

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 10, 2021
UN-APPROVED**

SB Members Virtually Present: Alison S. Manugian, Chair; Joshua A. Degen, Vice Chair; Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk; John R. Giger, Member; John F. Reilly, Member

Also Virtually Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Michael Hartnett, Tax Collector/Treasurer; Hannah Moller, Assistant Tax Collector/Treasurer; Patricia Dufresne, Town Accountant; Bud Robertson

Ms. Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and reviewed the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Haddad said the Board needed to extend if they wished, the signing authority of the Town Manager and John Reilly on the warrants and asked if that could be added to the agenda.

Mr. Haddad read a notice into the record about a new vaccine site opening at Devens later this week. Ms. Pine asked for clarification on whether just veterans or if anyone could go there for a vaccine because it was being held at a veteran's center. Mr. Haddad thanked Representative Harrington, the area Town Managers and especially former Police Chief Donnie Palma for all their hard work on getting this up and running. Mr. Haddad said it was open to anyone. There was a question whether children ages 12-15 could also attend. Mr. Giger said that the folks in Washington still needed to vote on that later this week. Mr. Degen thanked the Representative for her work on this and for showing up at Town Meeting, adding he wished she would respond to attending a Select Board meeting. Ms. Manugian said that she was still working on this.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Mr. Haddad said he had previously recommended to the Select Board, and the Select Board agreed, that they would not reopen Town Hall to the public (no appointments necessary) until after the Town achieved "Green" Status for two consecutive weeks. He said that after reviewing the matter, and taking into consideration that almost every Town Hall employee would be fully vaccinated by the end of the month, he recommended that they reopen Town Hall to the public effective June 1, 2021. Mr. Haddad said that masks would still be required to be worn while in Town Hall and that they would continue to operate under the protocols approved by the Select Board in May, 2020. He said he had consulted with the Fire Chief and other Department Heads and were all comfortable with this recommendation.

Mr. Degen said that some of the area Towns had been using a hybrid method for meetings in person and asked if the Town Manager had thought about that. Mr. Haddad said that they had originally discussed not holding in person meetings until within 30 days after the Governor lifted the order and asked for time to discuss that with the Chair.

Mr. Degen thanked the Groton Fire Department for their hard work fighting a fire last week at a garage located on Lost Lake. He said that thanks to the Fire Department, a quick-thinking Police Officer and neighbors spotting the fire from across the lake, they were able to save the residence and one next door. He said that thanks to the cistern installed a few years ago, this helped save the residences from catching on fire. Mr. Reilly thanked Art Prest for pushing for this cistern back in the day which received opposition because of its cost.

The Board had no objection to reopening the Town Hall on June 1.

2. Mr. Haddad said that Bob Colman's last day as Program Director for the Groton Channel was May 14th. He said that as discussed at a previous meeting and approved by the Select Board, and based on the recommendation from the Cable Advisory Committee, he had appointed Ashley Doucette as Program Director, effective May 17, 2021. Mr. Haddad said that Ms. Doucette had served as their Production Assistant since 2016 and had done a great job. Mr. Haddad said that he, Melisa Doig, and Dawn Dunbar interviewed Ms. Doucette and were excited for her to take over managing The Groton Channel. He respectfully requested that the Board consider ratifying this appointment.

Ms. Manugian asked about the hiring freeze and where this position fell. Mr. Haddad said that this was a backfill of a department head position and were not creating any new positions. Mr. Degen said that Ms. Doucette had rose to the top and thought she would be a great promotion and addition.

Mr. Degen moved that they affirm the Town Manager's appointment of Ashley Doucette as Program Director for the Groton Cable Department effective May 17, 2021. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

PUBLIC HEARING – ALL ALCOHOL ON PREMISE LIQUOR LICENSE – HERB LYCEUM

Mr. Haddad read the public hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Haddad said that they had held a carry in license for many years and were interested in being able to sell and serve alcohol.

Mr. Degen moved to open the public hearing. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

Mr. William Gilson said that for the past 3 years, he and his partners had been operating out of the Herb Lyceum on his parent's behalf under his and his partners catering license, Cambridge Cuisine. He said that COVID-19 had been challenging on restaurants adding they were trying to find a safe way to serve guests moving forward and wanted to make the property sustainable and profitable. He said that they had been running their restaurant, Cambridge Cuisine, for the past 8 ½ years and opened up three other restaurants in Cambridge recently. He said that they held other licenses with the ABCC already.

Mr. Reilly asked about the anticipated hours of operation. Mr. Gilson said that they were looking to be open Wed-Sun with daytime hours on the weekend for brunch. He said that they were asking for 11am-11pm. He said that currently their events had a hard 9pm stop so as to not disturb the abutters. Ms. Manugian asked if the license would cover the events and restaurant. Mr. Gilson said that it would. Mr. Haddad said that the hours were consistent with others in Town. Ms. Pine said that they wouldn't be able to allow people to bring in their own fine wine. Mr. Gilson said that that was true but had curated a list of fine wines they thought people might enjoy.

Mr. Robertson said he had been going there since Mr. Gilson was a cook in high school. He said that he had gone there because the food was very good and thought a liquor license was a great idea. Ms. Pine asked if they were planning on having music. Mr. Gilson said he thought an entertainment license was required and had not current plans for live music. Mr. Degen asked if they should make that a condition of the license. Mr. Haddad said that they did that because of a complaint from an abutter but said they hadn't had any complaints from the neighbors here.

Ms. Pine moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

Ms. Pine moved to grant the all alcohol on premise license to Cambridge Cuisine, LLC for use at the Herb Lyceum. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. Mr. Haddad said that the hours would be 11am-12am. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT – CONT.

3. Mr. Haddad said he had appointed Dylan Grimm as a Greenskeeper at the Groton Country Club and respectfully request that the Board consider ratifying this appointment

Mr. Degen moved to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Dylan Grimm as Greenskeeper. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

4. Mr. Haddad said that the Sargisson Beach Committee had recommended that the Board appoint Keven Charland and Nicholas Degaitas to the Committee. Mr. Haddad respectfully requested that the Board consider making these appointments.

Mr. Degen moved to appoint Keven Charland and Nicholas Degaitas to the Sargisson Beach Committee term to expire June 30, 2021. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

5. Mr. Haddad said that now that Town Meeting had authorized the Select Board to enter into an Easement Agreement with Kevin Lindemer for the Sewer Connection for 227 Boston Road, Mr. Lindemer would like to start the process as soon as possible. Mr. Haddad said he would like to recommend that the Select Board designate two members to work with him to negotiate the Easement to bring back to the full Board for approval. Mr. Haddad also

recommended that Mr. Lindemer and his attorney draft the easement so as to save tax payer dollars having Town Counsel draft one.

Ms. Manugian read the following email into the record:

Dear Members of the Board

I am unable to be present at the Board's meeting tonight and hope that you will read this into the record as you consider your response to Town Meeting's vote that authorized the grant of an easement to the Lindemers.... and directed you to negotiate terms and conditions in the best interest of the Town.

The uncontested 2/3 Town Meeting majority made clear that the Town overwhelmingly approves of this initiative in spite of the clear and consistent objections of a minority of the Select Board.

I understand that the Board will hear a recommendation from the Town Manager that 2 of its members be appointed to negotiate in the interest of Town Meeting. Should the Board determine to accept the Town Manager's recommendation, as a member of the Town Meeting that approved of the easement, and in the interest of all parties feeling that these negotiations are seen as being done in good faith, I request that the selected Members be drawn from individuals who did not express adamant opposition to the Article.

Thank you

Jack Petropoulos

Mr. Degen said he thought the entire Board should be negotiating this. He said it could be messy and cumbersome to have them all discuss this but thought it could be also extremely cumbersome having the two dissenting members excluded as per Mr. Petropoulos's email. Ms. Manugian asked if this would be done in executive session. Mr. Haddad said that the Board's discussions would be done in executive session but that negotiations would be done in open session. Mr. Reilly said that he agreed with having the whole board discuss this. Ms. Pine said she wasn't sure why they needed to meet on this. She said that they received a very thorough appraisal and Town Meeting supported this. Mr. Degen disagreed with Ms. Pine. Mr. Degen said that Mr. Reilly voted to support bringing this to Town Meeting but may not necessarily be in favor of this. Mr. Reilly said that was correct. Ms. Manugian also agreed with the approach that had been brought up by Mr. Degen and discussed.

Mr. Haddad said that he assumed they would want to wait until after the election to schedule this as there would be a change in membership. Mr. Degen and Mr. Reilly were okay with that. The Board discussed adding an executive session on May 24th at 6pm. Mr. Giger said that he would not attend adding he would not be involved in this because his last day as a Board member was the following day. Mr. Lindemer said he wasn't sure if negotiating with 5 members was a precedent but was hoping to move this along quickly. Ms. Manugian said she was asking about dates and not about a process. She said she wasn't sure there was a precedent setting difference here. Mr. Haddad said that the final decision was the full Board and if they full Board wanted to discuss this from the start they absolutely could. Mr. Lindemer said he was willing to wait until after the election for a full Board. Mr. Degen offered a compromise that one member in support of this and one against this negotiate and bring it back to the Board. Ms. Manugian said she would still want an executive session to provide input and would schedule an executive session on June 7th.

6. Mr. Haddad said that as far as Town Meeting following up went, he was working with the Finance Team to put together the necessary documentation for the various bonding authorizations approved at Town Meeting. He said that the Middle School Track Project and Florence Roche Construction Project was dependent on the Debt Exclusion Vote at the Annual Election. He said that the Finance Team was moving forward on all debt related articles. He said that the bylaws were all sent to the AG for their approval. He said that the Town Accountant was working on setting up the new FY budget. He said they also got an email from Senator Trahan's office about preliminary uses for the \$3.3M which they were working on reviewing.
7. Mr. Haddad reviewed the Board's weekly schedule for the next few weeks.

Ms. Pine asked about interviewing Town Counsel firms in person. Mr. Haddad said he also thought they should interview them in person. There was a discussion about capacity limits in order to meet in person. Mr. Haddad said he received a suggestion to do this at the Center and thought this was a great suggestion.

8. Mr. Haddad said that they asked for a grant to study the old sportsmen club in front of the Center. He said that they received a grant from the MRPC and performed a study along with test wells. He said that they found that the property was contaminated with lead. He said that they were not the landowners, but wanted to see if it was contaminated before possibly taking the property adding that the property didn't have landowners right now as the organization was defunct. He said that the DPW covered the contaminated area and blocked it off from further contamination. He said that they were trying to work with DEP and EPA on possible state or federal funding to clean up this site. Mr. Cunningham said that they received \$38K from MRPC which was very helpful. He said that some form of remediation would be required and were exploring grant opportunities for emergency response to contaminated areas such as this. Ms. Manugian asked if there was an estimate of cleanup costs. Mr. Cunningham said that they were told it could cost 6 figures. Ms. Pine asked what they meant by covering of the area. Mr. Haddad wanted to make clear that the Town was not responsible for cleanup of this property.

Mr. Degen moved to extend the warrant signing authority of the Town Manager and Member Reilly through June 10, 2021. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Ms. Manugian asked if Mr. Reilly was willing to continue doing this. Mr. Reilly said he was. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-abstain; Giger-aye

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Manugian said she asked that a discussion about a housing workshop be added to the agenda. She said she was proposing there be a workshop between the Board members. She said one idea she had was getting quotes from a consultant to help them work through the process and different levers they had available to them along with potential locations. She said she wanted to hear where her fellow board members were at.

Ms. Pine said that they were in the process of planning the housing summit and thought some of these issues might be addressed. She said she wasn't sure how what they would do would fit in with that without actually confusing it. Ms. Manugian said she didn't feel like she had those answers but that there were other peer Boards who had an interest but thought they needed some sort of coordination of the peer boards either before, during, after, she wasn't sure. She said it was May 10th and they hadn't heard anything more on the housing summit such as a date. Ms. Pine said that one of the main focuses was to bring everyone together to surface questions and hear from the public. Ms. Manugian said she didn't want to step on toes but also felt as though it was difficult to have one or two peer boards coordinate other peer boards. Mr. Degen suggested that she give this another couple of weeks. She said there was a sub committee of the Diversity Task Force (DTF) who was working with the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) to work the details of the summit out. He said he would bring this up at the DTF meeting on Thursday and ask for an update. He said he agreed with a consultant but thought one should be brought in after the summit was held. Mr. Reilly said he was confused about who would be hiring the consultant and who was taking the lead on this. Ms. Manugian said that this was part of the confusion with who was taking the lead on this.

Mr. Haddad said that based on this discussion, they would hold off on this until they received an update on the housing summit. Ms. Pine said that there were annual reports printed about what the Housing Authority and Affordable Housing Trust were working on. Mr. Haddad said he started the Housing Trust when he was first hired and hired the Town's first Housing Coordinator. He said that there were no projects anticipated at that time and was not created because of Boynton Meadows. Mr. Degen said he agreed with Mr. Haddad. Ms. Manugian said she did not agree based on her review of minutes and dates in which things occurred. Mr. Degen said that this was the reason they needed the summit, to bring this all together. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Manugian said she thought it was up to them to make sure this was being done in a cohesive manner. Mr. Degen asked that this be tabled until after the summit.

Mr. Giger asked if there was an update on the 9 West Main Street liquor license appeal hearing. Ms. Pine said she participated in that hearing and thought the case was well prepared by Town Counsel. She said the applicant represented themselves and was late to the hearing. She said that George Barringer was a witness and spoke at length about the property history. She said that the traffic and community opinions were presented. Ms. Pine said the ABCC would take the information under advisement and closed the hearing. She said they did not have a time specified when they would make a decision by. Ms. Pine said that the applicant made the point that the property had previous licenses. Mr. Giger said he was tied up on that day but had taken 3 dozen pictures of how the property had been blocked by traffic, etc. and signed an affidavit and submitted it. Ms. Pine said that was discussed and shown.

MINUTES

Mr. Degen moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 26, 2021 and May 1, 2021 as presented. Ms. Pine seconded the motion. Roll Call: Pine-aye; Manugian-aye; Degen-aye; Reilly-aye; Giger-aye

Ms. Manugian adjourned the meeting at 8:35pm.

Approved: _____
Rebecca H. Pine, Clerk

_____ respectfully *submitted*:
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 5/24/21