

**Norwell Board of Selectmen
Open Meeting Minutes
5/22/19**

NORWELL BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN HALL
2019 JUL 25 AM 11:21
RECEIVED

Present: Ellen Allen, Alison Demong, Jason Brown, Joe Rull, Bruce Graham, Peter Morin

Ellen Allen called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

The Board welcomed Bruce Graham as a new Selectman.

The agenda for the 7:30 session was reviewed.

The list of items to be discussed at future meetings was reviewed.

Open Session at 7:30pm

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Allen at 7:33pm. She reminded all that the meeting is televised and recorded. All rose to recite the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of agenda, unanimously voted

Ms. Allen noted that the board will discuss the Town Center planning later in this session.

Citizen Comments – None

Selectmen Announcements

Congratulations were given to Mr. Brown and Mr. Graham on their elections to the BOS. All reviewed and discussed the Memorial Day schedule. Reminder: Summerfest is scheduled for Saturday, June 1st, from 12-8pm.

BOS Citation – Gregg McBride

State Rep. Dave DeCoste presented Mr. McBride with a citation and thanked him on behalf of the State House of Representatives for his years of service as a member of the Board of Selectmen and other Town committees. Mr. McBride thanked the board and Rep. DeCoste for the kind words.

Reorganization of the Board

Ms. Allen explained the voting procedure to the Board and asked for nominations.

Motion; made by Bruce Graham, to nominate Ellen Allen as Chair of the Board of Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Alison Demong. No other nominations being made, the motion was made and seconded to close the nominations for Chair.

Motion; made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Alison Demong, to elect Ellen Allen Chair of the Board of Selectmen. Unanimously voted.

Motion; made by Bruce Graham, to nominate Jason Brown as Vice Chair of the Board of Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Alison Demong. No other nominations being made, the motion was made and seconded to close the nominations for Vice Chair.

Motion; made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Alison Demong, to elect Jason Brown Vice Chair of the Board of Selectmen. Unanimously voted.

Motion; made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Alison Demong, to nominate Joe Rull as Clerk of the Board of Selectmen. Unanimously voted. No other nominations being made, the motion was made and seconded to close the nominations for Clerk.

Motion; made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Alison Demong, to elect Joe Rull as Clerk of the Board of Selectmen. Unanimously voted

Other Board Positions – Board Representatives to other Town Committees

1. Advisory Board Nominating Committee: Jason Brown will continue as the board rep
Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Bruce Graham, to re-appoint Jason Brown as the BOS rep. to the Advisory Board Nominating Committee. Unanimously voted
2. Bylaw Review committee – HOLD appointment until a future meeting
3. Traffic Committee: Joe Rull will be the BOS rep.
Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Bruce Graham, to appoint Joe Rull as the BOS rep. to the Traffic Study Committee. Unanimously voted
4. Complete Streets – Alison Demong will continue as the BOS rep.
Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to re-appoint Alison Demong as the BOS rep. to the Complete Streets Committee. Unanimously voted
5. Cable Committee – Bruce Graham
Motion; made by Bruce Graham, seconded by Alison Demong, to appoint Bruce Graham as the BOS rep. to the Cable Committee. Unanimously voted
6. Carleton Property Committee – Alison Demong
Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to re-appoint Alison Demong as the BOS rep. to the Carleton Property Committee. Unanimously voted
7. Community Housing Trust – Ellen Allen
Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, to appoint Ellen Allen as the BOS rep. to the Community Housing Trust. Unanimously voted
8. MBTA Advisory Board – Joe Rull
Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to appoint Joe Rull as the BOS rep. to the MBTA Advisory Board. Unanimously voted
9. MAPC – Jason Brown
Motion; made by Alison Demong, seconded by Bruce Graham, to re-appoint Jason Brown as the BOS. rep. to the MAPC. Unanimously voted

Mason Shumaker – Eagle Scout project

Mason was present to summarize his project plan for cast iron and hardwood benches around the Town. His goal is to make a list of proposed bench sites owned by the Town and prioritize them as Eagle Scout projects. Mason gave a summary of his background and goal to become an Eagle Scout. He has identified two locations at the Clipper Community Complex (CCC) as potential bench sites.

Ms. Allen noted that he will need permission from the School Department (as the CCC is on school property). She suggested that he contact the School Committee and ask to be placed on an upcoming agenda to present his project proposal. All discussed other locations close to the schools as alternatives. The BOS is happy to support this project, but reiterated that he needs permission from the schools.

Bobby Curtin – Eagle Scout project

Bobby Curtin introduced himself and presented his project plan for an asphalt walkway to replace the wooden ramp that provides ADA access to the Town Common. He stated that he has observed individuals with various disabilities struggling to access the common over the years. The board asked questions about the construction of the ramp.

Motion; made by Jason Brown, seconded by Bruce Graham, that the board approve a letter of support for the walkway under the supervision of the Highway Surveyor and Building Inspector. Unanimously voted

Ms. Demong asked about fundraising, but Mr. Curtin said he is doing his own fundraising over the summer. His Scout Leader added that it is the responsibility of the Scouts to do their own fundraising.

Norwell Town Center Discussion - Art Joseph, Sarah Curtin

Ms. Demong gave the board a brief background summary of these Town Center discussions with merchants who have businesses in the center of Town, including the potential state bond bill funding for housing and economic development. It has been 7 years since the Planning Board's proposal to redo Town Center. Ms. Demong and other BOS members have met with several Town center businesses. Sarah Baker and Art Joseph were present to discuss their meeting notes and feedback from merchants. The two main concerns that arose at these meetings were the need to slow traffic and to have better, more accessible parking. The most interesting area of discussion is the lot behind the old McGreal's Tavern, where there is real potential for development. Feedback from discussions with the bank, the Gallaghers (property owners/landlords) and Marty Block (Norwell Package Store) included the idea of a destination place and/or support for Main Street. This area is soon to be improved, but walking access to Main Street is not part of the current plan. There were several interesting ideas proposed for this area, which included a discussion about parking options on West Street. Mr. Rull added that the State Police station was slated to be closed, but that decision is now on hold. The Commonwealth, followed by the Town, would have the right of first refusal if the state closes this station. The suggestion was made to keep an ear out for any residents in this area who might be selling. The James Library, State Police and houses along West Street are currently not zoned commercial. Those present discussed whether it would be to the Town's benefit to change the zoning in this area to commercial. First Parish Norwell owns the triangle across from the church. It may be worthwhile to have a conversation with the Parish Committee at some point in the future. Mr. Brown noted that there are a number of split commercial/residential zoning properties in the Town which need to be addressed. Eight of the twelve merchants in Town Center have participated in conversations about this topic. All discussed parking lot options that would make people want to park and explore the Town. For example, the Cushing Center parking lot could be better utilized.

The board scanned the 7 year old plan for Town Center. While it limits the traffic flow and parking, it still needs work to benefit the property owners and businesses. It was good for pedestrians but not necessarily traffic. If the Town receives the state grant, traffic and parking alternatives could be reviewed and discussed. All agreed that the plan would need to create significant new housing and jobs to have a realistic chance of receiving the \$2M earmark in the recent economic development bond bill. However, there are some good ideas for improving Town Center which might be eligible for other funding options. If the Town receives the \$75K earmark that Senator O'Connor has had added to the pending FY20 state budget, the board will see what can be done. Changing the zoning in the Town Center area to mixed use might attract new business owners. The board referenced the Master Plan, which has very little interconnected parking in the center.

All discussed traffic and the speed limit in Town Center, with alternatives to slow down the cars such as a raised walkway or traffic island. All agreed that the current parking configuration on Main Street in Town Center is dangerous; it's very difficult to see while backing out of the diagonal spaces. Store owners were against front and back parking, but there are options for better parking solutions.

Noting the large number of issues on the agenda for Town Center, Mr. Brown asked about funding alternatives, as the Town has already invested a large amount of money in projects such as sidewalks, pathways, and playground upgrades. The state likes to see this type of private sector investing. Wastewater upgrades will need to be addressed, but it would be a multimillion dollar investment, and there currently aren't a lot of restaurants. All discussed the pros and cons of possible future zoning changes in the Town Center area.

All agreed that potential Town Center shoppers need to be able to slow down/stop, park and walk around safely to patronize the businesses. Further discussions included traffic calming and funding the study as well as creating a scope and identifying participants. Mr. Joseph added that

all of his ideas/concerns have been addressed in this discussion. "Every town around is basically doing the same thing". Mr. Joseph used Scituate as an example, adding that they have more open space around their downtown to make parking and traffic updates. Road changes in Norwell Town Center would make the traffic situation worse instead of better, in his opinion. Traffic needs to be calmed first. Mr. Brown added that Norwell's Master plan is due for review and updates, which are being addressed by the Town Planner. The Planning Board has had at least two members present at these meetings with Town Center business owners. All brainstormed about ideas for making Town Center more user friendly. The lighting at night needs to be improved, which could be addressed in the street light study.

Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held on June 5th.

Adjournment

*Motion, made by Jason Brown, seconded by Alison Demong, to adjourn at 8:47pm.
Unanimously voted*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ellen H. Allen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ellen Allen, Chair