

**Norwell Board of Selectmen  
Open Meeting Minutes  
1/16/19**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2019 MAR -7 AM 9:35

**Present:** Ellen Allen, Gregg McBride, Alison Demong, Jason Brown, Joe Rull, Peter Morin

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The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:05 pm in the Selectmen's office.

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to enter into Executive Session, later returning to Open Session, for the purpose of discussing the Personal Contract of the Town Administrator. To discuss this topic in Open Session would be detrimental to the negotiations of the Town. Unanimously voted*

*Ms. Allen polled the board; McBride voting yes, Demong voting yes, Brown voting yes, Rull voting yes.*

At the end of Executive Session, the open meeting resumed in the Town Hall Osborn Room.

**Open Session at 7:30pm**

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.

**Citizen Comments - None**

**Selectmen Reports**

Ms. Allen reported that John Buckley, the Plymouth County Register of Deeds, is at Town Hall on 1/24/19. All are invited to stop by, ask questions or provide feedback.

On Monday, Ms. Allen reported that she, Jason Brown and Peter Morin attended a meeting with PREP, developer for the Hanover Mall, that included both the VP of Development from Cincinnati and April Anderson, who has been hired as a consultant to help with the MassWorks grant application. They have agreed to file a MEPA, which will include traffic impact studies. The MassWorks grant would request state funding for traffic impact mitigation and would be filed jointly by the two towns. This grant application topic will be on a future meeting agenda to discuss next steps.

**Approval of Agenda**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to approve the agenda as amended to move the limousine license policy discussion to Item 4d. Unanimously voted*

**Town Administrator Report** – The date for conflict of interest training for department heads and volunteers will be January 30<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. This ethics training is required every two years.

**Discussion of the Changes to the Sign Bylaw – Building Inspector and Town Planner**

Building Inspector Tom Barry and Town Planner Ken Kirkland were present to review the proposed changes to the draft of the sign bylaw.

Mr. Kirkland reviewed the bylaw section by section noting that the draft template is based on sign bylaws from the towns of Hanover and Ipswich. Both gave a short preface about the draft and highlights of the format changes, additions and content organization. Changes include more complete definitions as well as drawings to illustrate the bylaw sections and prohibitions of sign types. These changes add the ability for the Town to remove signs that do not comply with the bylaw. Mr. Barry gave examples of signs that he has removed and returned to the owners, who then put them back up again. Flags will not be permitted. Discussion ensued about fines for sign violations and repeat offenders. The board asked if there is currently adequate enforcement. Mr. Morin noted that serious contempt violations can be taken to court, and will review what types of

enforcement could be used. Discussion ensued about Jiffy Lube and their repeated disregard for the Town's sign bylaw. There is currently a permit to do rehab work at that business location which could be withheld as a warning to comply with the bylaw. All discussed complaints received by the Town about the sign bylaw.

Discussion ensued about the 30-day limit for political signs, as well as the number permitted on each property. Would 30 days apply to all electoral races, state and federal? Per Mr. Barry, 30 days for all elections.

Re: Washington Street (route 53) Signage – this is really a visibility issue. Temporary signs are allowed up to 45 days for businesses, but in reality this is turning into 24/7 for special events.

Ms. Demong asked about the current sign fee. Per Mr. Barry, the cost is \$50 per sign, regardless of type.

Mr. Brown asked about this draft bylaw slotting into the new codification for the upcoming Town Meeting. Mr. Kirkland added that this new piece would just get rolled into the format and sent to General Code. Once recoded it could be voted as a 2-part Article to cover both the content and the codification. Town Counsel can determine how best to word the relevant Town Meeting articles.

Planning Board member Pat Campbell was present at the meeting to clarify some language in the draft; he is unclear on the 20 ft. rule for signs on "pork chop lots" with very little frontage. Mr. Barry noted that signs must be 20 feet away from the neighboring property. More questions were asked and answered about sign allowances and placement for elections, businesses and professionals, especially for businesses working from home. Mr. Barry and Mr. Kirkland will review the questions and work on specific solutions for Norwell.

Ms. Allen asked about the bylaw draft review by Town Counsel. He has a copy but has not yet reviewed and sent comments to the Town.

The board asked the following questions, to be addressed at a future meeting.

1. Flag definition – needs better definition of the word "institution" or how to include businesses
2. Definition of sign area – are there 2 inconsistent definitions in the draft?
3. 3353 b-1- permit fee of \$75 – does this apply to Real Estate? Per Mr. Barry, no, this is a separate section which might need its own category. Signage can be kept up until it leases or sells, which is a very broad definition. Maybe this section could use some fine tuning. All discussed signage that is left up basically forever, especially in developments. Clarify this in new wording as there are some signs that are almost semi-permanent. This section needs to be addressed as well as all Real Estate signage. All discussed the need to compromise with merchants on new signage and noted that these violations will hopefully disappear. The \$75 deposit will be returned if the temp sign is taken down.
4. Political signs – be sure that the bylaw allows wire H-frames and lawn signs. Contractor signs need better parameters. Mr. Barry will check. Bylaw section 3360b4 – now says "occupancy".
5. Fees/Permits – get a draft schedule to the BOS if this bylaw passes.
6. No signage is allowed on trees – no trespassing, hunting, etc. Per Mr. Kirkland, the bylaw needs to be specific about trees and telephone poles. Discussion ensued about these instances.

Next Steps: these changes could take 6 months to a year. Town Counsel needs to review the draft and weigh in on the proposed changes. All discussed the proposed timeline, which included a public hearing in March. The consensus is that the draft could be done in time for Town Meeting. The board thanked both Mr. Barry and Mr. Kirkland for a job well done.

#### **Appointment of Electrical inspector**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to appoint Earl Servant as an on-call electrical inspector for a term ending 6/30/19. Unanimously voted*

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**MAPC study – Economic Development Committee (EDC) - next steps**

The EDC is present to discuss these recommendations with the board. The 43D zoning proposal at Accord Park would be the easiest to begin with, but more community outreach is needed. 40R zoning would need to follow more proactive efforts to inform and get input from Town residents. Mr. Merritt noted that the EDC consensus is that 43D zoning might spur some outside interest and would be a good first step, but what is the EDC's role? The hard part will be getting the zoning Article to pass.

Questions were asked and answered about the research and approval process. Per Pat Campbell, this is about streamlining the process. Ms. Allen would like to task the EDC to come up with a working plan. This zoning would give the property owners some additional tools and allow a broader scope of activities. Questions were asked and answered about subjects like sewage treatment, septic systems, etc. Mr. Campbell added that the Town needs to talk to the MAPC about next steps to make sure that this sewage/septic capacity issues would work with expanded residential and business construction. Ms. Allen noted that she has discussed some of these issues such as water supply and density with Water Commissioner Peter Dillon, but will need to meet again with him to continue the discussion.

The Town will need to reach out for community involvement and draw out a plan for the next 10 years. The MAPC can help to begin a community dialogue. Mr. Morin noted that Federal Realty was at the MAPC presentation, and they are eager and willing to develop the area behind their strip mall. They are also willing to get all of the necessary information gathered before the Town applies for the new zoning. They really liked the proposed changes that the Town is considering and are waiting to hear from Town Hall about next steps to move forward. This is a large regional property owner. If this project goes well, it will attract positive attention and could be a launching pad for Accord Park to move forward with momentum. Mr. Morin agreed, adding that the Town needs to stay sensitive to the wishes of residents and still help businesses move forward. Discussion ensued about piecemeal zoning vs. a complete zoning redo. The 43D zoning proposal would be for just 3 specific sites, not the entire Accord Park right now. Next steps would be to schedule an EDC meeting, invite Mr. Morin and the Planning Board, perhaps Peter Forman. Research could be done with other towns who have done this zoning change. Ms. Demong reported that the state passed a bond bill with a \$2M earmark for Norwell to help rehab Town Center. The board will discuss this at their meeting on 1/30/19 as part of the Complete Streets discussion. Although Sec. Ash was not optimistic about the Town's chances for ever receiving the earmark money, Mr. Morin noted that Sec. Ash's knowledge of the Town was not current with regard to the money invested and positive changes made to Town Center. If the state is made aware of these facts, they might be willing to put in some additional funding to enhance it and draw people to the center. When Sen. O'Connor comes to an upcoming meeting this will be a prime topic. Mr. McBride added that expanded thinking is needed for the big picture; people will want to use the planned sidewalk in front of the new building at 40 River Street to get to Town Center. The Town needs to have a well-designed plan before applying to the state for these funds. The 2016 planned vehicle flow is good, but needs pedestrian accommodation for 40 River. Discussion ensued about this planned sidewalk and its voted CPA funding.

Coastal Heritage Bank is planning to discontinue Saturday morning hours. Mr. Merritt would like to see it remain open to encourage Saturday commerce in Town Center. Does the BOS have any interest in sending a letter to the bank to reconsider their decision. Answer – yes.

**Adjournment**

*Motion; made by Gregg McBride, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn at 9:30pm to Executive Session, not returning to Open Session, for the purpose of discussing the Personal Contract of the Town Administrator. To discuss this topic in Open Session would be detrimental to the negotiations of the Town. Unanimously voted*

Ms. Allen polled the board; McBride voting yes, Demong voting yes, Brown voting yes, Rull  
voting yes, Allen voting yes.

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Ellen H. Allen

Ellen Allen, Chair