

January 2, 2020

**Board of Selectmen
January 2, 2020
Town Hall**

Present:

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

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Samantha Evans, Administrative Assistant

Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm

The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Blanchard read through the agenda

Review the proposed warrant articles for January 27, 2020 Special Town Meeting

Selectman Gimas inquired on whether the Financial Committee (Fincom) had provided a recommendation. It was clarified that they had not seen any of the articles.

ARTICLE #44

SENIOR CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY AND COST ESTIMATE

Chair Blanchard shared that the requested amount from Free Cash is \$89,150. Three different locations would be in this study 480 Main Street, 70 Cedar Street, and 80 Route 15. Selectman Gimas believes that this should be done but does not support the option of 80 Route 15. She would rather see the money go somewhere else than use it on a location that is not feasible in her opinion. Selectman Suprenant brought up that bringing water and sewer to 80 Route 15 is prohibited. Vice-Chair Dowling had reservations on 80 Route 15. Town Administrator Jeff Bridges shared that renderings and schematics were made that show it is feasible to put a water treatment plant and building in the area.

Motion: To place and support for Article #44 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor(5-0)

ARTICLE #45

PURCHASE OF 501 MAIN STREET FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLIC PARKING LOT

Chair Blanchard shared that the requested amount from Free Cash is \$244,000.

Motion: To place Article #45 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice-Chair Dowling

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Selectman Suprenant does not think there is a need for parking in this immediate area. He has observed less than 85% occupancy of parking in peak hours. An engineering study may indicate more parking may not be required. Zoning would take care of any immediate needs for parking. Also this is one of the worst areas to cross into river lands. This article is also above appraised value. Those are the reasons behind Selectman Suprenant not supporting.

Chair Blanchard shared that the Town has been trying to get parking anywhere on Route 20 for years. This is an opportunity for now and the future. There are sidewalks and businesses in the area, with parking there will probably be an increase in traffic. She fully supports this.

Selectman Gimas agreed with Selectman Suprenant. The Town is going to be liable for maintain the parking lot, lights, etc. She asked if they are going to let restaurants use it for valet parking. She is concerned if anything happens on the property. She thinks a little further east is better and does not want this land.

Town Admin. Bridges said the owners are paying for the demolition and clean up. This is the reason why the amount is more than the appraisal. The owners are also not paying prevailing wage which we would. This is the only spot that responded to the RFP. Without the buildings if the owners had a clean site they would receive better offers.

Chair Blanchard said that this is the first time that the Town has had a response for parking. Vice-Chair Dowling asked why the parking is necessary. Town Admin. Bridges shared that the Planning Board is supporting this for river land access. Selectman Kaitbenski supports this because the Town should stay consistent in beautifying the area. The Town is bringing in a lot of money from the businesses but it needs to have a better looking area.

Motion: To place and support Article #45 By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: (3-2) (Selectman Suprenant and Selectman Gimas Opposed)

ARTICLE #46

DESIGN OF A PARKING LOT AT 501 MAIN STREET

Town Admin. Bridges said they have done some solicitation for pricing from \$13,000-\$35,000. They are vetting those and should have a number shortly. Chair Blanchard said that the Board needs a number provided to them.

Selectman Kaitbenski asked if the Town has looked for any grants available for the parking lot. Town Admin. Bridges relayed that there may be economic grants and he would look into it.

Motion: To place Article #46 until a number is provided By: Chair Blanchard

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #47

**PURCHASE OF PERMANENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING EASEMENT ON 226 CEDAR STREET
WITH COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT HOUSING FUNDS**

Chair Blanchard shared that the amount appropriated would be \$201,756 of the Community Preservation Housing Funds. Vice-Chair Dowling supported this article but was disappointed in the price. She feels the Board should be

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able to get it done at a lower amount. She thinks the Town does not spend enough of the Community Preservation Act money and they should discuss this at Town meeting.

Selectman Gimas asked who would build the affordable housing. Town Admin. Bridges answered Habitat for Humanity. They do their own program and come up with their own pricing. Selectman Gimas asked if a family cannot afford the housing how it can be considered affordable housing due to the high price of the project.

Town Admin. Bridges then provided the financial break down.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked if the Town could do their own affordable housing. Town Admin. Bridges encouraged the Board to meet with Community Preservation Committee and affordable housing if they are reluctant. He also shared that it would cost more if the Town did it themselves.

Selectman Suprenant shared about how the Town would need oversight and they would be maintaining the property in the future. The Town would need to have an outside organization to enforce rules.

The Board discussed the price of the affordable housing unit. The price would be no more than 30% of the family's income. The Board members all agreed the amount was very high. Town Admin. Bridges agreed that it is a lot to build a home but Habitat for Humanity is not making a profit, which is why it costs so much.

Vice-Chair Dowling wanted to know what the taxes would be. Selectman Gimas would like an estimated income range and amount.

Town Admin. Bridges shared that Habitat for Humanity is going to pick who goes into the home. It will be someone who can afford and maintain the structure.

Motion: To hold Article #47 until more information is provided on Monday, January 6, 2020 By:
Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #48
CENTER OFFICE BUILDING STORM WINDOW PROJECT

Chair Blanchard shared that the requested appropriation amount was \$2,600 of Community Preservation Historic Preservation Funds.

Motion: To place and support Article #48 By: Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #49
CONVEYANCE OF THE TOWN-OWNED LAND AT 8 BROOKFIELD ROAD

Selectman Suprenant thinks there is still a public purpose for the land, including public parking. He believes it is a perfect location for public transit. The Town has used it as an area for emergency personnel at events like the Flea Market. He would like to lease the land long term because of its location. Town Admin. Bridges agreed the Town just needs to do something with it because it is insured. Selectman Suprenant asked to reword the article as sell or lease.

Chair Blanchard had a problem with the lease because of the state of the building. Selectman Suprenant said that part of the proposal is getting rid of the building. He still wants the option to lease.

Selectman Kaitbenski asked if Party A wants to sell and Party B wants to Lease, who decides. The answer is that the Board decides. Vice-Chair Dowling said that it is very open ended and gives a lot of power. It is totally up to the Boards discretion.

Town Admin. Bridges will see if the attorney says the Town can sell and lease. The wording in the article will be clarified.

Motion: To place and support Article #49 By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Selectman Suprenant shared that if the lease is over 20 years it has to go back to Town Meeting. Vice-Chair Dowling would like that verified.

Motion: To hold Article #49 By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #50

ACQUISITION OF THE PROPERTY AT 53 HOLLAND ROAD

Town Admin. Bridges shared that Community Preservation Committee approved an article but is waiting for approval from the Board. Chair Blanchard asked the Board if they wanted to hold until they got a number.

Motion: To hold Article #50

ARTICLE #51

REPLACEMENT OF A ROOF TOP AIRCONDITIONING UNIT AT THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX

Selectman Suprenant shared that the Safety Complex is going to need to have some major work done. Town Admin. Bridges thinks Sturbridge will be past 5 years until there are any buildings or renovations for the Safety Complex. He has nine more years to get it started.

Motion: To place and support Article #51 By: Selectman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #52

AN ARTICLE TO AMEND THE ZONING BYLAW FOR CHANGES IN DEFINITIONS

Selectman Suprenant asked about the craft beverage business. It is stated that a tasting room cannot exceed 50% of the buildings gross square footage. He asked what would happen if they are two separate buildings. He wondered if one is the brewery and the other is a tasting room, can they only have one building. The answer was yes; they can only have one building.

Chair Blanchard had questions on some of the warrant article language.

Motion: To place and support Article #52 By: Selectman Suprenant
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #53
AMENDING CHAPTERS 14 AND 15 OF THE ZONING BYLAWS

Motion: To place and support Article #53 By: Selectman Suprenant
2nd: Selectman Gimas
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #54
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER NINETEEN OF THE ZONING BYLAW

Vice-Chair Dowling asked if they are doing away with PUBD and only having a one-acre requirement. She shared that it used to be fifty acres for the PUBD down to one. So it was reduced and she supports that change. Vice-Chair Dowling encouraged putting this in a staff summary.

Vice-Chair Dowling would like clarification on the minimum lot size.

Motion: To place and support Article #54 By: Selectman Kaitbenski
2nd: Selectman Gimas
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #55 ELECTONRIC VOTING COMMITTEE

Motion: To place and support Article #55 By: Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #56
ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FISKE HILL WATER PUMP STATION

Chair Blanchard made a comment that the Board needs an amount and needs to know who is sponsoring the article. Selectman Suprenant asked if they usually list the water reserve fund.

Town Admin. Bridges said he would get the number and believed the Board is sponsoring this article. He can provide the account number with the water reserve fund.

Motion: To place Article #56 awaiting the amount By: Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #57
UNPAID BILL OF A PREVIOUS YEAR

Motion: To place and support Article #57 By: Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Suprenant
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

ARTICLE #58

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ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR CHEMICALS AND TESTING-SEWER

Motion: To place and support Article #58 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 6:10 p.m. By: Selectman Gimas

2nd: Vice-Chair Dowling

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Samantha Evans

Clerk of the Board:



Date signed:

02-03-2020