

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Monday, December 21, 2009
7:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Leclerc in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectmen Firenze and Jones were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were also present.

QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

There were none.

Chair Leclerc thanked Ms. Heli Tomford for the lovely basket of apples received from the Farmer's Market.

ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

Cushing Village Proposed Timetable Presentation

Ms. Jenny Fallon, Mr. Jay Szklut, members of the Planning Board, and Mr. Chris Starr appeared before the Board to discuss issues relating to the Cushing Village permitting process. Ms. Fallon noted that the Planning Board has agreed to hold a series of meetings in January with Mr. Starr to define the overlay concept. The information gleaned from these meetings will be shared with the Board. Selectman Firenze requested assurance that if the Board moves forward with the purchase and sale agreement for the parking lot, that Mr. Starr has the finances to move forward with the project. The Board has a right to know, he said, how this project is being financed. This project needs to be defined and the information will decide the conditions upon which the parking lot will be sold, he said. Chair Leclerc agreed that he needs to understand the philosophy of the project. He said he wants the project to be sensitive to the neighborhood (contextually appropriate) and to the historic value of the area.

Mr. Don Becker, a Horne Road resident from the audience, said that he and the neighbors have been searching for the information Mr. Firenze raised for years with regard to the basic plan for this space. He said a lot of time and effort is being wasted due to Mr. Starr's lack of disclosure.

Ms. Sapolsky, also from the audience, said that she is concerned about the creation of a dense, urban area in Cushing Square.

Proposed Health Insurance Policy

Ms. Crimmins, HR Director, and Mr. Darren Klein, legal counsel, appeared before the Board to discuss the proposed Policy on Health Insurance. Ms. Crimmins noted that Belmont needs a document on health insurance that complies with state law and details its practices and policies. Mr. Klein noted that there are no changes being proposed to the current policy with the exception that, as of February 25, 2009, employees cannot join the retirement system unless they are working 25 hours or more. This means that when these employees retire (those working less than 25 hours after February 25, 2009), they will not receive retiree health benefits, nor will they receive pensions.

The Board moved: To adopt the Policy on Group Health and Life Insurance and Continuation of Coverage (COBRA), subject to any changes in existing benefits or conditions being appropriately bargained with all of the affected unions.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To adopt the regulation on Retiree Health Insurance Eligibility, subject to any changes in existing benefits or conditions being appropriately bargained with all of the affected unions.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Executive Session

The Board moved to enter into Executive Session at 8:06 to discuss non-union contract negotiations and potential litigation, with the intention of returning to open session.

(During executive session no substantive motions were made.)

The Board returned to open session at 8:25 PM.

Outdoor Sandwich Board Discussion

Mr. Younger noted that the current by-law prohibits outdoor sandwich board displays by a private party except with the Board's permission. Both Belmont Center and Cushing Square have had sandwich board issues. Does the Board wish to prohibit signs or place restrictions on the signs? A permit for signs could be required. The Board discussed and requested that Mr. Younger come back with a recommendation and check with communities similar to Belmont to see how they handle the issue of sandwich boards. Chair Leclerc said he is not comfortable charging a fee, but would support guidelines and consistent enforcement of those guidelines.

Road Charting Program

Mr. Younger noted that Community Development has put its road construction projects on its website. There are start and end dates, and other information as well. The Board discussed the road charting format and noted that the impetus for this was the calls that

the Selectmen were getting from residents regarding road projects. The Board agreed that, while mill and overlay details and photos may be helpful, this document contained too much information and needs to be simplified for the general public.

Vacant Building Fee Program Discussion

Selectman Firenze noted that there are several building that have been vacant for a very long time. In an attempt to both cover the fees for vacant building maintenance and to encourage that something happen with the buildings, some communities have begun to charge a vacant building fee. The Board discussed the issues relating to this possibility. Mr. Younger said that this would need to be passed by Town Meeting as a general or zoning by-law. The Board asked Mr. Younger to draft a by-law, noting that it will focus on commercial buildings, but won't completely exclude residential.

Board of Assessors – Ratify Tax Certification Vote

Mr. Simmons from the Board of Assessors appeared before the Board to request the Board's approval to ratify the Tax Certification vote that the Board approved at its 11/30 meeting. He also noted that the tax rate has dropped 2 cents (\$12.18 to \$12.16).

The Board moved: To ratify the vote that was taken by the Board of Selectmen on the Classification Hearing held on November 30th, 2009.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The papers were signed.

ACTION BY WRITING

Possible Expansion of Benton Library Re-Use Committee Membership

Mr. Younger noted that residents from the Benton neighborhood have requested that the Benton Re-Use Committee hold its meetings in the evening and add a new member to the committee. Mr. Younger said that the meetings have been open and published. Selectman Firenze said he is not inclined to change the structure of the committee or the time that the meetings are held. This committee has done a lot of work and it can be disruptive to bring new people in. The Board then discussed the interest of a potential buyer/leaser. The re-use committee is looking at lease options.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

- The unfunded mandates list will be ready for the next meeting as a result of the efforts of many departments including the schools.
- The VFW license request has not been returned.

- Re-paving or reconstruction of Leonard Street will be discussed with Mr. Glenn Clancy. The street needs to be re-paved, but possibly in the context of a significant re-design of the area.
- The Town is working with legal counsel to find documentation of Town-owned property extending White Street across the railroad tracks..
- Chair Leclerc thanked the Allison family for their generosity in donating funds to the police department for security equipment.

The Board moved: To accept the gift of \$22,000 from the Allison Family Foundation.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Selectman Firenze mentioned wanting to publish such gifts in the paper.

- “Our Space” Fund Raiser will be held at Savino’s on Saturday, January 30th and as such is requesting to have the restaurant’s closing hours changed from 11:00 pm to 1:00 am.

The Board moved: To change the Savino’s closing hours from 11:00 pm to 1:00 am on 1/30/10 (i.e., effectively 1/31/10).

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Schedule Selectmen Meetings (and Office Hours) from 1/1/10 through 6/30/10

The Board discussed its upcoming 2010 meeting schedule, which includes meetings on January 4 and 25, February 1, 8 and 22, March 1 and 15, April 5 and 12 (April 26 is TM).

ACTION BY CONSENT

Common Victualler’s License and Livery Service

The Board moved: To approve the Common Victualler’s license renewal requests of the following establishments: Andros Dinner, Brugger’s Bagel Bakery, Gregory’s House of Pizza, Il Casale, Michael’s Pizza, Rancatore’s Ice Cream, Savino’s, Thyago’s Pizza, Stone Hearth Pizza, Teddy’s Kitchen, Advantage Limo, and Boston Executive Coach.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

ACTION BY WRITING (*continued*)

Zoning Board of Appeals Appointment

The Board moved: To approve the appointment of Mr. Jim Zakardas to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

OTHER

School Committee Chair Ann Rittenburg has requested a joint meeting with the Selectmen on January 12 to discuss negotiations with union employees. Selectman Firenze cannot make that date. Chair Leclerc will request a special meeting.

Responses from other communities have been positive to a letter sent detailing Belmont's recent TM resolution concerning the Minuteman school budget.

Mr. Younger is following up on the Board's request to the MBTA regarding a railroad cross-over at the high school.

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 pm.

Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator