

Approved by
the Select Board on:
Reapproved 8/24/2020

Minutes
Town of Belmont
Select Board
Virtual Meeting on Zoom
Monday, June 22, 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.

Epstein announced that this and future meetings would utilize the Webinar format in Zoom, which disabled the chat feature. The purpose was to more closely follow the traditional format of live meetings.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Starting this week and for a period of two weeks, there will be additional cardboard collection on regularly scheduled recycling day. Residents should place stacked, clean and dry cardboard outside, unlimited quantities allowed.
- Upcoming Beech Street Center virtual events (see Dana Levitt for additional information):
 - *Snapshots of Wisdom* interviews, Zoom teleconference on June 25th with subsequent broadcast on June 27 on Belmont Media Center.
 - *Belmont Dines Supper Club* (pandemic version) is back. This month hosted by Bakehaus by CLC – sign up for your \$15 gift card.
 - Virtual pet event with Marcel Le Corgi, June 30 at 1:15pm.
- Tomorrow is the Annual Town Election. All regular polling stations will be open, however due to COVID, polls are only open from 10am-2pm.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS:

- Rachel Heller and Betsy Lipson (Co-chairs, Housing Trust) were present. Heller explained the Housing Trust had submitted a letter last week asking the Select Board to reconsider its endorsement of the McLean Zone 3 development proposal that included an increased number of age-restricted units. Lipson followed with a specific request for additional traffic analysis related to the proposal: 1] to have the existing methodology for calculating traffic counts applied to the original proposal (40 townhomes with 110 unrestricted rental units); 2] to apply a more granular analysis of the transit use adjustment based on data from the specific census tract, and taking into account that Waverly Square is considered a hub.
 - Epstein said the calculations would be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION BY CONSENT:

COVID-19 update

Wes Chin (Director, Belmont Health Department) commented that the State was now in Phase 2 of reopening, which allowed for activities such as indoor dining (with proper precautions), contact personal services (massage, tattoo parlors, etc.), personal trainers and sitting rooms at retail clothing outlets (by appointment only). Chin encouraged continued practice of social distancing and wearing face coverings.

Caputo asked whether testing would be provided in Belmont. Chin replied that the Belmont Health Department does not have the budget to do so, nor does Belmont belong to a Community Health Alliance (as in Cambridge/Somerville, for example). Testing is available by appointment at Community Health centers in various other locations in the area; testing for uninsured or under insured individuals is available through the Tufts Medical Center at the Josiah Quincy School in downtown Boston.

Discussion on Submittal Letter for 40B – Beatrice Circle

Following on the public input provided at the June 1 Select Board meeting, Epstein had conducted some additional research and drafted a memo, the goal of which was to state the Select Board's official position on the proposed 40B development at Beatrice Circle. The memo was to be provided to MassHousing prior to the July 15 deadline for comment. At this stage the memo was in draft form and Epstein was seeking input from the other Board members. Ultimately, Town Counsel would take over review, finalizing and submission of the letter on behalf of the Board. Epstein explained that he had structured the document around MassHousing's own guidelines for suitability of 40B projects, showing how the proposed development was in substantial violation of these standards. Town Counsel and the other Board members weighed in:

- Dash supported the general thrust of the letter but advocated to more stridently argue each of the points raised. He stressed the importance of having a MassHousing representative physically walk the site, including the properties of abutters.
 - o Garvin reported she had reached out to MassHousing regarding a site walk-through (including of abutting properties); she was told that special permission was required due to COVID, and to provide an aerial photo indicating which areas of the site were being recommended to visit.
- Caputo thought that more points could be added to the letter, including: mention the potential impact to trees; talk more about traffic and pedestrian safety concerns due to the location on Frontage Rd. and at the crest of a hill; storm water issues.
- Town Counsel George Hall reported that he had already converted the memo into a draft letter and would take notes during the discussion to incorporate further comments. The letter would be shared at the direction of the Board once finalized.

[Epstein invited public comment.]

- *Sam and Chris Alexander:* Points raised in the memo do a good job of taking into account our concerns. MassHousing welcome to use our property to view the site.
- *Dan Devine:* Reinforce invitation to MassHousing to visit abutting properties to view potential impact from the proposed project. Asked about who owns the land (strip of vegetation) in front of the property; Epstein replied that this had been looked into – part is owned by the Town, but the driveway is associated with property at 91 Beatrice.

- *Darlene Chisholm*: Developer made false statements in the proposal with respect to ease of access to the site via public transportation.
- *Mark Stap*: Access road is horrific in the winter because both State and local crews plow the area, leading to large snow banks and blocked sidewalks. Epstein added that he had noted snow placement/removal as another missing consideration in the current proposal.
- *Lois Pines*: Asked about the status of the McLean project and whether it could factor in to an analysis of safe harbor status. Town Counsel Hall said that the Town is exploring safe harbor status, however this was really a separate issue from the proposal at hand – the focus of the letter would be to outline how the proposed project does not meet MassHousing’s own standards.
- *Kathy Keohane*: 1] Insufficient parking at the site, especially given the location since residents would be forced to drive to access other parts of Town. 2] Where will delivery trucks park? 3] Many abutters have mature trees that would be damaged by the development.
- *Rachel Heller*: Housing Trust does yet have an official position on the proposed project. Noted that the proposal for McLean endorsed by the Select Board limited the amount of affordable housing compared with the original proposal. This type of development does include elements of affordable housing that are sorely needed in Belmont, specifically 3-4 bedroom units for families.

[Close public comment.]

Epstein said his draft memo would be posted on the Town website this evening as part of the meeting materials. Over the next several weeks he would work with Town Counsel to finalize the letter, with another chance for review at the July 13 Select Board meeting. Dash encouraged the public to also send in letters to MassHousing, as well, by the July 15 deadline.

Rink update

Epstein was requesting an update on the process for pursuing a public-private partnership for a new ice rink - due to COVID-19 the previously established timelines had been disrupted.

Caputo reported that one bidder had responded to the RFP, a group associated with Belmont Youth Hockey. The internal working group had deemed their proposal met the minimum evaluation criteria, but had identified several areas requiring further discussion, such as site layout, programming, governance and financial assumptions. The internal working group would meet with the developer on these items, with the goal of giving a formal presentation to the Select Board and School Committee within a month. The final proposal could be put before Town Meeting either on September 21 (with other Fall Town Meeting items), or later in November, at a dedicated session.

Dash and Epstein pointed out that the schedule seemed very aggressive; Caputo agreed to review the timelines after further discussion with the developer and report back.

Update on the Community Path Project Committee (CPPC)

Russ Leino (Chair, CPPC) joined the meeting to give the update. Leino first advertised for the upcoming public engagement meeting, scheduled for July 16 at 7pm; engineering consultant Nitsch would present a summary of the 25% design report for the Community Path Phase 1a and 1b. The significance of achieving a 25% design was that the project could be submitted to MassDOT in order to be put on the upcoming cycle of TIP funding. One key issue that had emerged in Nitsch’s work thus far (that had also delayed the public meeting) was concerning the method of construction for the tunnel; discussions with

the MBTA had revealed a strong preference by the MBTA for a more expensive construction method that also had implications on the design.

Leino noted that even with challenges due to COVID, Nitsch was very close to their original project schedule, and that he expected the 25% design proposal would be finalized in advance of MassDOT's October deadline.

Financial Task Force II Update

Caputo pointed to the upcoming joint meeting this Thursday, wherein the Task Force would share a presentation outlining its' progress and current thinking around potential override timing and amount. This was a chance for discussion and input from various Town bodies, following which a formal recommendation would be put together.

Discussion and possible approval of Lions Club use of Delta Space on the evening of June 26, 2020

Garvin explained the event was to welcome incoming members. There would be 30-40 attendees and the Club had committed to practicing social distancing for the event.

Motion: To approve the use of the delta space in front of the Lion's Club on June 26, 2020 between the hours of 6pm to 8pm. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, Adam Dash)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Garvin reviewed the Town Administrator's Report:

- Leonard Street update: Mostly positive feedback on the new configuration for Leonard Street (closing one side); some concerns had been expressed over the speed of one way traffic down the street. Garvin was looking into getting additional signage/indicators in place. Caputo asked about the possibility of fully closing the street during certain evening or weekends, e.g. July 4. Garvin would look into it, but noted that any additional costs for doing so could not be covered within the budget.
- Assistant Town Administrator Jon Marshall gave an update on CARES act reimbursements received by the Town to cover COVID-related expenses in FY20. There would be an opportunity to submit funding for expenses incurred in FY21 as well, in the future.
- Given that the State Legislature had passed a bill which permitted Belmont to conduct a remote Town Meeting, Garvin requested authorization from the Board to dismiss the legal action that had been initiated as a back-up measure.
 - *Motion: To dismiss the legal action in pursuit of obtaining approval for a remote Town Meeting. (Vote passed 3-0, roll-call vote: Roy Epstein, Tom Caputo, Adam Dash)*

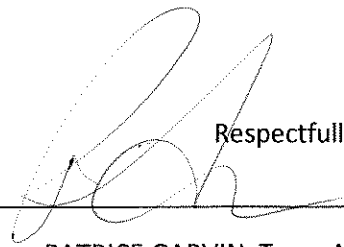
SELECT BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS:

- Caputo reported that the Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee had completed negotiation of the Guaranteed Maximum Price with Skanska, a significant project milestone.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn at 9:06pm. (Vote passed 3-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Garvin', is written over a horizontal line.

PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator

