

SELECTMEN'S MINUTES
AUGUST 6, 2002
Town Hall, Selectmen's Meeting Room
7:30 PM

Call to Order

The Board of Selectmen met in regular session on Tuesday, August 6, 2002 at 7:30 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at the Belmont Town Hall. All members were in attendance.

Questions from Town Residents

There were none.

Action by Appointment

Town Treasurer re: Approval of Financing

The Board met with the Town Treasurer regarding approval of financing.

The Board moved: to approve the financing of \$14.2 million through the issuance of 20-year bond notes from Eastern Bank at a rate of 3.92%.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Discussion of Fire Sub-Station Location in Belmont Center

The Board discussed the issue of location of a fire sub-station and additional parking in Belmont Center.

Mrs. Mahoney reviewed the results of a survey the Board of Selectmen sent to homeowners, business and commercial property owners to assess preferences with respect to locating a fire sub-station and additional parking in Belmont Center.

Mr. Donham, the Town's consultant, provided a brief overview of the technical analysis that identified the best location for the consolidation of three to two fire stations in the community, considering primarily response times.

Chief Osterhaus expressed his opinion that both the Claflin and Alexander lots have approximately the same advantages from an access and response time perspective. He explained why the existing site in Belmont Center is not a viable option for locating a fire sub-station.

Joel Mooney of the Town Hall Complex Building Committee summarized the results of a parking study in Belmont center and the potential to develop additional parking. He noted that the most cost effective option for creating additional parking in Belmont Center is by decking the Alexander Avenue lot.

Robert McLaughlin of the Fire Station Consolidation Committee reiterated his opposition to the coupling of the issue of the fire station location and the need for additional parking in Belmont Center.

A resident inquired about the factors that are necessitating the consolidation of the Town's three fire stations to two fire stations.

Many residents inquired relative to the need for a fire station in Belmont Center.

Residents commented and asked questions relative to the decision of the location of a fire station on either the Claflin Street and Alexander Avenue lots.

John Connery, consultant to the Belmont Center Business Association, stressed the importance of the need to include the creation of additional parking in the consideration of the fire station location decision.

Many residents and business and commercial property owners expressed concerns about locating a fire sub-station on an existing parking lot in Belmont Center that will necessitate creating additional parking in the Center.

The Board discussed the comments it heard of the residents.

Mrs. Mahoney inquired about the viability of restoring 45° angle parking in Belmont Center. Mr. Gatzunis commented that this type of parking is typically unsafe because it doesn't offer the line of sight that parallel parking offers.

Mrs. Mahoney indicated her surprise at the strong response in the survey opposing the closure of Claflin Street.

Mr. Brownsberger inquired about the potential of locating both a fire station on the top level and parking on the lower level of the Alexander Avenue lot.

Dr. Solomon commented that at this point he believes that locating the sub-station on Alexander Avenue is the best option.

Mrs. Mahoney stated she is swayed by the cost advantages of locating a fire sub-station on the Claflin Street lot, but is also persuaded by the siting advantages of Alexander Avenue in that it has a greater possibility of avoiding the Concord Avenue and Channing Road intersection and offers the most capacity for additional parking in the Center. She concluded, in weighing these two options, she comes down on the side of locating the fire sub-station on the Alexander Avenue site.

Mr. Brownsberger concurred with Mrs. Mahoney's reasoning. He added that he felt that from a design perspective, a fire station on the Alexander Avenue site has greater potential to be an architecturally appealing gateway to Belmont Center than a parking structure.

The Board moved: to approve the locating of a fire sub-station on the Alexander Avenue parking lot.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board discussed the process of moving forward with this issue.

Mr. Brownsberger inquired about what should be put before a Town Meeting in the fall.

Mrs. Brusch of the Permanent Building Committee strongly recommended that both fire stations should

be put before the Town Meeting.

Mrs. Mahoney suggested getting Town Meeting approval for the issuance of a bond anticipation note (BAN) to fund the cost of design and then a debt exclusion question can be developed based on the results of the design.

The Board agreed that it would discuss in significant detail the process with which to move forward with Town Meeting approval in the fall at their meeting on August 26.

The Board agreed to create a committee to examine the parking issue and charged the Town Administrator with drafting a charge for this committee for the Board's consideration on August 26.

Discussion of Potential Settlement of Dog Kennel Dispute (Possible Executive Session)

The Board discussed a potential settlement between the Town and Healthy Pet Inc.

Mr. Hamann expressed his client's concern relative to the enforcement mechanisms in this agreement and requested that the Board not sign the agreement at this point. He indicated his support for moving forward with adopting a bylaw to regulate kennels.

The Board expressed its support for the creation of a committee to develop a kennel bylaw.

Discussion of Long-Term Planning Initiative

Dr. Solomon provided an update of a proposal for a process for long range planning groups related to the vision process.

The Board discussed three areas of focus for initial efforts for long range planning groups.

Dr. Solomon suggested the creation of a Business and Economic Development Group, an Environmental Open Space and Recreation Group, and a Communications and Public Information Group.

Mrs. Mahoney questioned the involvement of the Vision Implementation Committee in convening the planning groups.

Dr. Solomon suggested that the Board of Selectmen was too busy to perform this role.

Mr. Brownsberger expressed support for the Business and Economic Development group and a Communications and Public Information group, but was not enthusiastic about the Environmental Open Space and Recreation group.

The Board agreed to move ahead with these two areas of focus and requested that Dr. Solomon and the Town Administrator develop draft mandate for these areas.

Mrs. Mahoney expressed her reluctance to spend any funds for a facilitator to assist in this process.

The Board requested further information about the expense related to facilitating this process.

Discussion of Board Meeting Schedule

The Board discussed their revised proposed meeting schedule for September through December, 2002

including alternate meeting dates.

The Board agreed to this revised schedule.

The Board also discussed and made revisions to the draft agenda for the August 26 meeting of the Selectmen.

Discussion of State Chapter 40B Housing Law

The Board discussed the recent changes in legislation related to the Chapter 40B affordable housing law. The Board agreed to send a letter to the Town of Norton thanking them for their letter and expressing general interest in staying apprised of their activities relative to any future proposed changes.

Discussion of AT&T Broadband/Comcast Cable TV License Transfer Application

There was no action on this item. The Board requested this item be placed on its August 26 agenda.

Action by Writing

Report from Water Department on Water/Sewer Pipe Dispute

The Board reviewed a report from the Water Department regarding a water/sewer billing dispute at 31-33 Hamilton Road.

The Board moved: to reject the request for an abatement of the sewer bill.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Approval of State Primary Election Warrant of September 17, 2002

The Board considered a request from the Town Clerk regarding approval of the State Primary Election warrant of September 17, 2002.

The Board moved: to approve the State Primary Election warrant for September 17, 2002.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Selectmen's Issues List

The members of the Board reviewed and updated their issues list.

Other

Dr. Solomon mentioned his interest in doing more to address issues of property tax increase impacts on homeowners with limited incomes.

Dr. Solomon provided an update on the issue of appointment of Associate members to the Conservation Commission. He explained that the Chairman of the Conservation Commission encouraged the Board of Selectmen to make the appointment. Dr. Solomon indicated he would try to identify an associate member within the next few months who would be acceptable to the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Kleckner summarized the outcome of the state's FY03 budget and the impact on the Town's FY03 budget, which results in an additional \$433,452 in state aid. He recommended the Town reevaluate its other revenue estimates and set the tax rate below the Town's levy capacity which can be utilized in future years.

Mr. Brownsberger suggested the creation of a small group to frame the issue of optimal levels of spending on the maintenance and reconstruction of the Town's roads through its Pavement Management Program. He suggested the same relative to stormwater and drainage issues.

Action by Appointment (Continued)

Discussion of Potential Settlement for Dog Kennel (Executive Session)

The Board moved to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing litigation.

The Board moved: to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation.
The Board shall not return to open session.

The motion passed unanimously, (3-0), by roll call vote.

Melvin A. Kleckner, Town Administrator
Clerk, Board of Selectmen