

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
HAMILTON, MA
2021 JUN -9 PM 1:58

HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING

Teleconference

May 3, 2021

Selectmen Present:

Chair Shawn Farrell, William Olson, Darcy Dale, Rosemary Kennedy, and Jamie Knudsen

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. The full board was present: Mr. Farrell, Rosemary Kennedy, Darcy Dale, William Olson, and Jamie Knudsen. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

It was discussed that there are two Planning Board (PB) openings. One PB appointment is on this evening's agenda.

Public Comment

None.

Selectmen/Town Manager (TM) Reports

Ms. Kennedy reported on the Conservation Commission (ConCom) meeting held last week. She said the 133 Essex St. project hearing was postponed. ConCom members are working

on a MOA [Memorandum of Understanding] for the Patton Homestead property and expect to bring it before the BOS on May 17. Ms. Kennedy thanked Hamilton Wenham Recreation Director Sean Timmons for setting up a free swim for seniors to take place on Saturdays from 10 to 10:50 a.m. They are looking to add a water aerobics component as well and seeking an instructor. Ms. Kennedy thanked Jim Reynolds and Jenn Flynn at the Wenham Council on Aging (COA) for their help also.

Mr. Knudsen gave no report.

Ms. Dale said many people don't understand that the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District is a completely separate entity from the two towns and there is no mechanism for either of the towns to effect change to it. She said if citizens want transparency and accountability from the School District, they have to work with the School Committee and School Superintendent, and elect School Committee members with the financial and municipal experience to improve things. She stressed that Hamilton goes by regular order and called Town Meetings serious business meetings. She commented that if citizens want something to happen, they need to focus on processes and not let emotions guide them.

Mr. Olson gave no report but thanked Ms. Dale for a well-prepared statement and called volunteerism the heart of the community.

Mr. Farrell gave no report. He agreed change happens because people get involved. He said he was encouraged by how many had applied to be on the Master Plan Steering Committee and that, as part of the Master Plan process, they should find ways to solicit more participation in Town government.

The Town Manager's report will be posted online. Joe Domelowicz Jr. said the Secretary of State's office reimbursed the Town Clerk \$6,700 for additional costs incurred for the last election. Hamilton's public health department received a grant of \$200K to use over the next three fiscal years to fund a regional public health director and public health social worker. Mr. Farrell asked for details on the Shared Streets grant that was received. At least 12 ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) curb ramps and sidewalks will be added with work completed by the end of the month. Bike racks are being ordered.

AGENDA

Approve Minutes of the March 15, 2021 Meeting

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion to approve the March 15 BOS meeting minutes. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Dale, Mr. Olson, and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous.

Appointment of Suzanne Soffa to Affordable Housing Trust (AHT)—Discuss and Vote

Ms. Soffa's application had been forwarded to the BOS and a recommendation from AHT Chair Marnie Crouch had been received. Ms. Kennedy described Ms. Soffa's resume as "quite fine." Ms. Soffa introduced herself as a resident of nearly 24 years whose son attended Hamilton Wenham schools. She recently retired from a Financial Services career and has been attending AHT meetings since 2019.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion to appoint Ms. Soffa to the Affordable Housing Trust. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Dale, Mr. Olson, and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous.

Ms. Soffa wanted to know at what point was she was coming into the term. Mr. Domelowicz said he would find out and get back to her. She is taking the seat of William Massos.

Appointment of Emil Dahlquist to Planning Board (Associate Member)—Discuss and Vote

Mr. Dahlquist, whose information was in the packet, introduced himself as a semi-retired architect and said he moved from a town similar to Hamilton located near Hartford, Connecticut. He detailed his vast experience volunteering on many boards, such as chairing a design review board for 20 years, and serving on a main street partnership design review committee for about 10 years. Among other things, he described working on three Charrettes (intensive studies). One was of a town center in which they created a form-based code. As opposed to standard zoning regulations that often rely on metrics like density, he explained that form-based code was a different approach to managing change in a community and tended to elicit more public participation.

Mr. Farrell said Mr. Dahlquist had received a unanimous recommendation from the PB. Mr. Olson asked Mr. Domelowicz about the other open associate member position. Mr. Domelowicz said there are two candidates for the other position, which will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Ms. Kennedy asked Mr. Dahlquist for more information about the process for Charrettes, which he detailed, describing an open, transparent process. Mr. Farrell commented on a downtown Charrette with the Metro Area Planning Council (MAPC) that Hamilton had done about four years ago.

Decision:

Ms. Kennedy made motion that the BOS appoint Mr. Dahlquist as Associate Member of the Planning Board. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Dale, Mr. Olson and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous.

Approval of Community House Application for Special Liquor License—Discuss and Vote

Mr. Farrell said the application was for a special liquor license for a funeral gathering and had been cleared with Hamilton’s public health officials.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS approve the Community House application for a special liquor license. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Ms. Kennedy asked how many of these requests come before the BOS and was told just a handful, generally for the Community House, American Legion, and Myopia Hunt Club.

Decision (Continued):

A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Dale, Mr. Olson, and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous.

Mr. Olson asked whether the Selectmen needed to sign the license and was told by Mr. Domelowicz that the BOS had previously authorized the Town Manager to sign during the pandemic.

Water Rates Update—Tim Olson and Dyan Katz

Because Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Mr. [Tim] Olson was not able to be present, the BOS tabled this item.

Decision:

Ms. Dale made the motion to table the agenda item. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Dale, Mr. Olson, and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous.

Appointment of At-Large Master Plan Steering Committee (4 members)—Discuss and Vote

There are four openings and 10 applicants for the Committee, including: Kala Campbell, Kristin Kassner, Scott Maddern, Kristen Pieper, Emil Dahlquist, Jenn Flynn, Natalie Hildreth, Jack Lawrence, Jonathan Sandford, and Al DeGroot. The names were displayed onscreen. Each candidate was asked to give a brief statement. Mr. Maddern and Ms. Campbell were not present. Then each BOS member was asked to give their top four choices, which were as follows:

Ms. Dale—Ms. Kassner, Mr. Dahlquist, Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. DeGroot.

Ms. Kennedy—Mr. Lawrence, Mr. DeGroot, Ms. Kassner, and Mr. Dahlquist.

Mr. Knudsen—Ms. Flynn, Mr. Maddern, Ms. Kassner, and Ms. Pieper.

Mr. Olson—Ms. Kassner, Ms. Pieper, Mr. Dahlquist, and Mr. Lawrence.

Mr. Farrell—Ms. Kassner, Mr. Maddern, Ms. Pieper, and Ms. Flynn.

Results were: Ms. Kassner (5), Ms. Pieper (3), Mr. Dahlquist (3), Mr. Lawrence (3), Mr. DeGroot (2), Ms. Flynn (2), and Mr. Maddern (2).

Decision:

Ms. Kennedy made a motion that the BOS approve the appointment of the following four people to the Hamilton Master Plan Steering Committee: Kristen Kassner, Kristen Pieper, Jack Lawrence, and Emil Dahlquist. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Dale, Mr. Olson, and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous.

Ms. Kennedy asked for a show of hands of those who were not selected but wanted to stay involved. She said they would keep their information on file.

Discussion of Human Rights Committee (HRC) Recommendation—Discuss and Vote

Mr. Domelowicz shared the HRC's slides regarding: Flag Policy Development, Lifting of Moratorium on Flag Raising for the month of June 2021, and Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Proposal by the Hamilton-Wenham Human Rights Coalition/HW Regional High School Social Justice Committee.

Flag Policy Development—HRC Chair Anne Brady asked if the BOS wanted the HRC's assistance in making edits to the current policy draft as HRC member Nancy Stehfest had done some research on the matter. Ms. Stehfest suggested that one way to decide on third-party flag raising was to make the determination based on flags aligned with Federal or State proclamations.

Mr. Olson responded yes to getting HRC input and asked about the timeline, asking if they needed to act before June. Mr. Farrell noted the BOS has this meeting and the next to vote whether to lift the moratorium for two flag requests (one for Pride and one for Juneteenth, a new state holiday). He said the BOS would have to draft the policy (or re-draft the one they have) and have first and second readings. Mr. Farrell said he also supported the idea of having the HRC identify best practices.

Ms. Dale asked if the policy would mean raising many different flags every day. Ms. Brady said no, not unless someone made a request that coincided with a State or Federal proclamation. Ms. Dale asked who would bear the cost of the flags. Mr. Olson said the BOS would not be funding the flags; petitioners would provide them. Ms. Dale asked how they would mediate situations in which someone wanted to put up another flag, such as for a political party. Mr. Farrell brought up the idea of using the flag pole in Patton Park for third-party flags.

Ms. Kennedy said, in a neutrality clause and in the interest of representing all people, the BOS should not be discriminating or prohibiting. She said whoever was in the Governor's house drives policy decisions, but the policy [for flags flown at Town Hall] should belong to the BOS and no other group. It was discussed that if someone was denied the right to fly a

flag, there could be some legal ramifications. Ms. Kennedy advocated the idea of flying the American flag that represents all the people all the time.

Ms. Dale suggested having a space at Patton Park dedicated to flag flying where people could gather and share their narratives. She said the flagpole at Town Hall doesn't provide room for parking or standing room for such events. Ms. Dale said the people's house—the Town Hall—should remain neutral.

Mr. Olson said he wanted to reframe the conversation since it isn't on the agenda to debate the flag policy, but rather to vote on whether the HRC could give the BOS information on the flag policy. Mr. Farrell said Ms. Stehfest had done the research and they should benefit from it. He asked if the HRC could provide information on how other municipalities were handling the issue and what the precedents were. Mr. Farrell said perhaps the flag pole at the Town Hall could be for Federally- or State-endorsed flags while the pole at Patton Park could be for something else.

Mr. Knudsen said he thought he BOS would benefit from the research the HRC was doing. He said he did have opinions, but would save that for the next discussion. He said one thing that is dangerous is that they shouldn't have a flag pole that was the free speech zone—where one could raise any flag one wanted. He said that should not happen on Town-owned land.

Lifting of the Moratorium—Ms. Brady discussed that it was Chief of Police Russell Stevens who had proposed the idea to lift the moratorium on third-party flag raising in light of two flags requested to be raised in June because of the precedent for them. Juneteenth is now a new State holiday and Pride month has been a State-proclaimed month since 2017. Ms. Brady said Chief Stevens suggested that since the Pride flag was flown last year, it might look as if the Town was backtracking in its commitment if it didn't fly it again this year. Ms. Brady said that the HRC had a letter from the North Shore Juneteenth Association requesting that North Shore communities participate in flying that flag.

Ms. Dale said she would like to see the third-party flags, even those that are State- or Federally-endorsed, flown at Patton Park as a good compromise. She said she didn't want to create division where they didn't need to. She said people can make change, but it doesn't have to be "in your face" all the time and that if you take the time to compromise and move slower, you persuade people to come along while if you are anxious and impatient, you end up hurting your cause.

Mr. Farrell supported flying the flags in both places, at Patton Park and at Town Hall. Mr. Olson said he agreed and that the flying of flags were minimal steps. He said he did not want to see the Town going backward and was in favor of lifting the moratorium.

Mr. Knudsen was also in favor of flying the flags in both locations. He said that if the BOS only did things everybody supported, they wouldn't get any business done in the Town and that goes for human rights. He said the HRC made these requests and he thinks the Town

should be supportive and that these are important human rights, well-recognized and very much needed.

Ms. Kennedy said just because the Town did something one time last year doesn't make it a precedent and she was in favor of flying flags for any legal entity in Patton Park. It was noted there are three flag poles in Town—Town Hall, Patton Park, and the Hamilton Cemetery, and the Town sometimes uses the one at the Community House.

Decision 1:

Ms. Kennedy made a motion that the BOS fly the flags [for Pride and Juneteenth] for the month of June in Patton Park. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Olson, and Mr. Farrell, and "nay" from Mr. Knudsen, (4-1). *Mr. Knudsen explained he voted nay because he wanted the flags flown in two locations—Patton Park and Town Hall.

Decision 2:

Mr. Olson made a motion that the BOS fly the flags at Town Hall for the same description and duration [Pride and Juneteenth for the month of June]. Mr. Knudsen seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes from Mr. Knudsen, Mr. Olson, and Mr. Farrell and "nays" from Ms. Kennedy and Ms. Dale, (3-2).

Tosh Blake, 217 Sagamore St., commented he had put in flag requests and was told of the moratorium, but now that the moratorium was being lifted, he would like to see his requests considered. He said he would like to make a request for July for the Gadsden flag to be raised in honor of Independence Day. He mentioned holidays, too, such as Columbus Day. He said he supported Ms. Kennedy's idea to allow all legitimate requests to go through rather than just those of a certain political viewpoint. He said any discrimination is not equitable.

Ms. Brady brought up the use of the flag holders (holes in the sidewalk) along Route 1A. Mr. Farrell said historically, the American Legion has been the only entity using these for placing flags. Since Bay Road is a State highway, there are different rules with it. He isn't sure if it would be a State or BOS/Town Manager decision. He said they would need to include a policy on using those holders in the flag policy, as well.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Proposal—Anna Siedzik, co-founder and president of the Hamilton-Wenham Human Rights Coalition, introduced E.J. Everett, 200 Linden St., a high school student representing the Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School Social Justice Club, who presented information on the statement. Mr. Farrell confirmed it was the statement the Club wanted to have said before the meetings, which was from Thomas Green, Vice President of the Massachusetts Tribe. Everett explained that a land acknowledgement is a way to show respect to the indigenous people and acknowledge the history of the land in Hamilton and Wenham before colonization, as it isn't in history books. The proposal is to read the statement prior to leading a meeting, to reflect on one's relationship with the land, and educate people who haven't heard about this. This is

already being done in many places within the State, such as in many schools, as well as in other places throughout the world.

Mr. Farrell opened the floor to questions. Mr. Olson said he would like to find a way to acknowledge it without making it a negative, and said he wanted to educate himself more about it. Ms. Dale said they needed time to think about how to go forward. Mr. Farrell said he was for some type of acknowledging, but not necessarily at every meeting or venue since it might make it commonplace and dilute the message. Mr. Farrell said he saw the letter that was sent and would like a representative to come and share some more information on the value and benefit.

Mr. Knudsen said the HRC had unanimously recommended it for consideration while understanding people would need some time to research and understand it. Mr. Farrell said they could tie other facets to it. Ms. Siedzik said the request was not for every meeting. It could be for just Town Meeting, for example, or other major events. She said it wasn't just a stand-alone and could involve a message on a website or a posting in a building. She said it was a learning process to her to learn the hierarchy of tribal governments. She said acknowledging the Massachusetts Tribe was being the most comprehensive.

Mr. Farrell asked about next steps, such as asking to hear directly from one of the tribes to make the request or having Town Counsel weigh in. Mr. Olson asked for a copy of the PowerPoint to see the references at the bottom. The value of having young people involved in their local government was discussed, as well as the idea that expecting Thomas Green to come there to educate them shouldn't be expected. Ms. Siedzik said Hamilton wouldn't be doing this for the Tribe; they are all part of the connection to the land, so they would be doing it for the community itself. She said the Hamilton-Wenham Human Rights Coalition [separate group from Hamilton's Human Rights Commission] is sponsoring a Zoom webinar on the topic on June 12 [4-6 p.m.].

Mr. Blake commented that some things he had learned conflicted with what Ms. Siedzik had given regarding the hierarchy and said he wouldn't want plaques to be put up that weren't correct. Mr. Farrell said he needed to move the conversation along. Ms. Brady said in the interest of time, they would leave their input aside. Ms. Kennedy suggested Everett give a lecture at the Library to get the information out to the community. Debbie Everett, 200 Linden St., discussed conflicting resources concerning lineages and land and said she thought Ms. Siedzik should show that information sources differ and provide summary information from the actual tribal group in the June 12 presentation. Ms. Everett said it was wrong for Mr. Blake to say things were factually incorrect. Mr. Blake asked to give a rebuttal, but Mr. Farrell ended the discussion.

Town Meeting Wrap-Up—Discussion

Mr. Farrell said Town Meeting had a few "hiccups" and not the turnout he was hoping for. Ms. Dale said she wanted to make sure everybody goes to the polls on May 6. She called on the HRC to reach out to the Human Rights Coalition to advocate for ADA-compliance in the form of supporting the Town Hall project, which she called a human rights issue affecting a


lot of people. Ms. Brady said the group didn't have a mechanism for that, other than to post on their own personal social media pages.

The BOS discussed difficulty with the "clickers" (automated vote counters) for the first couple of Town Meeting votes, saying it was a glitch because the system was mistakenly in test mode. Mr. Farrell noted it was tough for those in the back to see if their votes had been entered and suggested perhaps having an additional screen about half way back and on the side as a remedy. Porta toilets not locking was another issue discussed. Ms. Kennedy thanked Ms. Siedzik for her public support of the Town Hall renovation project and asked her to continue those efforts.

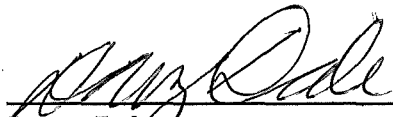
Adjournment:

At 8:56 p.m., Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS adjourn the meeting. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Knudsen, Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Olson, and Mr. Farrell, (5-0) unanimous.

Prepared by:


_____, 6-9-2021
Date
Mary Alice Cookson
Minutes Secretary

Attest:


_____, 06-09-2021
Date
Darcy Dale
Selectboard Clerk

Documents Discussed at Meeting:

- Minutes from BOS meeting on March 15, 2021, Mary Alice Cookson
- Application materials from Suzanne Soffa and Letter of Recommendation from AHT Chair Marnie Crouch
- Application materials from Emil Dahlquist and Letter from PB Chair Brian Stein
- Application for Special Liquor (One Day) License
- Application materials from applicants seeking appointment to the Master Plan Steering Committee

