

## **Board of Selectmen**

Regular Session

August 25, 2003 Minutes

### **Call to Order**

The Board of Selectmen convened at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of the Town Hall. All members were present.

### **Questions from Town Residents**

Mr. Arthur Wolfsen appeared before the Board to voice his concern about the speed with which the Town is attempting to obtain easements from Pleasant Street abutters. Mr. Brownsberger noted the state requirement that these easements must be registered in order for the Town to retain the Pleasant Street reconstruction funding.

Ms. Sue Bass also voiced her concerns about the project without the Town considering other design changes.

Mr. Brownsberger noted the requirement that the Town go out to bid on this project in a few weeks and that any formal changes at this point would prevent the Town from going out to bid and result in the loss of \$6.1 million in federal funds for this project for the foreseeable future. He didn't see delaying the project as a viable option for the Town.

The other members of the Board concurred.

### **Action by Appointment**

#### *Town Treasurer re: Execution of MWRA Bond Documents*

Ms. Susan Kendall Freiner appeared before the Board to seek the Board's execution of bond documents for the Town's borrowing of funds to finance the Town's water main replacement program.

The Board moved: to execute the MWRA bond documents authorizing the borrowing of \$650,000.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

#### *Acting Police Chief re: Promotions*

The Acting Police Chief appeared before the Board of Selectmen to seek permission to promote one sergeant to the rank of lieutenant and one patrol officer to the rank of sergeant. He indicated the recent retirement of Lt. Blanchette prompted this request.

Mr. Brownsberger noted his reluctance to approve the request given the age of the existing lieutenant list and his desire to wait until a permanent police chief is selected prior to allowing any personnel changes in the department.

Mrs. Mahoney voiced her support for Acting Chief O'Malley's request, given the fact that there will be a number of openings following the appointment of a permanent Police Chief.

Dr. Solomon also voiced his support for the Acting Chief's request.

The Board moved: to approve the request to allow these promotions.

The motion passed 2-1, Mr. Brownsberger opposed.

*O'Neill Properties re: Discussion of Alewife Development*

Steve Corridan and Brian O'Neill of O'Neill Properties appeared before the Board to discuss their proposal to rezone the property at the Belmont Uplands for multi-family residential use. Mr. O'Neill provided an overview of various impacts of the proposed project as compared to the currently approved project.

Mr. O'Neill indicated the difficulty for the developer to fund a 25% affordable housing contribution as cash, but that the project could finance the 25% affordable requirement through increasing the density of the project. He indicated that the project required 250 units (of which 63 would be affordable) in order to make the project financially viable. He noted their intention to develop a four-story interior parking garage within the apartments so that the visual impact of an open parking lot is mitigated.

Mrs. Mahoney inquired whether the affordable units could be marketed to senior citizens in addition to the 25% already designated for the senior citizens.

Mr. O'Neill confirmed that was their intention.

Mr. Higgins, Senior Planner, reported that the Town has retained a team of professional consultants to evaluate this proposal and provide comments and recommendations to the Board in a few weeks.

Mr. Brownsberger inquired whether the financial aspects of this project will become available to the Town.

Mr. Brownsberger encouraged the developer to work with the Town's affordable housing advocates to seek opportunities to participate in state and federal financing programs in order to make the financial aspects of the project more advantageous. He praised the elegance of the design but expressed concern for the environmental impact.

Mrs. Mahoney voiced her support for this concept because of its creation of affordable housing and of housing for seniors and providing additional tax revenue through the development of high-end rental units.

Mr. Brownsberger inquired about the sewer hook-up issue. He noted the improvements of this project as compared to the current proposal and supports getting the project in front of the Town Meeting for its consideration. He encouraged the continual exploration of reducing the density of the project through state and federal subsidies.

Dr. Solomon reiterated the comments made by his colleagues.

Mr. Brownsberger summarized that the Town Meeting will consider both a zoning by-law change and a Memorandum of Agreement.

Mr. Higgins noted the Town's need of a physical plan from O'Neill Properties to pass on to the Planning Board.

Mr. Brownsberger recommended a Special Town Meeting to consider the Uplands rezoning be scheduled for Monday, November 17, 2003 and that a public hearing on the Memorandum of Agreement be held on Tuesday, October 14, 2003.

Various observers made comments to the presentation.

#### *Discussion of Budget Process*

Mr. Brownsberger led the Board in a discussion of the Town's FY05 budget process.

He described various potential structures for a long-term capital funding approach ranging from an override to be appropriated to the capital endowment fund to the use of traditional debt exclusions. Mr. Brownsberger stated his concern that the people be able to vote on major projects at the polls. He reported that one possibility discussed would be to have an override annually appropriated to the capital endowment fund, but with the requirement of a popular vote to take the money out of the account. He noted this would give taxpayers continuing direct control over major projects. However, he suggested that an alternate and, perhaps preferable way to accomplish the major projects within a similar timeframe, is to fund projects through traditional debt exclusions but for a shorter period of time, such that by the time the construction is complete, the projects are paid off, freeing up tax capacity for the next major capital project. This would leave the decisions more firmly in the hands of the voters.

Mr. Brownsberger noted that if the Town were to seek special legislation to allow the Town to consider an override with a direct appropriation to the capital

endowment fund, the Town would need to develop this proposal for Town Meeting consideration in November.

Mrs. Mahoney expressed reservations about this type of proposal, because she believes it is highly unlikely that the voters would support it.

Mr. Brownsberger noted the Board's intention to assemble a meeting with the Warrant, Capital Budget, and Permanent Building Committees on Monday, September 29, 2003 to discuss this issue further.

Mr. Brownsberger also led the Board in a discussion of improvements to the Town's budget process, including the intention to develop a five-year revenue and expenditure projection early in this budget process to help to determine an appropriate allocation of these resources among various components of the Town's annual operating budget.

#### *Discussion of Board Goals and Objectives for Fiscal Year 2004*

The Board discussed its goals and objectives for itself and the Town Administration in FY 2004.

The Board made recommendations for changes to the goals and objective that are to be incorporated into a revised goals document.

#### *Discussion of Selectmen Meeting Schedule*

The Board discussed its meeting schedule. The Board agreed to meet in regular session every other Monday beginning Monday, September 8 and continuing until, and including, December 29, 2003. The one exception the Board made with a regular session was to schedule November 17 as a Special Town Meeting instead of a regular meeting and to designate November 10, 2003 as a regular meeting, instead. In addition, the Board scheduled a special session on Monday, September 29, 2003 to discuss large scale capital projects with members of the Warrant, Capital Budget, and Permanent Building Committees. The Board also scheduled a public hearing on the Belmont Uplands MOA for Tuesday, October 14, 2003. Finally, the board scheduled a special session for Monday, October 27, 2003 to discuss the FY05 budget process with the Warrant, Capital Budget, and School Committees.

#### *Discussion of Annual Committee/Commission Appointments*

The Board discussed and took action on committee appointments.

The Board moved: to make the following appointments to various Town committees, commissions and appointed positions:

Belmont Housing Trust  
Sallye Bleiberg, Harris Street

Cable Access Committees

Fred Skolar, Fairview Avenue  
Deborah Danzig, Payson Road

Youth Commission

Robert Palladino, Fletcher Road

MAPC Representative

Richard Kobayashi, Stults Road

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Dr. Solomon has agreed to call the chair of each group and ask for the recommendation of two appointees, using the volunteer list.

**Action by Consent**

Application for Licenses and Permit - Renewals

Lodging License

Theodore A. Speros, 386 Common Street

The Board considered an application for renewal of a lodging license by Theodore Speros of 386 Common Street.

The Board moved: to approve the application for the renewal of a lodging license by Theodore Speros of 386 Common Street.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Common Victualler's License

Manetas, Inc., d/b/a Andros Diner, 628 Trapelo Road

The Board considered an application for the renewal of a common victualler's license by Manetas, Inc., doing business of Andros Diner at 628 Trapelo Road.

The Board moved: to approve the application for the renewal of a common victualler's license by Manetas, Inc., and to communicate the Board's shared concern with that of the Health Director.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

**Action by Writing**

*Memorandum from Assistant Town Administrator re: State Early Retirement Incentive*

The Board considered a memorandum from the Assistant Town Administrator requesting authorization for the Town to evaluate potential cost savings opportunities presented by recent state legislation allowing a municipal early retirement incentive.

The Board authorized the Town Administrator to evaluate this program.

*Correspondence from Director of Community Development re: Wellington Brook Grate*

The Board reviewed correspondence regarding the Wellington Brook Grate project and a resident suggestion to move the location of the grate.

The Board supported the recommendation of the Director of Community Development to implement the current plans for this project.

*Memorandum from Director of Public Safety Communications re: Request to Hire*

*Public Safety Dispatcher*

The Board considered a request from the Director of Public Safety Communications to hire a public safety dispatcher to fill an existing vacancy.

The Board deferred action on this matter.

*Correspondence from Public Works Director re: Approval of Sidewalk and Water Main Replacement Contracts*

The Board of Selectmen considered the recommendations from the Public Works Director that contracts be awarded to N. Sacca and Sons for sidewalk replacement and granite curbing

The Board moved: to award contracts to N. Sacca and Sons for sidewalk replacement and granite curbing.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

*Letter to Town Administrator from Town Counsel re: Abandonment of Spring Street*

The Board of Selectmen reviewed a letter from the Town Counsel relative to a request by Belmont Manor Nursing Home that the Town abandon Spring Street.

The Board instructed the Town Administrator to send a copy of Town Counsel's letter to the Belmont Manor Nursing Home.

## **Other**

The Board discussed a memo it had previously received from the Senior Planner on the Town's permitting process. Mr. Brownsberger recommended the Board commend Mr. Higgins memo to the attention of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals for their diligent review and response and recommendation. The Board requested that by October, these boards communicate to the Selectmen their sense of how to accomplish this task for Town Meeting action in April.

Mr. Brownsberger noted a concept the Recreation Commission is considering, involving the potential use of the former incinerator site for a golf driving range.

**Action by Appointment (continued)**

*Discussion of Litigation (Executive Session)*

*Discussion of Collective Bargaining (Executive Session)*

The Board moved: to enter executive session to discuss strategy related to litigation and collective bargaining; further that the Board will not return to open session.

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

The regular session adjourned at approximately 10:30 p.m.

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Administrator

Melvin A. Kleckner, Town  
Clerk, Board of Selectmen