

Approved by
the Select Board on:

8/24/2020

Minutes

Town of Belmont

Select Board

Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Monday, June 15, 2020

7:00pm

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: September 3, 2020
TIME: 9:53 AM

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Select Board was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Roy Epstein. Vice Chair Tom Caputo and Select Board member Adam Dash were present. Town Administrator Patrice Garvin was present.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

[None.]

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS:

[None.]

ACTION BY CONSENT:

COVID-19 update

Epstein offered a clarification on the Town's social distancing and face covering policy, based on feedback from the previous meeting: While recommended, the observance of social distancing and requirement for face coverings does not apply to private residences.

Wes Chin (Director, Belmont Health Department) reported that the Recreation Department had approved opening of Town playgrounds, including playground equipment. Signage had been installed with reminders of the guidelines for use of the playgrounds, including a caution that the Town did not have the resources to clean/sanitize the equipment on a regular basis. Chin also noted that Governor Baker had announced a two-day pop-up testing initiative (free and open to anyone), to be held this coming Wednesday and Thursday at community health centers throughout the state. The closest locations to Belmont were the Cambridge and Somerville Community Health Alliance facilities.

Discussion on the closing of Leonard Street

At the previous meeting, the Board had voted to approve a plan to temporarily close Leonard Street in Belmont Center to vehicle traffic, which allowed for increased space outside that could be used by businesses. Based on feedback from the first week of implementation, Epstein was inviting public comment concerning possible adjustments to the layout. The agenda item would be paused at 7:15pm to take up a public hearing.

- *Swapnil Gandbhir (Cuvee Fine Wines)*: Seen business fall off because people have to walk around the barriers to get to the store. Part of a group of Belmont Center Business Association (BCBA) owners who had voted on an alternate proposal for the closing of Leonard Street.
 - o Glenn Clancy (Director, Community Development) commented that he did not understand the new proposal and would appreciate a representative of the group to elaborate on it. Clancy expressed concern about whether all businesses were represented in the vote.
- *Lauren Castagno (Manager, Revolve Clothing Boutique)*: Closing off the street completely has destroyed morning business – inconvenient for customers to have to park in Claflin St. lot and walk to the store vs stopping in on their way through town. Arrangement has helped the restaurant businesses but not retail.

[Agenda item was paused to open the public hearing at the scheduled time.]

Public Hearing – National Grid Petition for a Grant of Location for Concorde Avenue and Goden Street

[Public hearing was opened at 7:15pm]

Mary Mulroney (National Grid) was present to represent National Grid. She read the formal petition, which requested a Grant of Location to conduct gas main replacements along Concord Avenue and Goden Street. Dash recused himself from the hearing, as he was on the list of abutters for the proposed work.

Epstein raised several issues: 1] Noted there was a Town-wide five year moratorium on digging for streets that had been recently repaved (this project only involved streets that had been paved more than five years ago); 2] Work would run close to large street trees on Goden (Mulroney assured that National Grid would work with the Town to protect the trees); 3] Why are gas mains as recent as 2013 being replaced already? (Mulroney said it was part of an overall effort to proactively upgrade the infrastructure any time work is done in an area); 4] Issues with the quality of the road patches after the project is complete, e.g. on Belmont Street there were some particularly bad areas (Mulroney said the Town should notify National Grid about such instances, they would come back to fix it.)

With respect to issue 4]:

- Caputo echoed the concern about the quality of the patches, noting they were even more crucial now that pavement management funds were being deferred in FY21. Town should proactively keep log of the patches and their status, if possible.
- Dan Fitzgibbon (Street Opening Coordinator, DPW) explained that the scope of the patch depended on the size and impact of a given project, however, the trend was towards requesting a 'center line in' permanent patch. Fitzgibbon said he had not been in the field much since COVID, but would follow-up with the issues identified on Belmont Street.

[Public comment.]

- *Janet [last name not stated]*: How will the project impact traffic in the area?
 - o Mulroney said that National Grid works with DPW to schedule the work and related closing of the street.
 - o Clancy noted that a traffic management plan is a component of the application for obtaining the Street Opening Permit.

- *Michael Flaherty*: What happens if we do nothing in the next five years? How will they be able to do the work with cars parked in front of the High School from the construction project?
 - o Fitzgibbon said that doing the project now was actually advantageous due to low traffic volumes from COVID and the school being closed; would coordinate with the construction at the High School to limit parking in the area where the work was being conducted.
- Epstein relayed some other questions from the chat feature on Zoom that were answered by Mulroney.

Motion: To approve the Grant of Location request from National Grid, work order #1124789, to: install and maintain approx. 2285 feet of 12 inch, 25 PSIG plastic main on Concord Avenue from existing 16 inch, 25 PSIG bare steel (1930) to Goden Street; install approx. 50 feet of 4 inch, 25 PSIG plastic in Trowbridge Street from the proposed 12 inch 25 PSIG plastic in Concord Avenue; abandon and replace approx. 580 feet of 4 inch low pressure bare steel (1968) and approx. 130 feet of 4 inch low pressure plastic (1992/2002) with approx. 710 feet of 12 inch, 25 PSIG in Goden Street, from the existing 8 inch 25 PSIG plastic (1995) in School Street to Concord Avenue; convert and transfer low pressure service in Goden Street to 25 PSIG; and, to abandon approx. 470ft of 6 inch 25 PSIG plastic (2013) in Concord Avenue from Underwood Street to the existing 16 inch 25 PSIG bare steel. (Vote passed 2-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo voted yes; Adam Dash abstained)

[Closed public hearing. Turned back to the discussion on Leonard St.]

- *Daran Muckjian*: Explained the modified proposal for Leonard Street, which had been approved by a 19-7 vote of the BCBA, as a compromise to allow restaurants to keep outdoor space while still allowing traffic to flow through the center. The plan involved blocking off the east side of Leonard to traffic from the double yellow line to the sidewalk; the west side would be open for southbound traffic (with the exception of in front of restaurants, which would retain outdoor seating space) so that traffic could flow through parking would be available for customers and clients of businesses.
- *Lee Gaston*: Inquired as to what can be done, and who to contact, to make the barriers more aesthetically pleasing. Clancy said that he would act as the point of contact.

Dash explained that the original goal for the closing of Leonard Street was to help businesses affected by COVID. In that spirit, he proposed a motion to provide a blanket approval for businesses to obtain outdoor liquor licenses in the expanded outdoor seating areas, provided they complete the required documentation. This would expedite the process, and restaurants would not have to wait for the Select Board to meet again if they wanted to set up outdoor dining with alcohol service.

Motion: To expand all existing alcohol license holders in Belmont to serve alcohol in designated outdoor seating areas, pending receipt of the associated application and an insurance binder releasing the Town from liability, as well as confirmation from the Town Administrator that all required documentation is in order. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

Clancy said that he now understood the modified plan, and was willing to move forward with implementation so long as a good majority of the businesses were on board, and the Select Board was supportive. He would work out the logistics this week with the goal of implementing the plan by Friday – if any problems were to arise the matter would be brought back before the Board next Monday.

Motion: To amend the Select Board's prior vote on the road closure plan for Leonard Street in such a way to allow for one-way traffic on the west (i.e. CVS) side of the street, from Alexander Avenue to Moore Street, with final details to be approved by the Town Administrator. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

8 Can't Wait / Police

This was a follow-up item from the previous meeting. Chair Epstein had reviewed the 8Can'tWait policies and Chief MacIsaac's memo regarding the adoption of them by Belmont. Epstein's view was that seven of the eight policies as outlined by Chief MacIsaac were in direct alignment with 8Can'tWait, however Point #5 differed slightly but materially. The 8Can'tWait version completely banned shooting at vehicles, whereas the Belmont Police Department (BPD) policy allowed it, but only as a last resort. Epstein suggested to endorse the policies as outlined by Chief MacIsaac in his memo, and instituted already in the BPD.

Chief MacIsaac said that he felt the BPD policies met the 8Can'tWait criteria, as had been put to him; he noted other communities with similar policies that had adopted 8Can'tWait. The policy under consideration was developed under the guidance of a nationally recognized organization as part of the 21st century policing initiative.

[Public comment.]

- *Ade Baptista:* Urged the Board to vote directly on the 8Can'tWait policies as stated by the 8Can'tWait organization – show that the Town backs the policies.
 - o Dash said his original intention was for the Town to adopt the policies as written on the 8Can'tWait website, and he would support doing so. However, MacIsaac's memo was largely in the spirit of the policies, in some cases offering a simplification.
 - o Epstein disagreed with adoption of the policies as stated by 8Can'tWait for previously stated reasons, i.e. he thought Belmont's policy for Point #5 differed and was better than the 8Can'tWait version. He also raised that the associated organization supported defunding/abolition of the police, which he felt the community did not support.
- *Kathryn Bonfiglio:* Also encouraged the Board to back the 8Can'tWait policies directly - would make a statement about Belmont as a community, joining with other communities that have adopted 8Can'tWait.

[Close public comment.]

As a result of the discussion, Caputo proposed a more specific motion:

Motion: To approve the eight recommended evidenced based policies for the Belmont Police Department as stated in Chief James MacIsaac's memo dated June 1, 2020, and acknowledge their substantive similarity with the 8Can'tWait policies. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

McLean Proposal – Traffic

Epstein explained that developer Jack Dawley had put forth an amended proposal for the McLean Zone 3 development consisting of 150 units (40 townhomes and 110 apartment units); this most recent version designated a certain number of the apartment units as age-restricted, which ultimately allowed for compliance with the Traffic Monitoring and Mitigation Agreement (TMMA). Epstein expressed that he felt the new proposal was a good compromise that addressed a range of needs for the Town, including affordable and senior housing, while still generating revenue for the Town going forward. He proposed the Board vote to endorse the proposal as being compliant with the TMMA, so that the project could move forward in the process with the Planning Board.

[Public comment was invited.]

- *Maryann Scali:* As a senior and Council on Aging member, think this is a good compromise and glad to see options available for seniors who want to stay in Belmont.
- *Rachel Heller:* There has been unfortunate pushback to having housing that is fully accessible to families and children (previous version of the proposal had all the apartment units non age-restricted). Issue comes down to twelve cars at peak traffic hours – Belmont has a traffic problem either way, twelve cars won't make or break. Should be investigating all options to find a creative solution to make the previous proposal work.
- *Sue Bass:* Jack Dawley had promised to lead a Town-wide discussion on the potential shuttle bus service. Would like to see this happen, and specifically for the Select Board to advocate for it to happen, prior to Town Meeting.
- *Kathy Keohane:* Urge the Select Board to move forward with the proposal, strikes the right balance/compromise.
- *Betsy Lipson:* Don't feel that Belmont is being enlightened in moving forward with this version of the proposal; need to do things differently, provide fully accessible housing as per the previous proposal.

Epstein said that re-negotiating the Memorandum of Understanding with McLean (including the TMMA) was a non-starter, and he did not want to see the project fail.

Motion: To declare that the June 2, 2020 proposal from Northland Residential for the McLean Zone 3 Development is compliant with the Traffic Monitoring and Mitigation Agreement, dated November 22, 1999. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

Recycling collection of cardboard collection

Jay Marcotte (Director, DPW) joined the meeting. Due to COVID, the DPW had not been able to hold normally scheduled cardboard events; also, cardboard usage had increased due to increased online ordering. To address this problem, Marcotte had arranged for Waste Management to conduct a one-time cardboard pickup event. Starting June 22, on regularly scheduled recycling day, residents could leave an unlimited amount of cardboard (clean, dry, stacked, not tied) outside on the curb with their recycling.

Marcotte was requesting the Board approve an amendment to the Waste Management contract to enact this one-time program. The amount could be covered within the existing FY20 budget, and Garvin said that she was also seeking CARES act reimbursements to cover the costs.

Motion: To approve the additional cardboard collection one-item event in the amount of \$14,409 as described in DPW Director Jay Marcotte's memo date June 15, 2020. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

Belmont DPW contracts

- Mattress recycling: Previously proposed by Marcotte back in March, a program for recycling mattresses subsidized by a State grant. Instead of collecting mattresses through the bulky items process, residents would contact DPW directly to arrange a mattress pick-up that would take place every other Tuesday; DPW would pay \$10 per mattress for recycling (whereas bulky items were \$15 per item).

Motion: To approve the contract with Green Mattress of Norfolk, MA, to process and collect mattresses curbside every other Tuesday starting June 30, 2020 and ending January 31, 2022, at a cost to the Town of \$10 per mattress. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

- Gas and diesel: Standard yearly fuel contracts, purchased in bulk with a consortium of other towns/cities including Brookline. Three bidders this year; Marcotte said the prices were favorable and the contract saves money via buying in bulk.

Motion: To approve the contract with Dennis K. Burke of Taunton, MA, for diesel fuel at a fixed price of \$2.1482 per gallon, starting July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

Motion: To approve the contract with Dennis K. Burke of Taunton, MA, for gasoline at a fixed price of \$2.1776 per gallon, starting July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

- Trench and gutter repair: Annual contract utilized by DPW, Water and Sewer, and Belmont Light for repairs that arise during the year. Previous provider N. Sacca & Sons had been outbid by Cassidy Corporation; after vetting references, Marcotte was recommending to go with the lowest bidder.

Motion: To approve the contract with Cassidy Corp. of Woburn, MA for bituminous concrete, permanent patching, trench and gutter repair at a price of \$32 per square yard, for a total value of \$210,000, starting July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

- Sidewalks: From the 2015 override funds, annual contract for repairing damaged sidewalks throughout town. Low bidder was N. Sacca & Sons; given the bid amount Marcotte said that a change order could be implemented to do additional work within the budget if feasible. Epstein asked whether granite curbing would be used in all cases, noting that asphalt curbing did not seem to work particularly well for many applications. Marcotte would follow-up with details.

Motion: To approve the contract with N. Sacca & Sons of Arlington, MA for cement, concrete sidewalk and granite curbing in the amount of \$164,900, starting from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

Reappoint Floyd Carman to Retirement Board

Motion: To appoint Floyd Carman as the Select Board representative to the Retirement Board for a three year term starting July 1, 2020. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

Rolling Rally criteria

Garvin provided an updated version of the requirements for holding a Rolling Rally in Belmont, based on feedback from the Board at a previous meeting.

Motion: To approve the Town of Belmont Rolling Rally policy as provided today, June 15, 2020. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

Financial Task Force II (FTFII) update

Caputo provided an update on the work of the Task Force: Continuing to meet weekly and make progress on the five year financial plan, as well as converging on parameters for an upcoming override vote. The current sense of the group was that a November override made the most sense, and would likely be in the \$10-\$12m range. Caputo stressed the need at this juncture for a joint meeting (Select Board, FTFII along with the Warrant Committee, School Committee, and Capital Budget Committee) to assess the preliminary thoughts around an override, and for the Select Board to provide guidance on overall priorities for the budget. The joint meeting was planned for next week, June 25.

Annual Town Meeting, take positions on amendments

The one remaining amendment for consideration had been proposed by Julie Crockett, to transfer an additional amount of funds to the School budget. All three Board members expressed an understanding of the motivation for the amendment; however, the sense was that the current budget reflected a shared understanding of the Town's financial situation between the Select Board and School Committee, obtained through collaborative work on the budget. No new information had presented itself since the vote a week ago that would warrant revisiting the original approval of the budget.

Motion: To recommend unfavorable action on the amendment to Article 9 proposed by Julie Crockett (Town Meeting Member, Precinct 5). (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

Discussion and possible vote to keep free parking in Claffin Lot through Labor Day

Epstein had received emails from merchants in Belmont Center requesting extension of the free parking through Labor Day; Town Treasurer / Parking Clerk Carman had expressed concern about excessive use by commuters. As the current provision did not expire until July 8, it was decided to wait on taking action on this item, to see how things played out with the new arrangement for Leonard Street.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Garvin reviewed the Town Administrator's Report:

- Garvin had prepared a memo outlining the comprehensive permit process related to the proposed 40B development at 91 Beatrice Circle. With consent from the Board, she would post the memo online and provide as a reference for anyone requesting information on the matter. Dash stressed the importance of having MassHousing conduct a physical site visit, including of the abutting properties, in order to accurately understand the scope / potential impact of the project. He suggested a minor change to the memo to reflect this request.
- Garvin had drafted a previously discussed policy which would permit the Town Administrator to take days off under certain circumstances, without having to seek further approval from the

Board, and to designate the Assistant Town Administrator as Acting Town Administrator by default in such cases.

Motion: To approve the Select Board policy in the event of an unexpected or short absence of the Town Administrator, as outlined in Patrice Garvin's memo dated June 11, 2020. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

- A resident had inquired about street sweeping and whether a schedule could be posted online. Garvin had discussed with DPW Director Marcotte – it was difficult to predict the exact timing, since much depended on weather and available staffing. The usual cycle was for street sweeping to cover the entire Town over a course of two weeks.

SELECT BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS:

- Capital Budget Committee met this morning, voted favorable action on the budget.
- Warrant Committee went through Town Meeting articles, voted positions.
- Middle and High School Building Committee had essentially finalized the Guaranteed Maximum Price for the project, aside from ongoing negotiations with Skanska over how to handle COVID exposure.

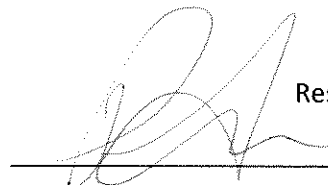
APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

- *June 8, 2020 regular session:* In the section on the Town Administrator's contact, Caputo requested clarification that the circumstance was a difficult time 'financially for the Town'.

Motion: To approve the June 8, 2020 regular session minutes, as amended. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, and Adam Dash)

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn at 10:20pm. (Vote passed 3-0)

 Respectfully Submitted,

PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator