

Approved by
the Select Board on:

5/17/2021

SELECT BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2021

5:30 PM

REMOTE MEETING

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 3, 2021

TIME: 9:54 AM

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Select Board was called to order at 5:30 pm by Chair Adam Dash. Vice Chair Roy Epstein and member Mark Paolillo were present, along with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin and Assistant Town Administrator Jon Marshall.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

[NONE]

ACTION BY CONSENT

Discussion and vote on Select Board positions for Warrant Articles and Amendments for Special Town Meeting

[There are no amendments].

Discussion and vote on Select Board positions for Warrant Articles and Amendments for Annual Town Meeting

Article 10 amendment

There are now 2 amendments submitted to Article 10.

- Judith Feinleib, Ralph Jones and Tommasina Olson submitted an amendment to Article 10. Judith Feinleib said their intent was to create an Article that would not offend any groups and which would establish August 9th as Indigenous People's Day.
- Judith Feinleib read Article 10 comments made by Ralph Jones:

This amendment intends to establish an Indigenous People's Day that does not offend Italian Americans. This amendment doesn't absolve Columbus of his injustices. Its intent is to honor Italian Americans. The amendment asks Belmont to establish August 9th as Indigenous People's Day. This is the same date as the UN Indigenous People's Day established in 1982.

- Judith Feinleib said that Italian Americans are our 2nd largest group in Belmont. We have to look at the context of when the holiday was created. In 1924 there were nationality quotas and Italians were fighting against that. The purpose of this amendment is to reach a compromise. She suggests changing the name of the Columbus Day holiday to Italian American Heritage Day.
- Tommasina Olson said that the point of the amendment was to respond to the incendiary language of Article 10. She feels the language of the article could cause resentment. She would like to see the community come together, the same way they did for Payson Park. She stated

that if we are going to crucify Columbus, then we need to do a full-fledged evaluation with a study group. She said they are submitting a different article in order to bring people together.

- Dash replied that he feels social justice brings people together and he is generally willing to compromise, but this is not an issue for which there can be a compromise. He commented that the Olson amendment changes the Article too completely. He said the trend is to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous People's Day, and that is the very point of Article 10.
- The Town Moderator has said that the Select Board needs to re-vote this amendment to Article 10, as well as the unamended Article 10, before Town Meeting.
- Epstein asked for a summary of the original UN declaration from 2007. Ralph Jones said the gist of the resolution is to affirm that practices and policies advocating the superiority of one group over another is wrong. The declaration reaffirms that Indigenous Peoples should be free from discrimination and includes a series of statements about previous disrespectful practices towards Indigenous Peoples, centering around land rights, treaties, etc.
- Paolillo said that when we first discussed this issue, he had concerns that the article might divide the community. He was looking for a compromise. We do need to lift up Indigenous People. We need to establish an Indigenous People's Day and commit as a community to do things in a more tangible way. He wants to commit to voting yes on all the amendments to Article 10, and if those are not approved, then he will support the original Article language.
- Ralph Jones said his preference would be to change Columbus Day to Italian American Heritage Day.
- Dash noted that Article 10 is non-binding because it hasn't been changed on the federal or state level. Article 11 is also non-binding because we can't change the building code at the state level.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Sara Bilodeau said she is pleased to know that there is support from the Select Board. She wants to clarify two points: 1) The UN choice to name Indigenous People's Day on August 9 was made by the UN without full consult of Indigenous Peoples. We need to find out what the native groups are asking for and not simply follow the UN lead; 2) The concern around the name of Columbus is due to the responsibility he had in genocide. We don't have a day to celebrate other colonizers, and if we did, we would be against that too.

- Ralph Jones agreed with Sara Bilodeau, the UN declaration was made without participation by the confederation of tribes
- Dash explained that the Moderator will take the Olson amendment first, then the Epstein amendment.
- Epstein said if the Olson amendment passes, then he would withdraw his amendment.

1. Motion was made to recommend favorable action on the Olson amendment to Article 10. Motion for favorable action was passed with vote of 2-1. Dash voted against.

If Olson amendment fails:

2. Motion was made to recommend favorable action on the Epstein amendment to Article 10. Motion for favorable action was passed by a vote of 2-1. Dash voted against.

3. Motion was made to recommend favorable action on the unamended Article 10. Motion for favorable action was approved by vote of 2-1. Epstein voted against.

4. Motion was made to recommend favorable action on Article 10 amended with the Olson amendment. Motion for favorable action was approved by a vote of 2-1. Dash voted against.

5. Motion was made to recommend favorable action on Article 10 amended with Epstein amendment only. Motion for favorable action was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Motion was made to recess until Annual Town Meeting begins at 7 pm. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator

