

HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING

Teleconference

April 20, 2021

Selectmen Present: Chair Shawn Farrell, Darcy Dale,
Rosemary Kennedy, and Jamie
Knudsen

Selectmen Absent: William Olson

Town Manager: Joe Domelowicz Jr.

** This meeting was conducted via Zoom teleconference with all the above participants remaining in their homes.*

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Shawn Farrell called the Board of Selectmen (BOS) teleconference to order at 6:33 p.m. and took a roll call. Present were: Mr. Farrell, Darcy Dale, Jamie Knudsen, and Rosemary Kennedy. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

*Mr. Olson was out of state and not present during the regular meeting. He arrived online just prior to the adjournment into Executive Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & BOARD OPENINGS

Board and Committee Openings

- Hamilton Historic District Commission—one opening
- Zoning Board of Appeals—one opening
- Open Space Committee—two openings
- Planning Board—two associate member openings
- Affordable Housing Trust—one opening

Public Comment

No comments.

Selectmen/Town Manager Reports

Ms. Dale talked about the Town Hall tours she and Ms. Kennedy are guiding and gave the dates and times. She talked about the condition of the building and some “scary” aspects, for example, there is only one light switch in the basement with no emergency lighting. She also mentioned the plaques in the building commemorating people over the centuries who served in the military and said she wanted to rededicate the space [Town Hall] and instill a sense of civic pride. She invited the community to tour the building.

Ms. Kennedy displayed the postcard she received in the mail about the Town Hall renovation and discussed the Town Hall in-person and Zoom tours. She noted the Conservation Commission (ConCom) is not going to bring a Conservation Restriction forward to Annual Town Meeting concerning the Patton Homestead property, but is willing to work with the Town in developing an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). She said the matter will likely be discussed at the BOS meeting on May 3.

Mr. Knudsen reported that two candidates applied to fill the vacancy on the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) and one was chosen. The other candidate had expressed interest in serving on other boards. Projects including Willow Street and the one proposed at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary were discussed. The Human Rights Commission met for the first time on March 31, which he said seemed appropriate on the day of the verdict in the George Floyd case.

Ms. Kennedy added to her report that Jack Lawrence had expressed an interest in serving as a Planning Board alternate member.

Mr. Farrell gave no report.

Town Manager Joe Domelowicz Jr. said COVID case numbers had declined. He said he appreciated residents’ renewed efforts to follow social distancing and mask guidelines. Annual Town Meeting is May 1. Residents will have a hard copy of the warrant by this Thursday and it will be posted on the Town website.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve Minutes of the March 21 Meeting. (*Amended to March 31)
- Approve use of Patton Park by HW High School girls basketball team

Mr. Knudsen noted the agenda said March 21, but the actual minutes are for March 31.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS approve the Consent Agenda with the amendment [change of date listed on agenda to March 31, 2021]. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Ms. Dale, Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, and Mr. Farrell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

It was noted that the Patton Park event was an end-of-year wrap-up for the team.

Update on the Compost Rollout—Tim Olson

Mr. Farrell said Department of Public Works Director Tim Olson was not able to be there. Mr. Domelowicz relayed that for the last couple of weeks Casella was putting non-compliance stickers on trash that did not have a corresponding compost bin next to it. Mr. Farrell referenced a composting program in Vermont that he said had a great website and said they could look at it.

Former Waste Reduction Committee members Anne Gero and Gretel Clark were present online for the discussion. Ms. Gero asked if the Town had seen a decrease in the trash tonnages. Mr. Domelowicz said he would ask Mr. [Tim] Olson for statistics from Jan.-March, but since they hadn't been enforcing compliance yet, he wasn't sure what it would tell them. Mr. Farrell said they should plan to get an update three to six months into the program. Ms. Clark said she was pleased the Town is allowing residents to have the green bin at no charge.

Woodbury Street Speed Change—Discuss and Vote

Mr. Domelowicz explained that before the BOS was a recommendation for reducing the speed on Woodbury Street from 40 mph to 30 mph. That recommendation is echoed by Police Chief Russell Stevens and Mr. [Tim] Olson. There are three different speed limits along that road currently.

Ms. Dale agreed it should be lowered and asked about enforcement. She said that cars come over the hill at 60 mph. Mr. Farrell said they would probably put out current speed signs at the beginning of the time after the speed was reduced. It was determined by the BOS that it was OK for Ms. Dale to vote even though she lives on the street.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS approve the Woodbury Street speed change. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, and Farrell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

Board and Committee Training for Anti-Bias and Sensitivity

Mr. Domelowicz said Human Resources Director Michellelee Carroll received quotes from two of the four companies she contacted. One quote was \$4K for just the anti-bias training. The other company charged per employee and the Town could sign up for training covering them for one, two, or three years. He said both companies offered a good product.

Ms. Dale asked if a third quote would be worth considering. Mr. Domelowicz said State law requires that they seek three quotes, which they did. It was hard to judge the cost until they know how many people would be involved. He said he liked the Trailiant model. The Town

could do a three-year contract and involve boards and committees as well as employees. Mr. Domelowicz was charged by the BOS to seek out a third quote and ask for references to find out how the trainings were received by the participants.

Water Abatement—Discuss and Vote

It was discussed that the Hamilton water customer, Jay Donovan, actually lives in Wenham. The address is 3 Walnut Road. That is because of the way the pipes run. There are some Hamilton customers who live in Wenham or Essex. The abatement amount is \$292.56.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS approve the water abatement for Mr. Donovan. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Dale, and Mr. Farrell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

Master Plan Steering Committee

Mr. Domelowicz reviewed that the BOS had discussed having a nine-member Steering Committee to work with the consultant when chosen, with five of the members representing standing committees and four at-large members, who may or may not sit on committees. He listed the five committees to be represented: BOS, Planning Board, Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom), ConCom, and Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee. As of this morning, there were five applicants for four seats. He said they would ultimately like to have hundreds of people actively involved. In addition to the Steering Committee there will be subcommittees and online forums held.

Mr. Farrell brought up the idea of whether Mr. Domelowicz should be a member. Mr. Domelowicz did not think that was a good idea since the Master Plan is more about the Town’s vision, not the Town Manager’s. Also, Ms. Dale said those involved should be Hamilton citizens. Mr. Farrell questioned whether FinCom members were allowed to serve based on the FinCom bylaws. Mr. Domelowicz said he is following up on that with Town Counsel. Mr. Farrell also suggested Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett and DPW Director Mr. [Tim] Olson be involved, perhaps in consulting roles. The LED signboard is being utilized to advertise and solicit Master Plan participation.

A resident joined the meeting to say he was unable to get into the Planning Board meeting and was given instructions by the BOS about what to do. Mr. Farrell added that he had forgotten to bring up that the School Committee had endorsed the Town Hall project and had noted publicly that it wasn’t competing for the funding.

Flag Policy Discussion

Mr. Farrell said the BOS had had a flag policy in front of them in the past and had tabled it. He said he was bringing it up again because the Human Rights Commission (HRC) was talking about it. He said his thought was that anyone could hang a flag when they wanted if they petitioned it. However, he said he and Mr. Domelowicz had discussed the idea of

having another flag pole in Town that organizations could use to fly their flags that wasn't associated with the municipality or located at Town Hall.

Ms. Kennedy said people have a right to post any flag on their private property and she supports that, but she said that as Selectmen, they have to consider all the circumstances. She said she is elected to represent all the residents and apply a best-interest standard, which is an ideal to establish policies and duties that do not harm. She proposed the BOS function as "Switzerland" and either maintain a neutral policy to only flag raise the American flag, or, in the alternative, to raise the flag of every entity that comes before them so as to ensure equal access. She said discretionary flag-raising would be involving censorship. Ms. Dale agreed. She said that once they opened the door to allow any flag, they couldn't close it.

Mr. Farrell said sometimes there is confusion between political signage versus human rights signage. For example, he said he viewed the Pride flag as a human rights sign, but he said they had to consider all the circumstances. Ms. Dale asked if the State had any guidance regarding the matter. She suggested they find out how the State handles its flags. Ms. Kennedy commented on the Chauvin trial and issues regarding Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter said she didn't want to see flag-raising politicizing or polarizing the Town.

Mr. Knudsen said the reason why Town Counsel or Mr. Domelowicz had brought the flag-raising policy before them in the first place was to make it clear that raising a flag at Town Hall wasn't a free-for-all and was at the discretion of the Town Manager. He said that while he might not agree with every decision on raising a flag that was made, he didn't think it right to "throw out the baby with the bath water." He said he thought it worth hearing the considered opinions of the newly formed HRC, although he noted they did not make decisions for the BOS. Mr. Farrell agreed and said he wanted more research about what other towns are doing. He said he wanted to gather some best practices and discuss at a later date.

HRC Chair Anne Brady, who was online, was asked by Mr. Farrell to make some recommendations and work with Mr. Domelowicz and Town Counsel in thinking about worst-case scenarios and how to handle applications when they come in to avoid a free-for-all that sends mixed messages to the community. Ms. Brady said they are in the research phase of things and were making sure to base decisions on what's happening in the world and not on their own whims and wishes. Ms. Kennedy said while she appreciates what other towns are doing, the BOS should make the decision of what's best for their town.

Tosh Blake, 217 Sagamore St., said he wanted to reiterate what Ms. Kennedy and Ms. Dale said. He said political expression on private property was fine, but it was dangerous to have on public property. He said unless they called a Town Meeting to vote on what causes the Town supported, they couldn't say in any objective standard who were the good guys and bad guys. He said he had made flag requests himself and was told there was a moratorium, but nobody had gotten back to him. He said he was against political turf-marking on public property asserting that it brought a distrust of the government.

William Olson joined the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Adjournment/Motion to Enter Executive Session

At 7:35 p.m., Mr. Farrell entertained a motion to convene in Executive Session to discuss a strategy session in preparation for negotiation with non-union personnel or conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel in which we would not be returning to Open Session.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made the motion (cited by Mr. Farrell above), Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Rosemary Kennedy, Mr. Olson, Jamie Knudsen, Darcy Dale, and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous.

Sign Cemetery Deed #1209

Listed as requiring BOS signatures. Not discussed at the meeting.

Prepared by:

Mary Alice Cookson / 5-19-2021

Mary Alice Cookson Date

Minutes Secretary

Attest:

Darcy Dale / 05-19-2021

Darcy Dale Date

Selectboard Clerk

Documents Discussed at Meeting:

- Minutes from BOS meeting on March 31, 2021, Mary Alice Cookson
- Request for use of Patton Park facilities, Hamilton Wenham Girls Basketball Boosters
- Memo to BOS and Town Manager on Woodbury Street Speed Study, DPW Director Tim Olson
- Petition to MassDOT for Establishment of New Speed Limit, including Traffic Engineering Study, Joe Domelowicz
- Water Abatement Application, Jay Donovan, 3 Walnut Road.