

**Norwell Select Board  
1-5-22  
Open Session Minutes**

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2022 JAN 21 AM 10:03

**Present:** Ellen Allen (via Zoom), Jason Brown (via Zoom), Andy Reardon, Pete Smellie, Bruce Graham, Peter Morin

Mr. Graham called the meeting to order at 7:07pm

**Approval of Agenda**

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon to approve the agenda.  
Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

*Motion; made by Ellen Allen, seconded by Pete Smellie, to approve the Open Meeting minutes of the 12/15/21 meetings as amended. Jason Brown abstained as he was absent. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

**Select Board Reports and Announcements**

Mr. Smellie asked residents to please use his townofnorwell.net email account when corresponding with him about Town business.

**Town Administrator**

Mr. Morin reported that the Board of Assessors (BOA) had a good working discussion at their meeting about the proposed circuit breaker tax program. The BOA will attend the Select Board meeting in two weeks to present their ideas.

**Citizen Comments**

Resident Tim Wall, 2 Summit Dr., expressed deep concern about his perceived lack of transparency with actions of the Select Board. He cited examples of his personal experience with public records requests not being addressed in a timely manner. Mr. Wall continued with his list of perceived issues with the contract between Igb Architects and the Community Housing Trust and payments made to that firm. He brought copies of the documents in question to the meeting to prove that the contract was inappropriately awarded. He stated that he feels there is a coverup going on here. After quoting from an email sent by Ms. Allen before last year's Town Meeting, he expressed the hope that the board will transfer the Wildcat parcels in question to conservation. He went on to add that in his opinion three board members are ignoring the law. Mr. Graham thanked Mr. Wall for his comments and noted that discussion cannot take place as this topic is not on the meeting agenda. He will call Mr. Wall tomorrow.

**7:15pm Stop and Shop Public Hearing**

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to open the public hearing at 7:15pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

Mr. Smellie read the notice of public hearing published in the Patriot Ledger. This hearing is to review and approve the reorganization of Packaging Center, LLC, dba Stop and Shop, change to its officers and directors and the on-premises manager. All CORI applications came back clean.

Attorney Gene Richard (representing Stop and Shop) and new manager applicant Mary Kate Ronan attended the meeting via Zoom to answer any questions from the board (none).

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to close the public hearing.  
Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*



*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the application for change of officers and directors and appointment of new manager as requested. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

TOWN OF NORWELL  
TOWN CLERK  
2022 JAN 21 AM 10:04

#### **7:30pm Capeway/Washington Park Motel public hearing**

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to open the public hearing at 7:30pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

Mr. Smellie read the notice of public hearing as published in the Patriot Ledger.

Mr. Graham stated that Police Chief Lee has some concerns about this application that require further research. He is hopeful that the research will resolve these concerns in the near future. In response to the John and Mark Phelan's (current owners) questions about this problem, Mr. Graham read the board Chief Lee's email. This hearing will be continued to the next scheduled board meeting.

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to continue this public hearing to the meeting on 1/19/22 at a time to be determined. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Limousine License application – Joseph Daddio**

In answer to Mr. Graham's question, Mr. Morin replied that the state gives licensing authority to its municipalities.

Mr. Daddio got a personal endorsement from Mr. Graham. Questions were asked and answered about CORI research and driving records.

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the limousine license for Daddio, LLC, expiring 12/31/22. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Hitching Post Lane Subdivision**

Mr. Graham summarized this topic which was discussed by the board a few months ago. The Planning board reviewed the documentation and Town Planner Ilana Quirk's overview of this project. Questions were asked and answered. Mr. Reardon would like a clear-cut expiration or revocation of the easement licensing agreement if the Article doesn't pass at Town Meeting.

Per Mr. Graham, the license is an easement to let groundwater run under the road (Circuit Street). Per Mr. Morin; licenses do not run in perpetuity but are subject to terms and conditions and also revocable. This would only take effect if it passes at Town Meeting. The Select Board voted to accept this conveyance a few months ago, and it now needs Town Meeting approval.

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the licensing agreement between the Town and Mark Raimondi to install drainage infrastructure under Circuit Street and clear vegetation from a defined area along Circuit Street. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the confirmatory quitclaim deed to grant land to the Conservation Commission under Mass General Law c.40, paragraph 8C. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to approve the grant of easements to the Town from Mark Raimondi to allow the Town rights in the Hitching Post Lane accessway and its drainage infrastructure. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

Note; The approval of this grant of easements will be on the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting in May 2022.

#### **Community Housing Trust Resignation – Rob Charest**

*Motion; made by Andy Reardon, seconded by Pete Smellie, to accept with deep concern the resignation of Rob Charest from the Community Housing Trust. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

Mr. Charest has served on the CHT for several years, providing exceptional guidance and insight into the Trust affordable housing activities. Most notable were his significant contributions to the success of the 40 River Street project. He will be very much missed by all.



2022 JAN 21 AM 10:04

**October Storm Related Issues**

The board shared concerns about the Town's issues in the October storm, citing the lengthy power outages, large number of downed trees and lack of cell phone service for emergency personnel and residents. All would like detailed information during this follow-up discussion. Mr. Reardon cited the "open and honest meeting" with utility companies that was held after the storm to address these issues and their root causes. He noted that Highway Director Glenn Ferguson expressed satisfaction with National Grid's follow-up actions to address a number of dangerous trees in the Town. Each of these issues will be addressed during this discussion. Present at the meeting (via Zoom) were the following representatives from the utility companies:

- National Grid – Dennis McCaffery, Joe Carroll
- Verizon – Stan Usevisch, Vahe Kebabjian
- Comcast – Michael Galla

**National Grid (NG) Comments:**

- This storm was a type 3 event; type 3 = 72 hours before crews could restore power safely.
- Norwell is part of the Brockton NG platform, which includes 233K customers plus Norwell and 9 additional towns. Listed multiple steps needed to restore power.
- Hundreds of trees were lost. Over 100 calls for downed trees in Norwell alone
- Not a typical storm (one of the worst in 30 years). Over 30 downed power poles
- In response to Mr. Graham's question about other towns' power restored before Norwell, the answer was unclear, but could be related to amount of damage.
- Mr. Brown reiterated that a critical issue was the loss of most cell phone communications, which affected the ability to call 911 for emergency assistance. This has never been an issue before. Hopefully Verizon will comment on this issue next.
- The cell coverage power units failed because the electrical chargers ran out of power during the prolonged outage. All asked how to prevent this during future outages.

**Verizon Comments:**

- Stan Usovicz repeated the comment above; power is needed to charge the cell units.
- The larger towers were also out. These can't be charged with batteries.
- Looking at the whole configuration to improve the restoration process, but no answers yet.
- Mr. Reardon stated that Verizon has made a concerted effort to move as many people as possible to cell service. Where is Verizon's effort to create an emergency platform? Why wasn't this addressed sooner? Mr. Usovicz will get back to the board with a reply within 30 days of this meeting.
- Mr. Reardon - the utility lines are on the power pole/lines owned by NG. What is NG's plan to assist first responders in getting this equipment off the roads?  
Mr. Usovicz's response: Verizon sends teams to address downed cables and works with NG to restore power. MEMA gave directive not to cut any wires. If any equipment is blocked by debris the owner of equipment gets material out of the way.
- Mr. Reardon stated that Verizon was late to the party; NG puts a liaison at the emergency operations centers (EOC) and Verizon provides a phone number. Since phones were not working that was not useful. A physical presence in the EOC would be more effective and efficient.  
Mr. Usovicz's response: There are Verizon personnel in the MEMA operations center. The Norwell EOC is also given Mr. Usovicz's cell phone number.
- Chief Dave Kean (Fire Department) already had Mr. Usovicz's cell phone number but still got zero response from Verizon or Comcast. Joe Carroll (NG) personally got a response from Verizon to get the service restored.
- Mr. Reardon noted that residents are still out of luck and have to rely on land lines or cell service.



**Comcast Comments:**

- In response to questions from the board, Mike Galla added that this massive storm took out power and wifi ability. There was too much physical damage for the equipment to keep working. Comcast will be addressing this issue ASAP.
- Per Mr. Galla, Comcast was constantly monitoring the storm situation. In answer to a question from the board, he did not know the power source, but if the cable falls off the pole the connection is lost.

**Board/Town Administrator responses:**

- Mr. Reardon reminded all that first responders are up against it. Redundancy should be in the forefront of any emergency plan. All of the utilities now have a whole community dependent on their services.
- Mr. Reardon added that the Town should not have to be dependent on MEMA. Far more practical to have utility reps in front of our emergency personnel. The average resident doesn't have the technical ability to call MEMA if they are without heat in February.
- Not good enough to say "we'll do better next time." A redundancy plan is needed now.
- Mr. Morin stated that NG set themselves up for a PR misstep; a huge fleet of NG trucks were marshalled in Norwell, and then drove through the Town to address outages in Scituate.
- Highway Department assistant director Shane Gokey followed the NG trucks around, observing their lack of ability to do anything.
- Mr. Reardon reported that a post-storm meeting of the departments and utilities was held. Both Verizon and Comcast were not in attendance, although invited to attend remotely. Both will research and report back about the reason for their absence.
- In response to Ms. Allen's question; if we were to have the exact same storm next week, would anything be changed enough to do better, Mr. Usovicz reiterated his statement about Type 3 events: the Town can expect about the same 72 hours turnaround. There will hopefully be better communication to the tree crews. He gave an example of a big effort in the town of Whitman with resistant wires on both public and private property. In Norwell, utilities work closely with the Highway department to ID risky trees.
- All agreed that a large part of the problems came from the timing of the storm. Trees were still heavy with leaves, which was a major reason for the level of the damage.

**Verizon:** Mr. Usovicz is on board to effect changes, including better communication with residents, but we are still dependent on power. All agreed that it would be a big improvement to install generators at the signal towers located outside of Town that power Norwell.

**Comcast:** Mr. Galla noted that he works closely with NG. The EOC should call him directly if there are any issues during future storms as he wasn't really aware of any issues. Comcast will increase technical ops and put generators in key locations. He added that the nature of the storm was a large factor and hoped it doesn't happen again.

- All agreed that cell phone contacts are key and will ensure that everyone has each other's information.
- NG also mentioned liaison Erick Zulek, who was in communication 2 to 3 times a day. As board members were not included in those updates, they will be put on the contact list for future events. NG will send his contact information to Mr. Morin.

**Mr. Morin:**

- Summarized operations issues in this and prior storms: prior storms – no "boots on the ground"; this storm – no coordination to give authority to available crews to start the restoration work.
- A day was lost because of no coordination. The crews just sat or went to work in other towns. Chief Kean reached out to Mr. Morin who called Sen. O'Connor, which finally got things moving.

- Other communities are getting resources before Norwell. Mr. Zulek asked for action and received no answers. There is no denying that the Town was a day behind Scituate, as both Town Administrators were in communication during and after the storm.
- It would be very beneficial if Norwell were not last to be restored - again.

Mr. Graham thanked all for attending, with the hope that plans will be forthcoming for better performance soon.

Mr. Gokey added that almost 50 trees have been removed since the storm. NG has also done a good job since the storm of cleaning up Black Pond and Captain Vinal Way.

#### **Town Meeting Date**

Mr. Morin reported that the Annual Town Meeting will be held on the second Monday in May- 5/9/22 at 7:30pm, hopefully an indoor meeting. Per his conversation with both the Town Moderator and Town Clerk, if the meeting must be held outdoors, it will be the following Saturday. Discussion ensued about facilities and ideas for contingencies if necessary. Town Clerk Pat Anderson would like to hold the Town election on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. If needed, Town Meeting could open on May 9<sup>th</sup>, adjourn and reconvene on the following Saturday and the election could still be held on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to set the 2022 Annual and Special Town meeting date for May 9, 2022 at 7:30pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Open Town Meeting Warrant**

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to open the Warrant for the 2022 Special and Annual Norwell Town Meeting, closing on February 2, 2022. Unanimously voted by roll call vote.*

#### **Future Meeting Agendas**

The next Select Board meeting will be held on 1/19/21.

#### **Adjourn**

*Motion; made by Pete Smellie, seconded by Andy Reardon, to adjourn at 8:40pm. Unanimously voted by roll call vote*

  
 Bruce W. Graham, Chair