodging house license for the period 1/1/19 to 12/31/19 for the following: Pilgrim Lodging-Rehoboth House. Unanimously voted*

### **Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:49pm, not returning to Open Session, noting that to discuss this personal contract in Open Session would be detrimental to the Town's negotiating position. Unanimously voted  
Ms. Allen polled the board; McBride voting yes, Demong voting yes, Brown voting yes, Allen voting yes.*

**Executive Session 2 - recorded separately.**



**Ellen Allen, Chair**

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