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Minutes

Town of Belmont

Board of Selectmen

Selectmen's Meeting Room

Friday, September 7, 2018

9:00am

APPROVED  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
DATE: 9/17/18

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 9:10am by Chair Adam Dash. Vice Chair Mark Paolillo and Selectmen Tom Caputo were present. Glenn Clancy was present in the role of Acting Town Administrator.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A moment of silence was held for Sachi Thanawala Patel.

Belmont Porch-fest will be held tomorrow.

Cushing Square festival is September 22 in Cushing Square.

Gallery opening at the Belmont Gallery of Art for *Rhythm and Hues* on September 7 10am-7pm. There will be a reception on September 22, 7-9pm. There will also be an African pop-up craft fair on September 10 at the Gallery from 10am-7pm.

There will be a Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting on September 13 at 7pm; added to the Agenda will be a discussion of the intersection at Sycamore/Lexington. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen which will be discussed and voted on subsequently. Public comment is invited for ideas and comments on how to improve the intersection.

A. Dash stated that making changes to problematic intersections has been an ongoing project, e.g. recent work at Marsh/Winter. Also, the Town has recently adopted the 'Complete Streets' program to obtain funding from the State to improve intersections. As part of this program the Town will compile a list of problematic intersections, hold a public forum for comments, and then prioritize and address the intersections.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS:

**Tammy Calise** (29 Walnut): What is Belmont doing to address problematic streets leading up to intersections, cars travelling at high speeds? Expressed concern about the qualifications of TAC - what professional development/knowledge/expertise do they have to make these decisions?

AD: Complete streets also addresses issues beyond intersections such as traffic calming, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. Last year the town-wide speed limit was reduced to 25 mph. TAC has hired outside engineers to consult on these issues.

GC: TAC brings in consulting engineers when required. Complete streets not limited to intersections; projects under this program will touch on variety of issues.

MP: Belmont posted as 25mph community - issue of enforcement. Board does best it can to appoint qualified volunteers, not always with specific qualification to the committee, but rely heavily on Police, Community Development, and other qualified external advisors. TAC provides suggestions to the Board and the Board sets policy.

TC: Important to involve TAC and follow through on the process outlined above to address these issues.

Tammy: Appreciate the complete streets program. How will the projects be prioritized? Re: 25mph limit, research shows that this can still be damaging to pedestrians. Important for our environment to support our behaviours.

AD: Not sure it is possible to lower below 25mph. GC: It is possible to set up a special speed zone, but these take precedence over town-wide regulation of 25mph, which is why there are still 30mph posted signs in town.

AD: In terms of prioritization, this is part of the process outlined above to get public input and then work with Community Development and TAC to make recommendations to the Board to take action.

TC: Tammy passed along Wayland's traffic calming policies, which outline comprehensive process and evaluation criteria. Board should consider using this or similar criteria.

MP: Too many cars on the road; need to move forward with Community Path program, increase walking routes, creating safer sidewalks for walking/biking.

GC: Re: prioritization of projects, important for the community to set forth priorities. Will have an evaluation tool for each project.

**Charles Clark** (Town Meeting Member – Precinct 4): White near Beech Street has had problems in the past; even with blinking lights and 4-way stop, still traffic issues. Some of these streets are a cut through to Watertown. Presence of crossing guards helps to slow things down. Speed bumps need to be better marked, and would suggest a 4-way stop at Lexington/Sycamore.

GC: TAC looked at Lexington/Sycamore intersection 3 years ago; concern was speeding and suggestion was to put 4-way stop. However, this would create severe traffic issues from the light at Lexington/Church.

CC: In the morning traffic backs up past the intersection; very difficult to get across. From point-of-view of resident this is a dangerous and chaotic intersection.

GC: Raised intersection has helped reduce crashes, but time to look at the next step; perhaps evaluation for full traffic signals. AD: TAC will take up these issues at the meeting.

**Shonool Malik** (Town Meeting Member – Precinct 4): Resident of Sycamore and a dear friend of Sachi; Sachi was a wonderful mom. Extremely important to wear lens of pedestrian; lot of walking traffic in that area and Belmont in general. A 4-way stop sign will not take care of limited visibility issue. Traffic is also

bad outside peak times besides just school times. Bump is confusing, people slowing down for the bump, not for pedestrians. Coming from Sycamore is very difficult; other intersections in neighborhood are also bad. Stress importance of having objective methodology for determining priority of projects. We do not need another tragedy; Sachi had two boys, 8 and 4.

AD: Thank you for your comments and sorry for your loss. Urge public to attend TAC and attend Board meeting when recommendations come back to Board of Selectmen.

**Kate Bowen** (Town Meeting Member – Precinct 4): Underscore using an objective/transparent evaluation process. Not always obvious how decisions get made. Board can enforce using objective methodology. Short-term traffic calming solutions can also be put in place.

AD: Sidewalk policy adopted earlier this year, ensure safe way to get through Town without having to cross intersections. In favour of objective criteria, but also need public comment. Evaluation criteria helps analyze and process feedback from the public.

GC: Town-wide study will take into account places we don't want traffic.

MP: Ongoing discussion with Police Chief about enforcement at hot spots; do more to change behavior.

KB: Agree, would like to see more coordination with safety regulations across different departments. What is the Town plan with respect to new developments?

MP: We get complaints from the other side re: impeding traffic, roads should be four lanes, etc. Response is that it is not our goal to make it easy to get through Belmont!

A. Dash closed the portion of the meeting for public comment.

**ACTION BY CONSENT:**

**Interview Planning Board Applicants and Make Possible Re-appointment(s) of Expiring Members and Make Possible Appointment(s) of New Applicant(s)**

A. Dash explained that there were vacancies for two full memberships and one alternate membership; two current full members (Edmund Starzec and Karl Haglund) are seeking re-appointment, but still a vacancy for the alternate spot for the remainder of the term vacated by Mr. Sanderson. Planning Board is extremely important and hence the interviews for new candidates.

A. Dash invited Norma Massorati to be interviewed and to give an opening statement. N. Massorati mentioned the sobering discussion from earlier in the meeting, and expressed concerns that traffic will not improve; as certain intersections improve, the problem gets displaced elsewhere.

AD: What is your interest in the Planning Board?

NM: An 18 year resident, have participated in various local activities. As of December 1, stopped working full-time and have more time to serve the community in a greater capacity.

AD: What skills do you bring to Planning Board?

NM: 30+ years corporate experience, strong organizational skills, operate with integrity and strong work ethic. Transferable skills.

MP: General thoughts about Planning Board and its focus, issues Planning Board should take up?

NM: No preconceptions, desire to serve in a greater capacity. Understand efforts underway for Pleasant Street / Waverly Sq.; see Cushing Sq. project come to fruition. Like what the Town has done with Belmont Center and Cushing Sq. Open-minded, interested in preserving quality of town – size and architecture.

TC: Planning board balances trade-offs. Any perspective on how you would make these trade-offs? What direction to push the Board?

NM: Have listened to meetings online, but no preconceptions; not enough experience to have an opinion on how to push the Planning Board. Objective is to listen, learn and contribute.

A. Dash invited Bulent Gurel to be interviewed and to give an opening statement. B. Gurel thanked the Board for their consideration.

AD: What is your interest in the Planning Board?

BG: As of last year started working from home, much more flexibility with home life, but need for more social interaction. Good way to give back to the community by helping to serve and meet local residents.

AD: What skills do you bring to Planning Board?

BG: Civil engineer with 20 years' experience. Currently project manager for power lines. Applied to Boards where skills could contribute.

MP: General thoughts about Planning Board and its focus, issues Planning Board should take up?

BG: Not much; understand it is a balancing act between public and private interest, due to project management and engineering experience.

TC: Strong opinions on how you would balance trade-off between individual interests and public good?

BG: From engineering background, learned solving problems without much interaction, focus on technical solutions. With project management background, learned to listen to others and incorporate non-technical aspect. Learn to listen to all aspects.

A. Dash invited Chair of the Planning Board Charles Clark for discussion on the appointments to the Planning Board.

C. Clark provided context of current projects of the Planning Board and stressed the importance and value of having technical expertise. Backgrounds of Ed and Karl provide expertise and they have made valuable contributions for current projects.

M. Paolillo expressed that part of the challenge is to give new people a chance to serve; Karl has served on the Board a long time (since 1999). Supports Karl, and obviously difficult to remove someone that has served well for a long time. C. Clark mentioned that Karl has been part of the Cushing Square project and has valuable institutional memory for these types of projects.

C. Clark recommended the re-appointment of Ed Starzec and Karl Haglund.

*Motion: To re-appoint both Karl Haglund and Edmund Starzec for full membership of the planning board for 3 year terms. (Vote passed 3-0)*

M. Paolillo asked to clarify the role of the alternate on the committee. C. Clark explained that they participate in special permit processes, and when there is a member absent the alternate can vote.

The Board clarified the length of the term for the alternate (2 years to fill the remaining vacant term) and reviewed past discussions regarding adding another member to the Planning Board. The Board made a point to recognize that additional resources were required for Community Development in this context.

C. Clark added that the alternate brings technical expertise as well, and therefore would ultimately recommend Bulent for the membership.

M. Paolillo asked about importance of having resident point-of-view; C. Clark replied that all the members are Belmont residents and that recently we have stressed skills and qualifications. A. Dash mentioned that residents can get involved through public process and in other ways as well.

T. Caputo deferred to C. Clark and the Board on their opinion and agreed that technical skills and expertise should be given high weight in the decision.

The Board thanked N. Massorati for her application and hoped that she would continue to get involved in the community in other ways.

*Motion: To appoint Bulent Gurel as alternate member of the Planning Board for the remaining 2 years of the vacant alternate position. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### **Review Application(s) for the Community Preservation Committee and Possible Appointment**

A. Dash explained that Elizabeth Dionne (Warrant Committee member) expressed interest in this appointment. She is an attorney, will bring a different and fresh voice/perspective to the committee.

*Motion: To appoint Elizabeth Dionne to the Community Preservation Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### **Review Application(s) for Housing Trust and Possible Appointment**

A. Dash discussed the application from Jeremy Romanul; had applied initially to the Planning Board; a recent college graduate; coordinator for Mass. Department of Health MassInMotion. Qualified for the position.

Don Mercier interjected that he had submitted an application; it had not been received by the Board.

M. Paolillo suggested to defer the vote until Mr. Mercier's application was received.

**Review Application(s) for Disability Access Commission and Possible Appointment**

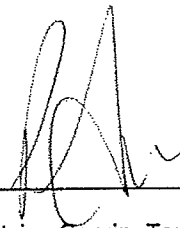
Patricia Gross, social security and disability attorney had applied. A. Dash wondered if she met the requirements for the committee. T. Caputo suggested to move forward with the appointment and double check the criteria afterwards.

*Motion: To appoint Patricia Groves to Disability Access Commission as an alternate member.  
(Vote passed 3-0)*

Looking to have short meeting September 13 at 6:15-6:30pm, Board of Selectmen room.

Next meeting is September 17, 2018 at 7pm.

*Motion: To adjourn at 10:18am. (Vote passed 3-0)*



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Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator