



SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2025, 2024
7:00 PM
ACTON TOWN HALL, ROOM 204
472 MAIN STREET

Present: Fran Arsenault, Dean Charter, Alissa Nicol, David Martin, Jim Snyder-Grant

Additional Attendees: Town Manager John Mangiaratti, Assistant Town Manager Thom Begin, Executive Assistant Lisa Tomyl

I. Regular Business

1. Resident Concerns

None

2. Chair Update/Town Manager Update/Members Minute

Ms. Arsenault announced the Economic Development Committee will be attending a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Silver Girl in West Acton on Friday.

Polystyrene collection is on March 15th from 10-1 pm weather permitting at the transfer station. The CAT is out of service on Tuesday, March 4th only affecting the CAT and to contact dispatch for alternative ride options.

Mr. Mangiaratti noted the reconstruction of the plow display in the Acton Town Hall lobby will be completed in a month, and a mural contracted by the Acton 250 Committee, will be installed behind the plow. The shoring work was completed for the construction work at 17 Woodbury Lane, and are prepped to do the demolition of the 1970s addition. The Economic Development Committee strategic plan is launching a public engagement survey with more information on actonma.gov/EDC. The fire station deployment pilot project has been in effect for a month, and is proceeding as anticipated; a community survey and a public forum will be conducted in a month to continue community engagement.

Ms. Nicol informed the board a Citizens' Library Trustee resigned with the current term up at the end of April and asked if any board member wanted to fill the vacancy temporarily before Town Meeting to let the Chair know; the WRAC is making progress on the stormwater feasibility study report, but have decided to wait until after Town Meeting to present a public forum, wanting to announce the forum at Town Meeting.

Mr. Charter noted the Acton 250 Committee will be meeting next Thursday; Acton sculptor Meredith Bergmann will be presenting on March 5th at 7:00 PM in Room 204 as part of the Acton 250 speaker series.

II. New/Special Business

3. Appoint Kristen Caouette as Town Accountant Effective March 10, 2025

Mr. Mangiaratti introduced Kristen who has been working in Finance for many years and has been promoted into leadership positions and recently served as interim Town Accountant for the past couple of months. Ms. Caouette introduced herself to the Board highlighting the many roles she has played in the Finance Department, and educational experience.

Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol, to appoint Kristen Caouette as Town Accountant effective March 10, 2025 and approved unanimously 5-0-0.

4. Announce Nomination Process for the Colonel Francis Faulkner Volunteer of the Year Award

Members will announce their nominations at their April 7th meeting.

5. Discussion Potential Name of 53 River Street Park

Mr. Martin reminded the Board of the past discussion naming the 53 River Street park, with the 53 River Street Committee suggesting “Textile Mill Park.” Many delays in completion of the park have extended the naming process. Mr. Bill Klauer noted that multiple textile mills were located along River Street, and some neighbors had concerns about the negative connotations of the word “shoddy.” Ms. Nicol reminded the board that it had directed a community input process to be advanced, specifically involving the Iron Work Farm, and the Historical Society. She also expressed concern that nowhere in the committee’s charge is deciding what the name of the parcel would be and there should be a public process. Mr. Martin noted it is a recommendation only. Mr. Snyder-Grant suggests sending out a public survey suggesting names and the meaning behind the name recommendation. Mr. Begin noted the park is anticipated to be completed by the end of the year. Mr. Charter noted the town approached CPC for funding for a sign on the property.

Terra, West Acton – supports a public survey, not naming the park after anyone that is alive or has family still alive.

Anne Forbes, Martin Street – wrote the property information form, supports having public input in naming, the Historical Commission should have weight on naming the park. Noted that naming the park Shoddy Mill Park leads to a teachable moment and the uses of the mill along with the history of South Acton. Mr. Martin will look into setting up a survey. Ms. Nicol suggests reaching out to the Historical Commission and Historical Society for naming recommendations.

6. Approve Request for Proposals for the Disposition of Real Property at 3 and 13 School Street

Mr. Mangiaratti noted the Board approved proceeding with an RFP, and this is similar to what went out a few years ago; looking for approval from the Board for the updated version. Ms. Nicol noted it will be important to have information on proposals going into Town Meeting, and appreciates the inclusion of community parking and a commercial component as favorable aspects.

Terra – in favor of RFP, however sustainability and right of first refusal is missing

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Mr. Charter, to approve the Request for Proposals for the Disposition of Real Property at 3 and 13 School Street and approved unanimously 5-0-0.

7. Review Assignments for Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Ms. Arsenault assigned articles to Board members. Ms. Nicol noted there will be a home-rule petition submitted and will take that as an article assignment. Mr. Mangiaratti reviewed the draft town meeting warrant with Board members. Ms. Nicol recommended having a home rule petition on changing the number of library trustees on consent.

Mr. Snyder-Grant suggests moving the leaf blower bylaw article earlier on the second night. Mr. Martin suggests getting the articles numbered and to the Finance Committee earlier to allow more time for determining their recommendations.

8. Discuss Recommendations for Acton Leadership Group Consensus

Mr. Mangiaratti noted discussion for the direction of municipal spending and budget recommendations from the Board has been updated with the ALG plan. Ms. Nicol suggested a strategy might be to note that the Finance Committee had not requested a 3% limit to the spending increase, but in reviewing the FinCom Point of View presented in November, noted bringing the tax increase below inflation had been the directive. Ms. Nicol recalled the concern with the addition of FTEs in the year following a narrow override vote, specifically in public safety and several years of reorganizations improving efficiencies within departments, maybe the town is at a point now that it is no longer possible to defer additional FTEs to address needs. Mr. Martin commented that it will be difficult to come to a consensus with ALG members and that the Board approved the Town Manager's recommendation for the FY26 budget. Mr. Charter noted the conservative history of the town on filling employee positions.

9. Discuss Results from Joint Meeting with Finance Committee Regarding DPW Building Project

Mr. Charter commented that the committee has put the best presentation together and has done everything necessary to convince this is a needed project. He also noted the Finance Committee is not supportive of the project, and citing issues such as administration turmoil in Washington and recent tariffs imposed as additional reasons why it is not an appropriate time for the project points to a likelihood that there will never be a consensus regarding the project. There cannot be any more cuts for the project to continue to be viable. Mr. Snyder-Grant noted that sharing the results of the feasibility study was important to clarify that a single building was the preferred and fiscally responsible option. Ms. Nicol didn't feel we got results that serve either Board, concerned about what was expressed at the end of the meeting from FinCom members asking for a plan to provide an appropriate work environment for DPW employees if the warrant article fails. The building designed is the right one for Acton's DPW operation, and borrowing/building now is good for long-term financial planning and minimizing the impact to taxpayers as debt has rolled off and the project cost will increase each year we delay. Mr. Charter mentioned a suggestion of constructing 2

buildings, one for staff and one for vehicles, and moving current departments out of the DPW, would prove to be a breakdown on communications and efficiencies. Mr. Martin noted that Town Meeting is authorizing the Select Board to borrow, and wants to hear from town meeting members if they don't support the direction to understand why so that it can be brought back with changes at a future Town Meeting.

IV. Consent Items

Mr. Charter held item 10. Mr. Martin held consent items 11-12. Ms. Nicol held consent item 14. **Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol, to approve consent items 13, and 15-21, and approved unanimously 5-0-0.** Mr. Charter voiced concern on item 10 that it may be a controversial item and that it should be posted as an agenda item for discussion and to allow public comment. **Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol, to take no action on item 10 and approved unanimously 5-0-0.** Mr. Martin suggested placing a shared bike rack at another location like Acton Center or West Acton Village. Mr. Mangiaratti noted the locations listed are adjacent to rail trails per the requirement of the grant. **Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Mr. Snyder-Grant to approve consent item 11 and approved unanimously 5-0-0.** Mr. Martin suggested further discussions if the board wanted to implement a policy to consider 501(c)(3) requests for waivers of rental fees. **Ms. Nicol moved, seconded by Mr. Martin to take no action on item 12 and approved unanimously 5-0-0.** Ms. Nicol suggested approving the one day malt and wine license with a condition to hire a police detail as recommended in the Police Chief's email. **Ms. Nicol moved, seconded by Mr. Martin to approve consent item 14 and approved unanimously 5-0-0.**

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to adjourn, and approved unanimously 5-0-0.
Meeting adjourned at 9:42 PM

Documents Used

- March 3, 2025 Agenda
- Colonel Frances Faulkner Sr. Volunteer of the Year Memo
- 53 River Street Park Name Memo
- Draft RFP 3-13 School Street
- Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Minuteman Regional Bike Share IMA
- Email from Amy Caggiano Regarding Request for Waiver of Fees of NARA Park Dated February 26, 2025
- Letter from Annie Zampitella Dated February 13, 2025 for Request to Use Town Roads
- One Day Wine and Malt License Application, Nexstar Entertainment
- One Day Wine and Malt License Application, Acton 250 Committee
- Memo from Recreation Department to Accept Gift from Middlesex Savings Bank Dated February 24, 2025

- Memo from Recreation Department to Accept Gift from Acton Ford Dated February 24, 2025
- Memo from Veterans' Services to Accept Gifts Dated February 13, 2025
- Email from David Martin Requesting Appointment of Jack Dirstine Dated February 24, 2025
- Email from David Martin Requesting the Appointment of Amy Green Dated February 24, 2025