

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES MAY 15, 2017
APPROVED**

BOS Members Present: John G. Petropoulos, Chair; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair; Anna Eliot, Member; Peter S. Cunningham, Member

Members Absent: Barry A. Pease, Clerk;

Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Mr. Petropoulos called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad announced that this was Mr. Cunningham's last Selectmen's meeting. He said that he had been a Selectman for 21 years and thought he had been an outstanding member. He said it had been his privilege to work for and with Mr. Cunningham and wanted to give him a small token of the Board's and employee's appreciation. Mr. Cunningham thanked everyone adding that it had been a long, strange, enjoyable trip. He said he loved the issues that had come along and that they had been able to work through them. He said he was also proud of the number of good things he thought he had accomplished over the years.

Mr. Degen said that the Affordable Housing Trust met in joint Open Session with the Board and then in Executive Session. He said that Mr. France and his attorney have offered to meet with the Trust to work to get the project to conclusion. He said that the residents of Boynton Meadows have had some negative comments made toward them recently. He asked people not to take any of this out on the residents adding this had nothing to do with them.

Mr. Petropoulos said that tomorrow was Election Day adding that the polls would be open from 7am - 8pm.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that as the Board was aware, he had been going through a search process for a new Land Use Director/Town Planner. He said that he had used the same process as he had done the previous year. He said that the search committee recommended that the Planning Board interview two candidates which they did. He said that the Planning Board unanimously recommended that Takashi Tada be appointed to the position. He said that Mr. Tada had been a wonderful employee, was easy to work with and had great knowledge of the Town. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Tada had the support of himself and the staff. Mr. Haddad said that he was pleased that the Planning Board endorsed this individual and asked the Board to ratify the appointment. He added that the appointment would be effective July 1, 2017 adding that Ms. Collette had agreed to stay on in the interim basis and would be ensuring a smooth transition. Mr. Haddad read the following statement by submitted by Mr. Pease who could not be present that evening:

Ms. Eliot said that she felt very comfortable with this decision.

Mr. Cunningham moved to affirm the appointment of the Town Manager of Takashi Tada as Land Use Director/Town Planner effective July 1, 2017. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion.

Mr. Degen said it was his understanding that Mr. Tada would obtain the necessary certifications as of 2021. Mr. Tada said that was correct adding that was the earliest he could achieve the designation of AICP. Mr. Degen asked if Mr. Tada was committed to fulfilling that designation. Mr. Tada said that he was.

The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Jack Saball said he wanted to remind the Board and the voters that Article 17 was passed as an advisory article. He requested that the Chair allow for full and open discussion at an open meeting before any action was to be taken. Mr. Saball talked about the wonderful diverse community within which he drives bus adding he was a retired Groton police officer. He said it was in his humble opinion, that the marker should read "Welcome to Groton."

Ms. Owen Shuman said that they had a great building committee when he was library director which decided to have "Welcome to All placed above the doors to the library. She said if they could not say "All are Welcome" she didn't know who they were saying they weren't welcoming. She said she respected Mr. Saball and his opinion but thought it was fine to say All are Welcome.

Ms. Diane Hewitt thought it was a small step that they show folks they were a welcoming community. She said as a member of the higher education community, they had gone above and beyond to say all are welcome. She said she had become increasingly concerned with the tenor of recent conversation and the lack of respect adding she thought they could all do better.

Mr. John Valentine said he moved here 2 years ago and found this to be a very welcoming community. He said he was very much in favor of keeping Groton a welcoming committee but thought this was a politically charged sign that was not necessary. He also didn't think it was right to chastise those people who didn't feel everyone was welcome. He said that they were not a sanctuary city and thought that was what the statement was. He hoped it would be added to an upcoming agenda for discussion.

Mr. Greg Fishbone said he opposed Article 17 when it was introduced. He said they were not as welcoming as they could or should be and thought they could aspire to be better. He said he thought the article was meant to be innocent adding he had come around to see that it was something they were sending to the future and hope they aspire to be better than they were.

Mr. Alberghini said that "Welcome to Groton" said it all in his opinion. He thought that "All are Welcome" had implications such as inviting those who may cause harm.

Ms. Gail Chalmers said she opposed any sign at all and thought in order for them to be welcoming, they needed to feel welcoming. She said it was just words on a sign where welcoming needed to come from the heart.

Ms. Pat Harvigsson said she thought inclusion was important and disagreed that words didn't matter. She said that they should aspire to be welcoming adding that "All are Welcome" was different than "Welcome to Groton."

Mr. Jack Saball said it was National Police Week and wanted to take a minute to acknowledge the fact that they had a great police department in Groton.

A Resident said that in talking to people in Groton and the amount of division they had seen over the issues such as the town seal were surprising. He said that these topics were dividing people more than they were bringing them together and wondered if this was worth the division.

Ms. Lynn Spadone said that they had voted on this already and would like to respect the Town Meeting vote. She said she didn't know how they could keep having a discussion on this after the Town Meeting had already voted.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Petropoulos said he declined adding this to the agenda (Article 17) and asked people to come in today to express their comments and to provide their request to the entire Board to have this added to an agenda. Mr. Petropoulos said that he had been asked about the possibility of reconsidering the Town Meeting vote on Article 17. Mr. Cunningham said he thought they should consider scheduling this for discussion on a future agenda. Ms. Eliot said she would go along with scheduling it for further discussion and suggested because of the possibility for a long discussion, they should schedule it as the only agenda item or schedule a separate meeting. Mr. Degen said he agreed with scheduling it as an agenda item but didn't want to see a separate meeting. He thought the discussion should be limited to 30 minutes adding he wished people had done this at Town Meeting but understood. Mr. Petropoulos said he did not want to see it added to an agenda adding this had been discussed at Town Meeting. He thought it sent a bad message to those who attended Town Meeting who thought their vote counted for something. He said he thought this set a practice that they as a board thought they could reconsider what Town Meeting voted on and passed. He said it basically rendered Town Meeting useless. Mr. Cunningham said he thought there was a benefit to having a conversation adding they may find that the Board may want to bring this back to a future Town Meeting for further discussion. Mr. Degen said he saw nothing wrong with having a discussion. This matter will be brought back to a future agenda.

COMPLETE STREETS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Present: George Barringer and Michelle Collette

Mr. Barringer explained what the complete streets program was. He said that the Committee had been appointed in the fall who set out to prioritize potential pedestrian safety projects. He said that they decided to use their own resources in house to that they could stretch the potential \$400K they could receive in grants further. He said they submitted a list of 7 projects to the State for review adding they were advised by the State that the projects had to be

engineered by an eligible DOT certified firm. He said that based on this new information, their own town engineer reviewed the proposed list and they further reduced the list to 4 projects. He said that these projects had a significant amount of engineering already done by the engineer. Mr. Barringer briefly reviewed the 4 projects and their approximate costs. Ms. Collette said that they would hear back from the State sometime in August. Mr. Barringer said that the projects would have to be done within a year. Mr. Cunningham said that the Committee had done a lot of work in a short period of time adding that it was discouraging to that they couldn't do any of the work in house. He said it wasn't an efficient use of federal dollars. Mr. Haddad said that a lot of it had to do with job creation and one of the reasons why they didn't allow in house work.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said that the next steps for the Senior Center project was contingent on question 2 passing at the ballot the following day. He said that they had advertised for an OPM and for the designer. Mr. Haddad said that he had asked most members of the Feasibility Oversight Committee to serve on the Building Committee including Mr. Keoseian, Mr. Amaral, Ms. Collette, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Green and Mr. Faircloth with the addition of Ms. Nilsson-Ripps. He said he believed that those 7 people would be excellent to have on this committee and asked the Board to consider ratifying these appointments. Mr. Degen said he thought it would be prudent to have a sitting member of the Board on the Committee. Mr. Haddad said that they could replace a member or expand the Committee adding that having Mr. Cunningham serve as their designee having served as a long-term member of the BOS could fill that need.

Mr. Cunningham moved to affirm the appointments of the Committee as presented. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Mr. Haddad said that Mr. Hargraves did not want to be reappointed to the Finance Committee. He said that after 6 years, he was ready to step aside. He said that this will create a 3-year vacancy on the Committee. Mr. Haddad said that in addition to this vacancy, Ms. Dunbar had begun the annual appointment process. The following committees were anticipating vacancies at this time: the Personnel Board, Historic Districts Commission, Sargisson Beach Committee, Housing Partnership and Zoning Board of Appeals.
3. Mr. Haddad said that the 3rd quarter financial review looked really good in comparison to last year. He said that licenses and permits had already exceeded that budget by \$90K adding that they were right on track with other local receipts. He said they were right where they needed to be with excise taxes on motor vehicles. Ms. Dufresne added that they were expecting to reach \$1.6M. Mr. Haddad said that they would be sending out PILOT letters with PILOTS due by June 30th. He said that they were also on track expenditures. He said they were a little ahead with DPW adding that was mainly because snow and ice was greater this year. Ms. Dufresne said that she was going to insert a footnote from now on because the \$200K for OPEB used to be paid out of the general fund but was no longer the case because it was transferred into the trust fund created by Town Meeting.
4. Mr. Haddad said that he also wanted to update the Board on where they stood with their goals and objectives. He said that Mr. Pease was working on the mission statement and had created a survey which was due in June. The survey asked employees and volunteers to suggest a mission statement. The three finalists would be brought before the Board. He said that Mr. Pease planned to hold off on the Strategic Plan until after the election. Mr. Haddad said that they had completed the Municipal Modernization Act review. He said that no workshops had been scheduled yet to establish boundaries. Mr. Degen said it made sense to discuss this after the election. Mr. Haddad said that as far as public communication went, their Facebook page was getting activity adding that the IT department was doing a great job updating that. He said they were well on their way to recruiting more volunteers adding that through that meeting, they had 16 new individuals appointed. He said the Audit was progressing very well and expected the report would be done by the end of June. He said they met their budget goal and that they needed to create the free cash policy. Mr. Haddad said Mr. Pease felt they should wait on the regionalization grant until after municipal audit was completed and discussed by the Board.

Mr. Haddad said that one of his personal goals was to provide operational support to the COA. He said he thought he had done a good job working with the COA. He said that he thought he had done a good job assisting the Board of Selectmen with their goals. He said he didn't think he had any issues with the media and thought he had been doing a good job. Ms. Sartini of the Herald said that Mr. Haddad was doing fine as far as she was concerned. Mr. Haddad said that he planned to take a summer course as part of his

professional education goal and thought he had a very strong working relationship with the School Superintendent.

Ms. Becky Pine said that she had never heard about a Town of Groton Facebook page and asked how one would know about it. Mr. Haddad said they could add something about it to the Town's homepage.

5. Mr. Haddad said that they received a request for a one day beer and wine license for First Parish Church for a Free Concert Featuring the Thoreau Way Ensemble to be held on Friday, May 19th from 7:30pm-9:30pm and asked the Board to consider approving the license request.

Mr. Degen made a motion to approve the one day beer and wine license request. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Mr. Haddad said that they received a request for a one day beer and wine license for the Groton Conservation Trust for a Sunflower and Sunset Party at the General Field to be held on Thursday June 8th from 7:00pm-10:00pm and asked the Board to consider approving the license request.

Ms. Eliot made a motion to approve the one day beer and wine license request. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Haddad said that the 2017 Town Meeting approved the changes to the Charter. He said that the Charter Review Committee Chairman and the Town Clerk had reviewed and approved the changes made at Town Meeting. He asked the Board to vote to authorize him to send the Charter to Representative Harrington and Senator Donoghue for approval.

Mr. Cunningham moved to authorize the Town Manager to send the Charter to the Representative and Senator. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Executive Session meeting minutes of March 27, 2017 and release them. Mr. Degen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve Part 1 of the Executive Session meeting minutes of April 14, 2017 and release them. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve Part 2 of the Executive Session meeting minutes of April 14, 2017 and not release them. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of March 27, 2017. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion adding she had one minor typographical correction. The motion, with the correction, carried unanimously.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of April 3, 2017. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Petropoulos adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.

Approved: _____
Barry Pease, Clerk

_____ respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 5/31/17