



## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

**Present:** Joan Gardner, Jon Benson, Dean Charter, Peter J. Berry, David Martin, Town Manager  
John S. Mangiaratti

**Absent:** None

Ms. Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM via a virtual meeting with no Board members in physical attendance and broadcasted via Zoom.us virtual meeting platform.

### I. **Regular Business**

#### Citizen Concerns

Terra Friedrichs, West Acton – requested the HPP presentation to be placed on the BOS DocuShare folder for viewing

#### Chair Update/Town Manager Update

Mr. Mangiaratti provided an update on operations and shared some of the communication programs in place to keep departments, employees, and the community informed. The Governor announced today schools in the Commonwealth are closed for the rest of the school year. Staff is working on a special COVID-19 edition of the Municipal Monthly which will go out to all households. The COVID hotline has been launched and is staffed by live operators during business hours. The FFC expanded the licensed range for Acton's WAEM radio station into Boxborough. The town launched a social media campaign to highlight local restaurants by taking a "selfie" at the restaurant when you get takeout. There will be another live Java with John this Friday at 10:00 AM.

### II. **New/Special Business**

#### 1. Presentation of the Housing Production Plan (HPP)

Liz Rust from the Regional Housing Service Office and Jennifer Goldson from JM Goldson, LLC presented the proposed five year HPP. The draft HPP represents proposed housing needs for the next 5 years with 19 different strategies that are subject to change over the next level of review. The current plan expires in August 2020. Mr. Benson commented the importance to get to the 10% 40B threshold with the 230 rental units on Powder Mill Road will help to get to that level and with the 2020 census information including the 446 Mass Ave planned development. He also suggested that housing needs in the next ten years should focus on senior, affordable or downsizing housing, factoring in the need for multi-family housing as well. Mr. Charter supported the recommendation to encourage mixed use development at Kelley's Corner and along 2A, and also to utilize unused office space and industrial space for re-development. He expressed concerns about the concept of utilizing CPA funds for a rental subsidy program, and suggests



removing it from the draft plan. Mr. Martin commented the most important factor in housing to keep seniors in town and to sustain our safe harbor status and progress towards the 10% threshold. Mr. Berry is supportive of using on CPA funds for rehabbing current housing units for accessibility which would count towards subsidized housing inventory. Public comments included questions on land availability in South Acton, sustainability efforts, conservation clustering to preserve open space, coordinating with Acton Water District to ensure enough water supply with expected population increase from building new housing, requesting to extend the comment period, adjustment on language referring to “extremely low income” vs. “low income”, more outreach for comment period on the draft via social media and town website, rehabbing existing units to preserve open space, , encouraging CPA funds to support low-income residents, environmentally sustained construction, Kelley’s Corner housing, and encourage housing for the elderly and disabled community.

2. Review Draft Warrant for Annual Town Meeting

Mr. Mangiaratti updated the Board regarding the Town Meeting article related to 127 Strawberry Hill Road (releasing the restriction placed in 1986). The article has been revised. Selectmen will already have authorization to acquire the easement but do not have the authority to release the restriction. Once Town Meeting approves the release, then the Selectmen can increase the site distance. **Mr. Benson moved to recommend article 31 related to Strawberry Hill Road as amended, Mr. Martin seconded. Mr. Charter called roll:**

**Mr. Berry – aye**

**Mr. Benson – aye**

**Mr. Martin – aye**

**Ms. Gardner – aye**

**Mr. Charter – aye**

**The motion carried.**

3. Review Concepts for Small Business Relief Measures

The Board reviewed a list of potential programs and proposals developed to assist local businesses. The proposal included liquor license fees adjustments, Common Victualler license fee adjustment (waiving fees), reallocation of meals tax revenue for targeted economic development programs, local grants to assist rental fees for vacant storefronts, easing of signage rules for businesses and possibly waive sign fees, returning donations for Fourth of July celebration, property tax abatements, zoning changes regarding drive-thru windows. The Board discussed the proposal to allow direct sale of stock from restaurants similar to grocery stores to assists restaurants during the pandemic.

**Mr. Charter moved that the Board of Selectmen authorize the Town Manager to work with Town Counsel to investigate suspending enforcement of the town sign bylaw until the end of the COVID emergency, Mr. Berry seconded. Mr. Charter called roll:**

**Mr. Benson - aye**

**Mr. Berry - aye**



**Mr. Martin - aye**

**Ms. Gardner - aye**

**Mr. Charter – aye**

**The motion carries.**

Mr. Mangiaratti will work with the EDC regarding the signs, and will work with the Board of Health for input on restaurants selling groceries. The Board will reach out to the EDC and the Finance Committee on their input on refunding liquor license fees. Mr. Mangiaratti will look into the use of the revenue from the meal tax.

4. Discuss Town Events and 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration

Mr. Mangiaratti discussed the reduction in the Recreation Revolving fund, and also the concern of the public health risk with large gatherings, the recommendation from the Recreation Department and Land Use to not recommend holding events at NARA until July 15th. Board members agreed that the events should be cancelled. Mr. Mangiaratti will work with ActonTV to run previous Fourth of July events on both channels in its place.

5. Discuss Acton Boxborough Farmers Market (ABFM)

ABFM requested to use the Pearl Street location from the previous location at Windsor and Pearl. Mr. Martin was concerned about the location due the number of people and vendors, and requests to see how they would set up with social distancing in place. Mr. Mangiaratti mentioned that the ABFM is working with the Board of Health to address public health concerns. Mr. Mangiaratti will work with the BOH and revisit topic at next meeting. Mr. Martin suggests relocating to another location that has more space, such as the train station parking lot as an option.

**III. Consent Items**

**Mr. Benson moved to approve consent items 8 and 9, Mr. Martin seconds. Mr.**

**Charter called roll:**

**Mr. Benson – aye**

**Mr. Berry – aye**

**Mr. Martin – aye**

**Ms. Gardner – aye**

**Mr. Charter – aye**

**The motion carried.**

**Mr. Benson moved to adjourn, Mr. Martin seconded. Mr. Charter called roll:**

**Mr. Benson – aye**

**Mr. Berry – aye**

**Mr. Martin – aye**

**Ms. Gardner– aye**

**Mr. charter - aye – aye**

**The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:48 PM.**

**Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**



- Agenda, April 21, 2020
- Draft Housing Production Plan Document April 16, 2020
- Draft Housing Production Plan Presentation, April 21, 2020
- Draft Town Meeting Articles 11 and 31 as of April 21, 2020
- Small Business Relief Memo April 17, 2020
- April 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes for Approval