

**Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Select Board  
Tuesday, May 4, 2021  
Remote Online Meeting (Zoom 823 3756 0353)  
Called to Order at 7:00 p.m.**

Remotely participating were Board members, Chair, Laurie Bent, Harvey Boshart and Christopher Houston. Also present were Town Manager Leon A. Gaumond, Jr., Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director Lisa Yanakakis, Stephen Fogg, Town Engineer, Jonathan Witten, Town Counsel, Deborah Davenport, Town Clerk, Ripley Hastings, Moderator, Kortni Wroten, Sustainability Coordinator.

Ms. Bent called the remote meeting to order and read the following:

*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Weston will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. We will strive to provide access to such meetings via a link to call in, or other similar option. In the event we are unable to accommodate the same, despite best efforts, we will post recorded sessions of the meeting as soon as possible following the same. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings.*

**Resident Comments**

None.

**Tree Advisory Group Candidates:**

The Select Board was joined by candidates Anne Benning, Carol Lee, Janette Patel, Nicole Seddon, Thomas Szekely, Howard Wolk, and Denis Wu.

Ms. Benning said she was attracted to TAG and the goals facing the community-mainly because she is a tour guide at Garden in the Woods and spends a lot of time educating people about sustainable gardening, planting native species and pollinators, etc. She felt this was a good way to give back to Weston.

Ms. Lee, who is a new resident of Weston, provided her background and said she was looking for an opportunity to become involved in town.

Ms. Patel provided her background, highlighting her work teaching science at Drumlin Farm, Lexington Public Schools, and currently in Newton Public Schools. She stated that she was on the Conservation Commission for 6 years. She is interested in how Weston maintains its tree inventory, educating citizens on this topic, and working to identify where more and differing types of trees can be added. She feels an education program is crucial.

Ms. Bent asked each candidate to share how they would contribute to the Tree Advisory Group.

Ms. Benning said writing and creating documents are comfortable for her. She said gathering community input and translating that into making decisions works well and she sees herself as a conduit between TAG and citizens.

Ms. Lee responded that the educational opportunities of TAG, especially for children, is a place where she can contribute. She is also very interested in native trees and plants and believes there is opportunity for that. Ms. Bent asked about adult educational opportunities and Ms. Lee said there is plenty of room for these types of programs.

Ms. Patel said she is interested in three things: creating a tree inventory, education via a seminar series, and monitoring trees that have been planted.

Ms. Seddon outlined her educational background in child and adult teaching environments and said the education goals appeal to her as does outreach with Lands Sake.

Mr. Szekely explained that he had encouraged Land's Sake and schools to apply for cultural grants. He worked at Drumlin Farm as a teacher and farmer, and enjoyed that experience. He has written for the local papers as well as organized workshops. He is interested in education as well as actual planting.

Mr. Wu said planting trees would be a great thing to do, perhaps having children be personally responsible for a particular tree. His background is communications, and he feels he could add value in outreach activities.

TAG Chair Lori Hess thanked the candidates for applying and attending. She said it takes both enthusiasm and skill, and the variety of candidates could make a very strong team.

### **Weston Ahead: Climate Action and Resilience Plan**

The Select Board was joined by Phoebe Beierle, Weston Sustainability Committee & Liaison to the Permanent Building Committee.

Ms. Beierle provided some background on the reasons and process for the development of the plan, and then explained the proposed Climate Action & Resilience Plan. She explained that the committee spent a lot of time talking about their vision and goals, which they aligned with the Massachusetts Carbon Neutrality Goals.

Ms. Beierle said the Town had committed to Climate resiliency through adaptation and mitigation, and explained the 5 main elements of the plan including Health Natural Ecosystems, Connected Mobility, Smart & Efficient Buildings, Resilient Infrastructure & Services, and Sustainable Resource Consumption. She explained the high-level goals in each of these areas and the 6 Guiding Principles as well as other components of the plan.

In closing, she summarized the current status of the plan as well as next steps, and thanked those who worked on the effort.

Ms. Bent thanked Ms. Beierle for her effort and for the high quality and value of the plan. Mr. Houston expressed his appreciation for the plan, and Mr. Boshart said he is amazed how much was accomplished in such a short time.

Ms. Wroten, the new Weston Sustainability Coordinator, introduced herself and said she was excited to implement the plan.

Sustainability Committee Chair Katarina Wilkins provided commentary on how this effort started several years ago and expressed her appreciation for how much has been accomplished.

### **PAYT Implementation Working Group**

Ms. Bent explained that David Ayer has agreed to chair this group and that 4 other citizens plus herself, Mr. Gaumont, a DPW representative and Public Information Officer Kara Fleming (ex-officio) will also participate. They are charged to figure out the transition from the current program to the PAYT program, identifying the source for producing the bags, developing a distribution system as well as outreach to the community about the transition and various other issues. Ms. Bent said they will advertise for volunteers. There was a discussion of the timeline and committee member recruitment.

Mr. Houston asked if the Swap Shed would be separate, which Ms. Bent confirmed. Mr. Boshart said outreach is a big component given the discussion on social media.

Mr. Ayers agreed that communication/outreach is the most important component, and they need to move quickly especially around ordering bags. Ms. Wilkins expressed her support for Mr. Ayers and said she would announce the volunteer opportunity at the next Sustainability meeting.

**MOTION:** Ms. Bent moved to establish a Pay As You Throw Implementation Working Group as detailed in the charge. The motion was seconded by Mr. Boshart.

**Roll call vote:** Mr. Boshart, Mr. Houston and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Fur Ban Citizens' Petition**

Select Board was joined by Nerva Patel, resident.

Overview: Ms. Patel said she had collected over 100 signatures to petition the Select Board to establish a ban on the sale of fur in Weston and explained the purpose of bringing the petition. She explained that it does not ban already owned fur or leather, cowhide, sheepskin, fur bought online or from a private party, from a non-profit or estate sale, or pawn shop. It also does not ban fur used in religious or tribal practices. She outlined the reasons for banning fur and asked that the Board support Article 34.

Discussion: Ms. Bent asked if any stores in Weston sell fur. Ms. Patel said only Trove has some and the owner is phasing out these items and enthusiastically supports the ban. Ms. Bent asked why a ban is needed, and Ms. Patel responded that a ban would stop fur sales from coming to town.

Mr. Houston said he doesn't think any large fur businesses will open in town. He said he hasn't heard any counterviews and that typically the Select Board does not take positions on issues like this.

Ms. Bent said she is sympathetic to the issue and said that Ms. Patel's work talking to people is probably more valuable than a ban but that the Board does not comment on issues outside of its purview.

Public Comments: Phyllis Halpern asked if a ban would affect the laundering or tailoring fur items. Ms. Patel said it would not affect these businesses.

There was consensus that the Select Board would take no position on the article but encouraged Ms. Patel to take it to Town Meeting.

### **261 Merriam Street Historic Preservation Restriction**

The Select Board was joined by Phyllis Halpern and Steve Wagner, Co-Chairs of the Weston Historical Commission and Leslie Glynn, representing the owners of 261 Merriam Street.

Ms. Halpern said the house dates from 1901/02 and is part of the Silver Hill National Register Historical District. The house was purchased by a group of neighbors several years ago to prevent a large housing development on the site, and they approached the Historical Commission about supporting a preservation deed restriction. The owners would like to put the house on the market and are trying to create the restriction without requesting CPA funds.

Ms. Glynn provided more details on the plans for the property and why the area and the house are important, and detailed the original components of the house.

Ms. Bent asked how many people owned the house, and Ms. Glynn said 30. She also asked how many restrictions the commission holds, and Ms. Halpern was unsure but thought 6-12. There was a discussion of the restrictions.

Ms. Bent asked if future owners would need to have insurance to ensure they could pay to replace the protected features. Ms. Halpern read the insurance requirement which she felt covers in-kind replacement. There was a discussion of enforcing protections.

Mr. Boshart and Mr. Houston expressed support for the effort. Mr. Wagner said the owners deserve a lot of credit.

**MOTION:** Mr. Houston moved that the Select Board accept and approve the historical preservation restriction as presented, with any further changes required by Town Counsel with respect to the property at 261 Merriam Street. The motion was seconded by Mr. Boshart.

**Roll call vote:** Mr. Boshart, Mr. Houston and Ms. Bent voted in the affirmative. **Approved unanimously.**

### **Position on Proposed Zoning By-law Amendments for Riverside Road**

The Select Board was joined by Kevin Sheehan, Managing Partner and Teri Ford, Director of Development for Greatland Realty Partners.

Mr. Sheehan reviewed the site and its planned redevelopment into a life sciences campus, as well as the work that has been done with the Planning Board and neighborhood. He reviewed the configuration of the existing buildings and the proposed changes and additions and the zoning changes that will be needed to do this. He outlined the benefits of the change including increased tax revenue, no traffic increase at rush hour, improvements to Park Road, a \$2m contribution to the town for housing and conservation, a land swap with the Town to allow residential development at the rear of the property that are being developed.

Mr. Boshart said the Planning Board is not completely comfortable with the zoning changes. He added that the project will not be a drain on Town resources. He said the land swap will allow for flexibility for possible housing at the site which positions the Town well regarding affordable housing.

Mr. Sheehan shared a drawing of the proposed land swap, per Ms. Bent's request, and explained the swap.

Mr. Boshart summarized that the existing Planning Board issues relate to noise, air quality, and the general Zoning Bylaw. They are bringing in experts for peer review, as well as a consultant to take a look at life science zoning in other towns. The goal is to have the Select Board approve and sign the development agreement before Town Meeting.

Ms. Glynn said the Planning Board is working hard to do this correctly because it's a new district. There was a discussion of the review and approval process prior to Town Meeting.

It was decided to wait on voting on the item until more information is available from the Planning Board.

Kelley Murphy, 44 Tamarack Road, said he does not support Article 30 which creates the multi-family district because it's impact on the entire town has not been considered. He stated that it is not necessary to decide at this time and that this is moving ahead too quickly. He suggested the article be removed from this Town Meeting and that time be taken to fully consider the zoning change.

Judy Nitsch, 17 Blake Road, said she endorses the lab zoning on the property, and the housing proposal also makes sense to her. She asked that the overlay zone on the west side of the parcel be removed and explained why. She does not support 50 units per acre on the site but would be comfortable with 20 units. She also asked that the stand of large trees remain on the west side of the site.

Mr. Boshart outlined the issues regarding the siting of potential housing on the pieces of land being considered for a swap. He also said that the density of any housing would be around 15-20 units.

Mr. Sheehan said the developers support the housing units on the east parcel because the tree buffer on the western parcel is important for them as well as the neighbors.

Usef Raban, 9 Blake Road, said he has not seen any studies of the effect of the zoning change on the east parcel and that it feels rushed.

Marcie Loebert, 36 Tamarack Road, said she supports the lab rezoning and 20 units of housing on the east side.

Ed Winchem, 40 Orchard Avenue, said he supports the lab rezoning and that the west side buffer zone needs to remain. He is generally in support of some housing on the east side, and 15 units seems reasonable. Mr. Boshart, Mr. Houston, and Mr. Winchem discussed locating affordable housing in Town.

Mr. Houston asked if the neighbors would agree to up to 20 units on the east parcel in order make future conversations more productive. Mr. Winchem said he is comfortable with 15. Ms. Loebert said that while there is not 100% consensus, she believes the majority of the neighbors are supportive of up to 20 units on the east side.

Kelley Murphy said that he doesn't know what share of the neighborhood would oppose 20 units.

Judy Nitsch said she would agree to up to 20 units.

Mr. Boshart explained that 20 units are needed for one year of Safe Harbor, and that any other parcels that the Town might want to be developed under the new district would need to be approved at Town Meeting.

Mr. Raban said that Article 3 suggests that up to 50 units could be considered, and questioned why the new district was needed. He feels the issue has been rushed and not fully studied and he is concerned about traffic.

Tom Gold, 164 Orchard Avenue, said he is also concerned about traffic, and reviewed the commitment by Greatland to improve the situation. He hopes that by approving the housing these traffic issues will finally be addressed.

Mr. Sheehan reaffirmed that the new use would not add traffic and that they intend to follow through on the roadway improvements.

**Regular Meeting adjourned at 10:21 p.m.**

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Harvey Boshart  
Clerk