

**MINUTES**  
**Page 1 of 5**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**September 19, 2005**  
**REGULAR SESSION**

*Convene as Municipal Light Board*

The Board of Selectmen convened as the Municipal Light Board at 6:30PM.

**Call to Order**

The Board of Selectmen convened in open session at 7:04 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of Town Hall. All members were present. Also present were Town Administrator Thomas Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeffrey Conti.

**Questions from Town Residents**

There were none.

**Action by Appointment**

*United Nations Day Proclamation*

The Board of Selectmen discussed enactment of a proclamation making October 24 United Nations Day.

The Board moved: to approve the proclamation with an amendment deleting a phrase that might make the Board seem to be advocating a political position unrelated to Town matters.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

*Discussion of Planning Manager Role*

Town Administrator Tom Younger reported that interviews are being scheduled after receiving a number of applications. The Selectmen discussed the role of the position as being primarily a planning function but encompassing economic and business development as well, in lieu of having a full-time economic development person which the Town cannot afford. There was also discussion of the structure and chain of command of the Planning Department as having been somewhat unclear in the past. Mr. Younger stated that the Planning Director has always reported directly to the Town Administrator and that it will continue. It was agreed that the Planning department is as important as any other function in Town Government. The Board of Selectmen discussed the idea of separating the Planning

Department completely from Community Development. Mr. Younger talked about establishing a cross-department development team that would meet regularly and review any project of a certain size. All of these will continue to be looked at going forward.

*Discussion with Community Development Director*

Community Development Director Glenn Clancy and Planning Coordinator Jeffrey Wheeler participated in this discussion.

*Discussion of Regional Traffic and Capital Road Project*

Mr. Wheeler reported on two regional traffic studies, the Belmont/Lexington/Waltham study and the Route 2/Alewife Parkway study. The latter is very narrow in focus, but the Town could play a role in drafting the scope of work to have a wider range, for example to include the traffic issues surrounding the proposed quadrangle development in Cambridge.

Chairman Solomon updated on his discussions with Cambridge Mayor Michael Sullivan and City Council member Henrietta Davis on holding off on approval of zoning changes for the development and learned that the changes are not likely to pass. Mr. Younger confirmed that his discussions with Cambridge officials supported this.

The Board moved: to have Mr. Younger draft a letter for the Board of Selectmen to sign to Cambridge expressing its concerns about the project going forward without further study.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Wheeler mentioned that the Belmont/Lexington/Waltham Advisory Committee needs two additional appointments from the Town of Belmont.

The Board of Selectmen expressed its hope that the Committee could go forward and begin meeting with these appointments to be made as soon as possible.

*Discussion of Sewers and Road Projects*

Mr. Clancy explained that the biggest road project that had been planned for 2005 was Bright Road, which was delayed because Cambridge's consultant did not present final plans until mid-August. Mr. Clancy felt that this would not allow sufficient time before the winter for bidding and construction, and did not want to have a partial construction because it would add a new roundabout which might be a safety and maintenance issue during the winter. The decision was made to wait until April 2006 to begin construction. Other projects have also been delayed, including developing a Street Opening Permit process which would be more robust

than what other towns are doing and has raised legal questions. Mr. Clancy is also working with the Traffic Advisory Committee on the Trapelo Road study to make sure that everything necessary is done in preparation for this project to be on the TIP next summer.

Mr. Clancy stated that the plan continues to evolve, for example, areas where islands have been proposed that caused concern among the business community have been moved or removed.

The Board of Selectmen expressed its concern about public perception of the road project schedule and a general lack of knowledge about what roads are going to be worked on at any given time. Mr. Clancy explained that the Town is focusing on the main thoroughfares as a priority over the next 15 years or so, a timeline that has increased because the estimated annual budget of \$1.2 million was for paving purposes only and it did not take into account curbing and sidewalks. Selectman Firenze requested a full blown plan~with a list of work to be done on each road (full depth reconstruction, cold mill and overlay, and crack sealing)~with target dates for completion, given current funding levels.~ The Board of Selectmen also requested an estimate of costs at current prices for reaching acceptable levels of road conditions given the current plans for curbing and sidewalks.

The Board of Selectmen acknowledged that the rising price of asphalt will make acceleration of this schedule difficult without additional funding. The Town is trying to address traffic calming and bicycle and pedestrian access and safety as well as road surface improvement. It would be helpful to bring on the resident engineer position and create road plans for a five-year period so that projects can be shifted around quickly if a project gets bogged down. Belmont citizens need to be able to be confident in the Town's management and the Town needs to communicate its roads plan to the residents of Belmont.

The Board of Selectmen deferred the actual sewer discussion to a later meeting when Ralph Jones and the Sewer committee can be present.

#### *Pleasant Street Request to Change Hours of Operation*

Mr. Clancy requested permission on behalf of Pleasant Street Resident Engineer to begin work at 7:00 A.M. (it is currently scheduled to start at 8:30 A.M.). He has been told that traffic volume has been light and can be managed and he has not been getting complaints from residents.

Resident Arthur Wolfson expressed his concern about construction work starting before 7:00A.M.. Mr. Wolfson stated that construction work has been starting as early as 7:00AM even before this official request came before the Board of Selectmen tonight.

The Board of Selectmen encouraged him to notify the Board of Selectmen, should this be the case.

The Board moved: to approve Roads Corporation / Mass Highway's request to modify its current hours of operation and to authorize construction to start at 7:00A.M.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

#### *Discussion of Alewife Bike Path*

Assistant Town Administrator Conti reported on the status of the Alewife bike path project and expressed concerns surrounding the Belmont section, particularly the extent of the Town's liability for hazardous materials on the site. State Representative Anne Paulsen spoke about her legislation to limit towns' liability in this area. She stated that no testing can be done until the property is leased. The project is on the TIP for 2006.

Representative Paulsen said that the next step would be for each town to confirm that they want to move forward.

The Board moved: to notify MassHighway by letter that the Town is prepared to do what is necessary to move forward.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

#### *Discussion of Board of Selectmen's Goals*

The Selectmen expressed their concern over the current list of goals which they feel might be too long; they feel that some prioritization might be in order and also expressed their need for a way to measure progress.

Town Administrator Younger said that he would be looking into a project management software.

#### **Action by Consent**

##### *Approval of Cooperative Fuel Bid*

##### *Approval of a Department of Public Works Feasibility Study*

The Board moved: to approve the cooperative fuel bid submitted by the Department of Public Works.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: to approve the Department of Public Works Feasibility Study.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Action by Writing**

#### *Approval of Bituminous Concrete and Permanent Patching Contracts*

The Board moved: to approve the Bituminous Concrete and Permanent Patching contracts, as submitted by the Public Works Director.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Other**

The Board of Selectmen recognized and commended Light Department employee Eric Taylor who took a leave of absence to assist in Hurricane Katrina efforts.

The Board of Selectmen decided to schedule a special Goals and Objectives session meeting on Saturday, October 1 at 2:00 PM.

The Board of Selectmen noted that the Human Rights Commission needs to replace a member, as does the Recreation Board. The Selectmen agreed to add this to the agenda for next week's regular meeting.

#### *Town Administrator's Report*

The Town Administrator updated the Board of Selectmen about various ongoing projects.

The Board expressed its hope that the Senior Center's tenancy in the parish hall can continue on a month-to-month basis rather than having to move the Senior Center to a temporary location such as the modular units at the High School. Town Administrator Younger noted the need to have a fallback plan for such a move just in case. He also noted that the church and parish hall buildings will now become taxable since there is no longer an active church there.

The Board moved: to go into executive session and further, that it shall not return to open session.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The open session adjourned at 9:21pm.

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Thomas G. Younger  
Town Administrator