



## SELECT BOARD AND SEWER COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 24, 2022

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting Only

**Present:** David Martin, Dean Charter, Jim Snyder-Grant, Fran Arsenault, Himaja Nagireddy, Town Manager John S. Mangiaratti, and Assistant Town Manager Mark Hald

**Absent:** None

Mr. Martin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### I. Regular Business

#### 1. Resident Concerns

Franny Osman, Half Moon Hill – concerned that meetings are being held in a way that does not empower the public and prevents them from seeing who is in attendance. Encouraged finding alternative technology improvements.

Amy Krishnamurthy – reading from a prepared statement that is included in the Select Board meeting packet, commented on the approved ARPA spending approved by the Select Board, and requests the Select Board revisit the ARPA allocations in light of new federal guidelines that expanded the use of ARPA funds.

#### 2. Chair Update/Town Manager Update/Members Minutes

Mr. Martin had no comments to the Board. Mr. Mangiaratti provided update on the status of operations in Town Hall. The past few weeks have experienced staffing issues due to the COVID Omicron strain, but have since resolved, and encourages all to sign up for the free test kits. Mr. Snyder-Grant commented that the fixed route bus is returning to operation with new stops added. Ms. Nagireddy encourages all to be safe and embrace all and support everyone and the diverse community in Acton.

### II. New/Special Business

#### 3. Discuss Request for Tenant Advocate Position

Mr. Martin opened the discussion to Board members, asking whether this was a subject the Board was interested in pursuing. He further indicated that no formal vote would be taken. Mr. Charter was hesitant to support such a proposal, and mentioned the support services currently available to residents in town, and that the town should not be providing legal assistance to only one segment of the community and not all. Mr. Snyder-Grant acknowledged that renters face some disadvantages regarding relations with landlords, and that there are services available. He suggested that the Town Manager research how renters can have more access to Town services. Ms. Nagireddy looked forward to hearing from renters, and explained that the position was more of a mediation measure, and feels this position is needed. Ms. Arsenault



supports the position; there are residents in town that do need that assistance. Mr. Martin commented that there needs to be more information justifying the need for such a position and what type of resources would be required, such as the need for legal resources, and would support a town meeting article to support a study. Mr. Snyder-Grant's comments echoed both comments from other Board members, and suggests advertising on the town website and using a central phone number and email address to start tracking inquiries for assistance. Mr. Martin suggested drafting a charge for a Social Services Study committee.

Melissa Winfield – supports the position and suggests that tenants meet with their landlord first, and if no progress is made then meet with tenant advocate and landlord.

Ruth Thatcher – supports a tenant advocate and to include in a future budget.

Jennifer Morazes – emphasizes an advocate position that is not a lawyer, and prepared a possible job description that would work with the Community Services Coordinator.

Matthew Ranney, Great Road Condominium – lived in apartments that were in abysmal conditions, and not centrally managed.

Danny Factor, 11 Davis Road – feels it is reasonable to fund this position in the budget and that it would benefit thousands of residents, and requests that Town Meeting voters have the chance to approve the funding.

Terra, West Acton – supports tenant advocate position, would entertain a citizen petition for Town Meeting if the Board doesn't vote on this during the meeting.

Dana Snyder-Grant – supports a tenant advocate position, and concerned that renters don't have a voice and they need someone to turn to for representation, and that using ARPA money to fund the position would be appropriate.

Rudy Jartu, 8 Parker Street – supports creating a tenant advocate position in the current budget, and feels that renters have no say or voice.

Kirsten Spargo, Yankee Village – concerned about renters who face adversity with financial and health issues and feels that renters should not have to deal with managers that live out of state and lack of action.

Stella Ko, 11 Guswood Road – supports the renter community and a tenant advocate position.

Virginia Loftus – senior and disabled renter at Windsor Green, the advocate would serve as an ambassador/liaison to the community and feels it is a federally subsidized program, feels that Acton has been stretched too thin and Acton is the largest rental community in the western suburbs.

Franny Osman – commented on the improvement of the involvement of the Acton Committee on Climate and Housing with more renters being more involved.

Mary Chella – experienced bad landlords, and is looking for a position to represent the renters.

Madeline Cruz, Yankee Village – commented on a statement made by a Board member and felt it was disrespectful and feels that renters like herself deserve to have their voices heard.

Nancy Corcoran – does not feel that the position is needed immediately and that there should be a study conducted to see if there was a need, and found that 18 surrounding



communities do not have a tenant advocate position, and feels that the town currently has the resources in place to provide support, and feels that what is needed is publicity to let renters know what resources are available, and fears that town is spread thin financially.

Michael Biales, 80 Willow Street – feels the position needs to be well publicized so that renters know there is assistance available.

Ms. Nagireddy thanked the public for their comments and noted the renter population are integral members of the community; agreed with setting up an email or hotline number to take renters' questions and/or concerns and supported setting up a study and a study committee.

Ms. Arsenault thanked the public for submitting their comments.

Mr. Martin appreciated the comments and clarified that if someone was hired, they would not be able to perform the legal tasks that many renters are requesting, which is why the study is needed.

Mr. Mangiaratti went over the email to the Board that was included in the public packet regarding ideas about this position. There are several resources in Town to assist renters such as the Board of Health, Community Services Coordinator, Council on Aging, Family Services Resource Officer, Veterans Services, Town Manager Staff and Transportation Coordinator, and Planning Office Staff, as well as the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC), Acton Housing Authority (internal tenant advocate on staff), interdepartmental working groups, Hoarding Task Force, and the Town Services Hotline 978-929-6600 to help people get in touch with specific services. Mr. Mangiaratti noted that creating a tracking system and studying the need for additional renter resources are staff-intensive activities, and asked for assistance from the Board in identifying what other priorities could be lowered or dropped to make room for this new work.

Mr. Snyder-Grant suggested tracking calls that are requesting assistance, mailing information to renters, and having the Manager and the Chair have a preliminary discussion before the next meeting to discuss how requests for staff time to work on short-term and medium-term improvements to addressing renter's needs could be prioritised.

Ms. Nagireddy questioned if the position would be funded through ARPA funds or added into the town budget and extending renters assistance, and if part of the study would be charting what resources renters have not been able to receive. Mr. Martin noted that that should be part of the Social Services Study Committee charge.

#### 4. Sewer Commissioner Business

##### a. Sewer District Plus Privilege Fee Request, Hawk's Crest Reserve Subdivision, 74 Main Street and 5 Fletcher Court

Attorney Mark Bobrowski represented the applicant Mark Gallagher, Seal Harbor, LLC. The request is to connect 8 housing units to the Sewer District. Atty. Bobrowski listed several locations that recently were added to the sewer district within the past 7 years, and noted that the development will only add less than 4000 gallons title 5 flow and would offer the Commission \$25,000 towards



INI reduction or any other reasonable purpose. Town Counsel Nina Pickering-Cook described to the Board if a development that is in or outside of the sewer district can connect depends on two criteria – the capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and location of the property. If there is sufficient capacity, the Commissioners cannot reject a request to connect on basis anticipated future development or connections. Mr. Snyder-Grant expressed concern regarding households that are currently within the sewer district that have paid their betterment fee and want to connect, but are told they can't because the WTP has reached capacity by allowing developers to connect outside the district and questioned if they would have to be refunded or future legal actions. Mr. Snyder-Grant questioned to the Town Manager if the \$25,000 would assist in maintenance costs, the Town Manager affirmed that it would assist. The total amount in privilege fee would be \$210,000.

Terra, West Acton – questioned if people are within the sewer district and want to connect the town would have to reserve capacity for them, Mr. Martin noted that under our current regulations that the town does not have to reserve capacity.

**Ms. Nagireddy moved, seconded by Mr. Snyder-Grant to admit Fletcher Court into the sewer district and allow 7 new connections for consideration of their privilege fee plus \$25,000 for INI work or other sewer needs and voted unanimously by roll call (5-0).**

- b. Sewer Privilege Fee Request, Diplatzi Place Subdivision, 64,66, 68 Maple Street  
Attorney Stuart Singer represented the developer's request for sewer connection. When the project was approved by the Planning Board in early 2020, in-between public hearings with the Planning Board, the Sewer Commissioners increased the sewer privilege fee from \$12,300 to \$30,000, and his client was under the impression that the privilege fee would be \$12,300. The current purchaser of the property was requesting consideration of a reduction of the privilege fee.  
**Ms. Arsenault moved, seconded by Ms. Nagireddy to allow the single-family home at 64-68 Maple Street to connect to the sewer district for the normal privilege fee and voted unanimously by roll call (5-0)**
5. Update on Economic Development Initiatives from Director Julie Pierce Onos  
Economic Development Director Julie Pierce Onos presented several economic development initiatives using PowerPoint (a copy is included in the public meeting folder): (1) foundational economic development, (2) strategic communication, and (3) goals. Ms. Onos briefly explained why economic development is important to communities. The influx of new businesses affects the community in many positive ways, such as creating and maintaining employment, increasing tax revenue which, in turn, improves infrastructure and overall quality of life for community members. Ms. Onos described the grant applications she is working on with other town staff such as wayfinding, public art initiatives, and self-educating on various tax incentive programs to assist businesses apply for help to entice new business to town, and support for current businesses. Several Members suggested considering agricultural



and tradesmen such as plumbers, electricians and landscaping companies to set up business in town. Ms. Onos can be reached at [jpierceonos@actonma.gov](mailto:jpierceonos@actonma.gov)

6. Acton Town Center Redesign Presentation

Acton Town Meeting approved the project in the town center in 2021. DPW Director Corey York presented updates on the project plans. The decision to realign Concord Road to be one way heading onto Concord Road and a right turn only onto Main Street, adding bike lanes, relocating the horse trough to extend the one-way entrance onto Main Street, and adding texturized crosswalks. There were no comments from Board members.

Christi Andersen, Main Street – concerned about road noise generated with trucks and suggests to not add additional materials to the crosswalks.

David Honn, School Street – questioned if Mr. York will meet with the Historic District Commission and discuss applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness if the horse trough needs to be relocated.

Terra, West Acton – suggests laying a raised sidewalk on side streets and leave Main Street flat.

Mr. Martin is in favor of painted crosswalks over texturized crosswalks. **Mr. Charter moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to install painted crosswalks and voted unanimously by roll call (5-0).**

7. Discuss Proposed Community Preservation Act Projects from Town Departments, Boards and Committees and Identify a Prioritized List to Share with the Community Preservation Committee

Mr. Martin presented the list of Town-related CPA applications and requested that the Board categorize the applications as low, medium, or high. Mr. Mangiaratti explained each of the application requests. Members made suggestions on each application request for consideration by the CPC. No formal votes were taken. The Board finalized its recommendation as high priority or medium priority, with the projects listed in no subsequent order (numeric prefixes refer to the Project Application List contained in the public folder).

HIGH

- 4 Revolutionary War Gravestone Restoration (historic) \$50,000
- 7 Gardner Phase 3 Landscaping (recreation) \$100,000
- 11 RHSO Services - 2 years (housing) \$70,000
- 13 ACHC Community Housing Program Fund (housing)
- 14 Open Space Acquisition and Set Aside (open space) \$500,000
- 15 CPA Admin Support 5% \$81,000

MEDIUM

- 1 Asa Parlin House Restoration (historic) \$1,064,000
- 2 Woodlawn Cemetery Chapel Restoration (historic) \$200,000



- 3 Shoddy Mill Park - 53 River Street (historic) \$182,000
- 6 50 Audubon Drive Playground (recreation) \$75,000
- 8 Elm Court Tennis Courts (recreation) \$165,000
- 9 Boardwalk at Heath Hen Meadow (recreation) \$38,000

8. Discuss the Process for Changing the Community Preservation Act Funding Percentage

Mr. Martin noted that if the CPA surcharge percentage is increased from the current 1.5% to the maximum allowable 3%, the amount collected locally would double and there would be increased state reimbursement. Mr. Charter was concerned about the impact of increasing the CPA surcharge on the average taxpayer and we should publicize that effect prior to Town Meeting. Mr. Martin encouraged the public to submit comments regarding the CPA surcharge and what applications they support. Mr. Snyder-Grant supports increasing to 3% and feels it supports the large open space projects. Ms. Nagireddy is concerned about raising the surcharge and the impact upon families struggling financially. Mr. Martin would like Town boards and committees to discuss the topic and bring it back to the Board in two meetings (March) to decide if the Select Board wishes to place this in a warrant article.

9. Discuss Acton Boxborough Farmers Market Elm Street Location

Mr. Mangiaratti informed the Board the group that runs the Farmers Market is requesting to utilize the space for their 2022 season. Town staff has no issues, and looking for the Board to designate him to sign the agreement. **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Mr. Charter to approve the Farmers Market Elm Street location and to authorize the Town Manger to sign the 2022 Farmers Market agreement and voted unanimously by roll call (5-0)**

10. Designate Liaison for Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Mr. Mangiaratti updated the Board that the original plan expired in October but were reassured that if the process to update was in progress it was not an issue and reached out to Boards and Committees who would be interested in who would be interested in being involved as a liaison from the Board for about 3-4 months. The consensus of the Board was for Mr. Snyder-Grant to be the Select Board liaison to the Open Space and Recreation Plan “working group”.

11. Update on Home Rule Petition S.2515 An Act Authorizing the Town of Acton to Adopt and Enforce Local Regulations Restricting New Fossil Fuel Infrastructure and Certain Construction

Mr. Snyder-Grant updated the Board that the Town presented testimony to the TUE Committee about our Home Rule Petition. The Chair of the Telecommunications Utility Energy Committee is pursuing state legislation on restricting fossil fuel infrastructure, and there is the potential to have the home rule petition approved or possibly a state-wide ban.



12. Update on Draft MBTA Community Compliance Guidelines for Multi-Family Districts under Section 3A of the Zoning Act

Mr. Mangiaratti updated the Board that the legislation advanced to the Governor's office was approved, and the state promulgated regulations on how to interpret that legislation. The Planning Director and Town Counsel reviewed the current zoning bylaws. Key points include a comment period through March 31<sup>st</sup> for the Board and residents, submitting comments to DHCD and recommending the Board hold a public meeting in March to take comments from the public to send feedback to DHCD. There are certain housing and density regulations the town must comply with. The town is not currently in compliance. There is a form that could be submitted to Department of Housing and Community Development to make any changes to local zoning bylaws within the next two years (2024). Mr. Mangiaratti recommends that the Board agree to hold a public meeting in March and submit feedback, and file the form.

13. Discuss Current Plans for Fourth of July Celebration

Mr. Mangiaratti updated the Board and announced that there is no plan to hold a fireworks celebration in 2022 due to financial reasons and logistical challenges. Mr. Mangiaratti inquired what the town may want to do to celebrate the country's 250 anniversary in its place in 2025. Mr. Martin would like to continue to see the fireworks celebration in 2023 or 2024. The Board was in general agreement to not hold the fireworks celebration this year.

III. Consent Items

Mr. Snyder-Grant held consent item 19. **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to approve consent items 14-18 inclusive and voted unanimously by roll call vote (5-0).** Mr. Snyder-Grant was concerned that he has not seen the phase 1 report related to consent item 19 requesting a letter of support. Mr. Mangiaratti clarified that the application is for a grant, and that the application is due very soon and wanted to have this item on consent for consideration. **Mr. Charter moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to approve consent item 19 and voted by roll call vote 4-0-1 (Mr. Snyder-Grant abstained).**

**Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to adjourn and voted unanimously by roll call (5-0). Meeting adjourned at 11:10 PM.**

**Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Agenda, January 24, 2022
- Email from Town Manager Regarding Tenant Advocate Position Dated January 18, 2022
- Memo from Town Engineer Regarding Request for Sewer District and Privilege Fee for 74 Main Street and 5 Fletcher Court Dated December 15, 2021
- Memo from Town Engineer Regarding Sewer Privilege Fee Request, 64 and 66 Maple Street Dated December 23, 2021
- Community Preservation Act Project Funding Request List



- Community Preservation Act Study Committee Report Dated February 17, 2016
- Letter from Town Manager to Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utility and Energy Dated January 19, 2022
- Planning Division Memo of Review of Draft Guidelines for Multi-Family Districts Dated January 20, 2022
- Meeting Minutes, December 10, 2021
- Letter of Support to Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Regarding the 53 River Street Dam Removal Dated January 14, 2022
- Making the Connections Intermunicipal Agreement Extension
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council Powder Mill Corridor Letter of Support Dated January 24, 2022