

February 3, 2020

**Board of Selectmen  
February 3, 2020  
Town Hall**

**AMENDED**

**Present:**

Mary Blanchard, Chairman  
Mary Dowling, Vice Chairman  
Michael Suprenant, Clerk  
Priscilla Gimas  
Chase Kaitbenski

**Staff:**

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator  
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

**Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm**

**The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Chair Blanchard read through the agenda.**

**Public Service Announcements**

None

**Common Victualler License- Yogesh Patel- The Sturbridge Host Hotel**

Yogesh Patel, new owner of The Sturbridge Host Hotel, came before the board and introduced himself.

**Motion: To approve a common victualler license to Yogesh Patel at The Sturbridge Host Hotel By:  
Selectwoman Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**Amend The Sturbridge Host Hotel liquor license- Change of Owner**

Chair Blanchard asked if the manager was being changed as well as the owner. Mr. Patel stated that they were changing managers, and the board informed him he would have to file another application to amend their manager listed on their current license. Vice Chair Dowling asked what changes they anticipated making. Mr. Patel stated they will start in the lobby area, but they have visions of many different renovations.

**Motion: To approve change of owner to Yogesh Patel on The Sturbridge Host Hotel liquor license  
By: Selectwoman Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

February 3, 2020

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**Department Head Updates:**

**Town Planner**

Jean Bubon, Town Planner, came before the board providing her yearly report. Some of the things she gave an overview on were the housing survey, the new permit software, and energy production projects that were completed in the planning department in the last twelve months.

**Department of Public Works**

Butch Jackson, Department of Public Works Director, came before the board and provided December and January reports. He mentioned that other than snow and ice removal, business has been quite slow. Vice Chair Dowling asked what efforts were made to reduce traffic during holidays. Mr. Jackson stated that they had already held a traffic control meeting and they are working on it.

**Building Department**

Nelson Burlingame out sick.

**Town Administrator**

Mr. Bridges provided the board with a spread sheet providing information about the compensation study, a Route 20 truck stop document, and sample motions for the retail sale of marijuana.

**Approve installation of storm windows at Center Office Building**

Robyn Chrabascz, facilities coordinator, came before the board and gave an overview of the storm window request that was approved at Special Town Meeting.

**Motion: To authorize the Town Administrator to enter into an agreement on behalf of the Town with Historic Preservation Associates for the installation of storm windows at the Center Office Building for an amount of \$16,876 By: Selectwoman Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**To approve deficit spending for Snow & Ice removal costs in FY20 in accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 31D**

Selectman Kaitbenski asked if we are going over budget are we not budgeting enough. Mr. Bridges stated he would have to look and get actual numbers compared to numbers budgeted. Selectman Suprenant said if we weren't budgeting enough during the audit they would be able to tell us.

February 3, 2020

**Motion: To approve deficit spending for snow and ice removal costs for Fiscal Year 2020**

**By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaibenski**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**Acceptance of Community Compact Grant for a fiber optic network**

Mr. Bridges explained to the board that the Town applied for a Community Compact Information Technology Grant in the amount of \$194,374. The purpose of this grant is to connect the Town and School facilities in a fiber optic network. This will provide greater efficiency, connectivity, and security of our computer networks.

**Motion: To accept the Community Compact Grant of \$194,374 and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the grant documents on behalf of the Town. By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaibenski**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**Discussion: National Grid power outages**

Kevin Shaughnessy, Community and Customer Manager of National Grid, along with Ryan Moe and Jeff Cahill, National Grid representatives, came before the board and introduced themselves. They went over their tree trimming programs. They mentioned that they target to trim dead or dying trees that are likely to cause power outages. The National Grid representatives went over the amount of trees removed due to gypsy moths. They stated that Sturbridge has been very proactive with the trees that need to be taken care of. Vice Chair Dowling asked about the average duration of power outages, stating that she would like to see the statistics per year. Mr. Shaughnessy stated that he will provide five years' worth of data for the board. Selectman Suprenant asked about the coordination that National Grid has with our Tree Warden, wondering if they document trees they plan to cut and if they get permission from the Tree Warden first. They informed Selectman Suprenant that they do get permission first, and they document and explain why they are cutting the tree. Selectman Suprenant asked about what they do with the stumps in the public way, and if they remove them. National Grid stated that they aren't sure on all the details of stump removal, but it is typically the property owner's responsibility. National Grid said it's important to note that although they maintain the trees, they do not own or have the right to maintain the stumps. Selectman Suprenant asked if National Grid was doing any undergrounding of critical areas. They stated that they do not unless it is paid for by the customer.

**Vote to sign the 2020 seasonal population increase estimation form**

The board discussed that 9,581 looked to be a small number for the population. They decided to look into it and bring back revised number.

**No motion**

February 3, 2020

**Review of Host Community Benefit agreements for the retail sale of marijuana**

Mr. Bridges explained to the board that after a few weeks of revising the Host Community Agreements, they were all reviewed with the three applicants.

Vice Chair Dowling stated that she is disappointed that there weren't any traffic studies done because it would have helped in making a decision on which marijuana component would be the best fit for Sturbridge. She feels that although they had agreed to allow for 600 customers at each location, she would like to re visit that amount. Vice Chair Dowling shared with the Board a news article about a cannabis retail store in Leicester and the traffic resulting from serving 1,000 customers on its opening day. She stated that the possibility of a total of 1,200 customers per day is too much traffic in Sturbridge.

**Motion: To modify the host community agreements to reflect a maximum of 400 customers per day By: Vice Chair Dowling  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectwoman Gimas**

**Discussion:** Selectman Suprenant stated he has done a traffic analysis in the past and the difference between a 600 customer maximum and a 400 customer maximum, at the locations proposed, will not make a big difference. Chair Blanchard said all three components had already reduced their customer numbers, so she doesn't think that 600 is too many customers. Selectman Kaitbenski stated he is against any other restrictions for the two companies that they choose. Vice Chair Dowling stated that the Town can always relax stringent requirements in the host agreements in the future, but will have difficulty negotiating their changes once the host agreement is signed.

**Vote: (2-3) Motion Defeated (Chair Blanchard, Selectman Kaitbenski, Selectman Suprenant opposed)**

Vice Chair Dowling brought up changes which she would like to be made to the host community agreements. Nicole Costanza, Town Counsel, went over these changes with the Board.

Change one: After the first two weeks of being open, any release of onsite traffic control personnel for each location will be determined by the Board of Selectmen, with recommendation from the Chief of Police.

Change two: The annual reporting requirements will include the number of customers per day that have visited each location.

Change three: The penalties section in the Host Community Agreements will contain language that violations of the Host Community Agreement or Cannabis Control Commission regulations could lead to revocation and termination of the Host Community Agreement by the Board of Selectmen.

**Motion: Changes to the host community agreements be pursued on behalf of the town By: Vice Chair Dowling  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Suprenant**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**Motion: To grant 253 Organic a Host Community Agreement By: Selectman Kaibenski  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Chair Blanchard**

**Discussion:** Selectwoman Gimas stated that she was not in favor of 253 Organic because of their choice to sell desserts, and also because the location would create a traffic problem. She stated that she prefers Caregivers location because of the current blight adding that it would look better with a nice new building there. Vice Chair Dowling agreed with Selectwoman Gimas, stating that route 131 is the access road to many businesses and residents use that route the most, so the traffic would be a big problem. Vice Chair Dowling also stated that she does not agree with putting a retail marijuana shop near the affordable housing where children would be living. Selectman Suprenant stated that he would be in favor of all three proposals, so he would vote in favor of 253 Organic.

**Vote: (3-2) Motion Carries (Vice Chair Dowling and Selectwoman Gimas opposed)**

**Motion: To grant Caregiver Patient Connection a Host Community Agreement By:  
Selectman Suprenant  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Chair Blanchard**

**Discussion:** Selectman Suprenant stated that he would like to explore lifting the requirement for Heal, Inc. so that all three components could enter into a Host Community Agreement with the town. Vice Chair Dowling stated that she disagrees with doing that because she feels they should be honoring the residents, who voted to ban all retail establishments in the 2017 Town wide election as well as the bylaw which limits special permits to two. Selectwoman Gimas stated that she agreed the residents wanted two retail marijuana stores and she referenced that number being based on the amount of retail liquor licenses as well. The board discussed that if Heal, Inc. did not receive one of the two Host Community Agreements offered, because they are already a medical marijuana facility, they could become a retail store in the future. This would leave Sturbridge with three total retail distributors, and they had only agreed to have two in town. Mr. Bridges asked Town Counsel if the board was to pick Caregiver Patient Connection and Heal, Inc. remained selling medical marijuana, would Heal, Inc. have to come back to the board to enter into a Host Community Agreement. Ms. Costanza said that in her opinion they would. The board agreed that they would need clarification on that.

**Vote: (2-3) Motion Defeated (Selectwoman Gimas, Vice Chair Dowling, Selectman Kaibenski opposed)**

**Motion: To approve and enter into the proposed host community agreement with Heal Sturbridge, Inc. for a retail adult-use marijuana establishment at 660 Main Street in Town, and in conjunction therewith to approve and enter into the proposed amendment to the existing host community agreement with Heal, Inc. for a medical marijuana treatment center at the same location. By: Selectwoman Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice Chair Dowling**

February 3, 2020

**Vote: (3-2) Motion Carries (Chair Blanchard and Selectman Suprenant opposed)**

**Motion: To reconsider the Host Community Agreement granted to 253 Organic By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectwoman Gimas**

Discussion: Selectman Suprenant stated that his reasoning behind this is that he thinks they picked the wrong site, and that 253 Organic would not be the best location.

Representatives from 253 Organic came forward with frustrations. The representative mention Heal, Inc. not providing a lot of tax revenue leaving Vice Chair Dowling to respond saying she was very uncomfortable with an applicant talking about another applicant who was no longer in attendance.

**Vote: (3-2) Motion Carries (Chair Blanchard and Selectman Kaitbenki opposed)**

**Motion: Not to enter into a Host Community Agreement with 253 Organic for the retail sale of marijuana By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectwoman Gimas**

**Vote: (3-2) Motion Carries (Chair Blanchard and Selectman Kaitbenski opposed)**

**Motion: To enter into a Host Community Agreement with Caregiver Patient Connection By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectwoman Gimas**

Discussion: Chair Blanchard stated that she was very upset in the process that went on during this meeting, and she feels that Selectman Suprenant had a lot of time to think about his decision and changing his mind at the last minute left her disappointed in him.

**Vote: (3-2) Motion Carries (Chair Blanchard and Selectman Kaitbenki opposed)**

### **Old Business**

Selectwoman Gimas mentioned the economic development forum happening on February 13<sup>th</sup> stating we should post it on our website. Chair Blanchard asked for an update on Sturbridge Auto Sales. Mr. Bridges stated that a letter was sent, but he has not heard back yet.

### **New business**

Vice Chair Dowling mentioned that Sue Brogan would like to attend a meeting in the near future and on behalf of the Pan Mass Challenge thank all the parties involved. Vice Chair Dowling will put her in touch with the Board of Selectmen's office to set something up.

### **Correspondence**

Selectman Suprenant read through the correspondence.

February 3, 2020

**Approval of Minutes**

January 2, 2020

**Motion: To approve the minutes of January 2, 2020 By: Selectwoma Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Chair Blanchard**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

January 6, 2020

**Motion: To approve the minutes of January 6, 2020 as amended By: Selectwoman Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Suprenant**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

January 27, 2020

**Motion: To approve the minutes of January 27, 2020 By: Selectwoman Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Suprenant**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**Citizen's forum**

None

**Adjourn**

**Motion: To adjourn at 9:20pm By: Selectwoman Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Chair Blanchard**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

**Adjourned at 9:20 p.m.**

**Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen**

**Clerk of the Board:**



**Date signed:**

03-02-2020