

MINUTES TOWN OF BELMONT BOARD OF SELECTMEN SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
TOWN HALL Monday, January 28, 2008 7:00PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 7:01 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall. All members were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were present.

II. QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

Mr. Anthony Oberdorfer presented a question regarding the relocation of the Belmont Center taxi stand. Taxi drivers would prefer the taxi stand to be located opposite the Transit stop, to more conveniently service people exiting the bus from Harvard Square. Mr. Conti's group had looked into this issue and will revisit it at Wednesday morning's meeting.

Next question/comment from Mr. Oberdorfer: He expressed his displeasure with the Senior Center project. This is an expensive project, which will only benefit a small number of senior citizens (as it will be difficult to get to). In fact, many seniors are against the building of a new center. The town is experiencing financial challenges and this project will cost property owners money for years to come. Mr. Oberdorfer concluded his comments by expressing regret that a multi-purpose center (perhaps combined with the library) hadn't been discussed.

Selectman Solomon responded by stating that many seniors do support the project. The neighborhood is pleased, and it is expected that access to the center will not be an issue. He agreed that over-spending is a concern and explained that the town has a reserve policy whereby 10% of the total operating budget is put aside. The town has a AAA bond rating which will be maintained. Selectman Solomon said that he also would like to see the multi-purpose building concept explored and he concluded his remarks by noting that the town voted for this debt exclusion by a large margin.

III. ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

- Cushing Square - 15 Minute Parking Assistant Town Administrator Conti noted two requests concerning the "15 minute only" parking spaces in Cushing Square. The first from the owner of Savino's, who is concerned that his patrons who dine in the evening are not aware that the "15 minute only" parking does not apply to them. (The parking signs are only relevant during business hours, i.e., 9am-6pm.) Second, Spirited Gourmet would like two "15 minute only" spaces outside the store. These spaces will support those patrons to have access (during normal business hours) to go in and out of the store, often carrying large cases of wine.

The Board agreed that the "15 minute only" parking spaces support the local businesses in that area. It was suggested that the two signs in front of Savino's be moved across the street in front of Spirited Gourmet to satisfy both requests.

Loretta Thomas, the owner of the Pet Shop store, requested more of the "15 minute only" signs in Cushing Square. Most customers are in and out of the stores quickly and, in the case of her business (like Spirited Gourmet), people are often carrying large bags (pet supplies) and need to be parked nearby.

The Board agreed with Selectman Leclerc's assessment that for patrons who need to park for an hour or more, they can park across the street in the lot that is designed for longer use.

The Board moved: To have two "15 minute only" parking spaces on each side of Common Street, north of Trapelo Road - that is, to add two such spaces to the two already there - designated to apply to business hours only (9-6), to be reviewed by the Parking Commission in 6 months.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0). - Government Structure Discussion Selectman Solomon stated that he is concerned about the difficulty in getting people to run for town-wide office. Selectman Solomon would like to explore ways to change the structure of government in order to stimulate more people to get involved. If changing the structure of government is something we want to examine, we need to decide the process to do so.

The Board discussed Belmont's current structure. Chairman Firenze pointed out that other towns have a very strong Town Manager position, which takes some of the tasks off the three Board of Selectmen. A change such as this may make the Selectman position more appealing to potential candidates.

Mr. Ralph Jones, Town Meeting member from Precinct 2, and Warrant Committee member, offered the following comments: As a member of the Search Committee for the Town Administrator position, this group spent a lot of time discussing this issue. They considered changing the Town Administrator job description to look more like a Town Manager position. A Town Manager has more authority over individual departments, which leads to a more efficient government.

The Board agreed that the relationship of the Board of Selectman and Town Administrator should be looked at. Changes there might make the Selectman position more appealing for people to consider. Town Administrator Younger agreed that within the Town Manager structure, some issues would be taken off the Selectman's roster, but that other issues would remain, as they are legally required to be addressed by the Board.

The Board supports the notion of establishing a committee to include Mr. Jones and make recommendations to the Board of Selectman regarding this issue. This committee may consist of former Selectmen and/or former Town Administrator Search Committee members. Chairman Firenze noted that the Town's Moderator may need to be involved.

- Belmont Roads Override Discussion Selectman Leclerc requested that the Board begin the roads override discussion now. The Board needs to be in agreement, he said, to be able to make a strong, clear case to the community. The Pavement Management Committee has submitted a good report. It estimates that it will cost \$250.00 per household (perpetually) to get the roads planned for and built. Leftover funds can be put in a stabilization fund and built up there for purpose of future roads work. This is a discussion that the Warrant Committee is having, as well.

The override process was clarified: The Board can initiate an override question on the ballot; voters then have an opportunity in the April Town election to approve the override; if the override is approved by the voters, Town Meeting can authorize the Town to spend the funding from the account which is created by the override.

The Board agreed that three major issues continue to face the Town: public safety, education, and infrastructure. The roads override will need to fit into the context of everything else (operating budget issues and the Wellington school project). The Board agreed that they would prefer to get through another year without an operating override. Chair Firenze stated that while he supports going to the voters with a roads override, he no longer wants to see separate "special elections" for an override question. They should be done in April or at the November election.

With regard to the issue of sequencing: The Board anticipates a roads override vote in April, a Wellington debt exclusion vote in November, and an operating override vote the following April (2009). The Board will vote on the roads override question at its meeting on March 1, 2008. - Town Administrator's Report

" Snow Emergency parking lots update: Obtained a copy of a list of monthly pass users to notify them of Snow Emergency policy. Also notifying cars parked in lots, reminding them that they can't park there during snow emergencies.

" CPA (Community Preservation Act) committee: Mr. Conti said the Committee has learned that the expected State matching funds are likely to drop this year from 100% to about 75%. The committee is meeting with representatives from other towns about their experiences and will be conducting a financial analysis.

" SomerStat Program: Mr. Younger will be meeting with Somerville officials on February 11 to learn more about the "SomerStat" municipal data analysis program.

" Harvard Lawn Fire Station: Hope to have the signed P&S at next week's Board of Selectman meeting.

" Woodfall Road: The state Inspector General has confirmed that Belmont may use a hybrid bid process to sell the town-owned Woodfall Road property. The process can now move forward.

IV. ACTION BY CONSENT

- Vote to Approve Snow and Ice Expenditures in Excess of FY08 Budget

Town Administrator Younger reported that the DPW Snow and Ice Account is more than \$14,900 over budget. The reserve fund has \$400,000 in it, as well as \$165,000 in remaining funds from the entrance doorway for the high school. Therefore the reserve fund total is presently \$565,000.

In order to continue to spend money in excess of the budgeted amount, State law requires the Selectmen to formally vote to authorize the expenditure.

The Board moved: To approve snow and ice expenditures in excess of FY08 budget. The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

- Approval of Board of Selectmen Minutes February 5, 2007 - February 24, 2007 - March 21, 2007 - December 3, 2007 - December 17, 2007 - January 8, 2007 - January 22, 2007 - January 25, 2007 - January 29, 2007 - January 31, 2007 The Board moved: To approve all minutes listed on agenda, except the meetings of December 3 and 17, 2007. The motion passed (2-0) with Selectman Leclerc abstaining.

The Board moved to approve minutes of: December 3 and 17, 2007.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

V. ACTION BY WRITING

- Amendment to MOU - Pleasant Street Widening

The Board on December 17 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with McLean Hospital to allow their private contractor to widen Pleasant Street as part of the construction of Olmsted Drive. Community Development Director Glenn Clancy has requested that the Board agree to an amendment extending the deadline for the completion of this work from March 31, 2008 to June 30, 2008.

The Board moved: to sign the amendment to the MOU with McLean Hospital concerning widening of Pleasant Street. The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

- 2008 License Renewals - Common Victualler's The Board motioned: To move approval of license renewals listed, with the exception of Angelato.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board motioned: To move approval of the license renewal for Angelato.

The motion passed (2-0) with Chairman Firenze abstaining.

VI. OTHER

- Proclamation

The Board moved: To recommend an award of Proclamation for Ms. Mary Hall in honor of her 40 years as staff of the Belmont Public Library.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0). Climate Action Plan - Selectman Solomon noted that this is almost finished. Sustainable Belmont is meeting on February 6 and will meet with this Board soon. - Updates

" Harvard Lawn Fire Station proceeds: The Board noted that the Warrant Committee recommended to apply the proceeds from the sale of the Harvard Lawn Fire Station to pay down the debt on the Belmont Senior Center project.

" The Board moved: To support the recommendation of the Warrant Committee to apply the proceeds from the sale of the Harvard Lawn Fire Station (\$615,000) to pay down the debt on the Belmont Senior Center project.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Executive Session:

The Board moved: To enter into Executive Session at 9:06 to discuss a Personnel issue and not to return to open session.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

(During executive session, no substantive motions were made. The Board adjourned at 9:26 PM.)

Administrator

Thomas G. Younger, Town