



Board of Selectmen

Date of Meeting: Monday, September 25th, 2023
Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Members Present: Chair Jamie Underwood, Selectmen Matt Mecum, and Seth Ridinger;
April Steward, Town Administrator; and Town Counsel Stephen Madaus
Not Present: Alison Mack, Administrative Assistant to the Board

The meeting commenced at 6:30 PM.

Financial Warrants were signed in agreement.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of meeting minutes: 09/11/2023

Sewall Street Discussion: Seth mentioned that during April's report last week a resident came in and we began talking about Sewall Street. Ali referenced the gentlemen's name as John, but there was a resident named Philip Johnson that was there, not sure about John. Should it just be changed to town resident.

Mile Hill Road and Linden Street stop signs: Line of sight on Linden Street from Central Street is too great of a distance but it should be Linden Street to Mile Hill. It was referenced from the vantage point of coming down Linden to Mile Hill.

Seth Ridinger made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 09/11/2023 with the aforementioned corrections, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Vote to appoint Donna LoConte: Council on Aging Assistant position:

Seth Ridinger made a motion to appoint Donna LaConte as the Assistant to the Council on aging, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Feasibility Committee to present updated RFS. Seeks approval for authorization to post for bid: Matt Mecum, Joan Deal and Dennis Goguen were in attendance from the Feasibility Study Committee. April Steward was also part of conversations regarding the Feasibility Study Committee.

Speaking to Hillside Restoration Group on potentially using the Gough House as a senior center. We put together an RFP to send out to get experts to come in and tell us what we can and can't do. It's a little more challenging because it's a historical building. Joan questioned the language on the RFP regarding the historical aspect and getting an architect who has experience in that. The Feasibility Committee was hoping to get it approved tonight and get it posted to meet timelines, which is tight.

Meeting Minutes Approved: BoS Meeting 10/23/23.

Matt Mecum made a motion to approve the Feasibility Study RFS for the use of the Gough House as a senior center. Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Master Plan Discussion:

Claudine Underwood, Van Baker, Dennis Goguen, Jeff Walsh and Paul Dell'Aquila attended the meeting as representatives of the Master Plan Committee.

Matt addressed that this was pushed off a bit until our Town Planner Paul Dell'Aquila was back and now we need to get that committee going to implement the Master Plan.

The idea would be to have a member from each of the board/committee who would be responsible for the action items listed in the Master Plan and a resident or two. Getting the committee structured is the easy part, how it's structured and how you want to take action is a bigger question. Town Planner, Paul Dell'Aquila was around for most of the planning process, adopted the Master Plan during his sabbatical and now we are back; pointing out there are 332 action items to the plan and some he can move on tomorrow. The Master Plan was constructed by this committee along with CMRPC; it reflects the input of the community and makes sense to have a committee to help with the implementation. He envisions this as a 10–15-year plan. Paul suggested a few different ways the plan can be organized and suggested the committee meeting quarterly and jive up with their own calendar meetings; this will give time to produce information before the end of the year leading into a budget, and budget process leading up to town meeting. Also giving enough time for the appropriate department to request what is needed. He will be working very closely with the committee and helping to do whatever research is needed. In his own duties, he would move forward with the other regulatory things that have been recommended.

Conservation Commission Representative Jeffrey Walsh commented that he has a lot of experience with planning boards, conservation commission, zoning boards and land development, but not master plans. He believes this plan will evolve, a guide. The priorities within will change with time, maybe a historical thing one year and then all of a sudden funds become available for something completely different, and we switch gears; very fluid. He stated we have a good cross section and suggests starting with 1-6 things to attack that are within a budget or can be budgeted fairly easily. With time we may be able to bring in personnel resources or volunteer resources; go after other monies to pay for the bigger, hot implement. Looking at the matrix will help prioritize the action items; one might be dependent on another. The committee will be evolving as well as new people will come in or others will get burnt out and leave. Make it more consumable and get immediate disposition on the 332 items: short term, medium term, and long term.

Paul Dell'Aquila will be updating some regulatory items, zoning and subdivision regulations. We plan to discuss different grant opportunities later tonight, but we identified a number of different initiatives through the master plan so the implementation committee will help decide which ones go first. Matt asked if a seven-person group would work, and Paul responded that's manageable; modest threshold to have a legitimate meeting. The committee would consist of board representatives from: Planning Board, Parks and Recreation, Conservation Commission, Council on Aging, Historical Commission, Finance Committee, School Committee, and Affordable Housing. Paul reminded the group of what the chapters are and how loosely these goals and objectives are organized: Housing, Open Space and Recreation, Historic and Cultural, Economic development, public facilities, Transportation and Land use.

The Planning Board is normally the keeper of the master plan. Also, although its not listed, but budget and financial issues are also an important component so having someone well versed in that process would be important. The Board determined it should be a seven-committee board that is made up of the following: Planning Board, Parks and Recreation, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Council on Aging, School Committee and Finance Committee.

Matt Mecum made a motion to implement a Master Plan Implementation Committee, consisting of a representative from the School Committee, Planning Board, Parks and Recreation, Historical Commission, Council on Aging, Conservation Commission and Finance Committee. They will serve two-year terms, with the initial appointment being four two-year terms and three, one-year terms. Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Town Planner Report to the BoS:

Planning Board:

Last meeting the planning board approved a special permit for a sign at route 70/Shrewsbury Street.

Public hearing for 8 Gulf Street was opened but continued until the next meeting on October 3rd. Still waiting for a peer review report from Graves Engineering.

Grants:

Improvements on Route 140/South Sewell Street: Met with April and Steve Mero. Looking at fees that have accumulated from other projects as well as previous funds that were dedicated to that intersection to see if its possible to do something with the shared spaces grant for some pedestrian oriented improvements. Looking to see if we can package that with a real traffic signal at that location.

Seth asked if there were supposed to be sidewalks on both sides of Route 140. Paul recollected that there was a proposal to have a sidewalk from roughly Brookside leading to the plaza that would include that cluster, Other Place Pub and post office. Also, sidewalks delineated at the southern side, more of the corner of Sewall on either side of the road because that is where the people would be crossing. Seth stated that he would love to see a way to continue that sidewalk all the way up to either the elementary school or even up to Compass Pointe; children could walk from Compass Pointe to school. Paul will look into options.

- Complete Streets Funding Program – Due Oct 2nd
- Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Project Funding Program – Due Oct 6th

Hazard Mitigation Plan:

Will be moving forward on this shortly. We received bids from various consultants who received one bid. That was from CMRPC so he believes we will be proceeding with that.

Parks and Recreation Commission: Held a meeting recently to discuss what opportunities might be available in the Master Plan for them; Morningdale, Manor and Harrington Park were identified as potential facilities we want to improve. State and Federal grants that can be looked into.

Redefining Administrative Staff: Will be added to the next agenda. Ali had this on the draft and is unsure how it was removed for final version. Staff will report to Paul moving forward instead of April.

Earth Removal Board: Attended an Earth removal Board last week; alluded to in previous meeting that there was some unpermitted work going on at 313 Main Street. The work stopped and Mr. May applied for a permit through the Earth Removal Board and received a permit at that meeting.

Housing: Route 140 and Route 70 would be the two corridors adjacent to commercial activities that they would look at. There are a few different parcels within that area; Hillside, Route 140 and School Street and A Hobson Ave Address. The Mass Housing is aware of our Master Plan application so we may not want to step in front of that process. The Flagg Estate was discussed with having the criteria the grant program would be looking for. This grant program would allow us to analyze a given property to position it for development. We would be able to do an RFP to get us to a position where we could do an actual development. The grant promises to match up worthy developments with private developers who do that kind of work. For senior housing and affordable housing, we need a modest chunk of land, more than a few acres.

A resident asked Seth, if Boylston builds truly affordable housing and mass housing needs to be involved, what percentage of units will be awarded to qualified Boylston residents? It would be a lottery system. Town Counsel responded that the regulations of the DHCD, these projects are subject to, within those ranks you can apply for permission to have a resident only lottery, up to 70%. If that 70% doesn't get filled, its open. Seth stated that his objective would be to build it for residents of Boylston, but the law restricts us to some degree. Matt added that he would like to keep an eye on the MA transit piece or whatever's going to force us to change our zoning to allow denser developments. Seth stated that in speaking to Monica from CMRPC, even with the restrictions, the affordable housing discussion is something they can continue to explore. He made it clear to her that, if it is a general 40B or it doesn't accommodate Boylston seniors, nobody is going to be interested. Discussion on which parcels would be of interest occurred. Matt asked if we have the ability at this time to identify the Flagg Estate. Stephen expressed that the order of the taking for Hillside has a laundry list of purposes and it includes, open space and recreation land, and it does not designate portions of what was taken for particular purposes. If we have to issue an opinion that its available, that would be a problem because in Massachusetts, if you acquire land for open space, you can't use it for any other purpose without the two third of the legislature. If we are going to choose a piece of Hillside, does it make more sense to choose all of Hillside and say we only want to choose 20 units. Paul reminded the board that we still don't know if we got the grant to do the Hillside Master plan yet, but that would very much outline the issues. Paul Dell'Aquila suggested reviewing some language tomorrow and see what the deed says for Hillside. Paul added there is another piece of land that Worcester County Corrections owns on our side of the street, maybe that's an option. Paul stated he will look at language with Town Counsel and can circle in MA Housing.

Vote to award Boylston Hazard Mitigation Plan Update project:

Seth Ridinger made a motion to award the Hazard Mitigation Plan contract to Central Mass Regional Planning Commission and authorize our Town Administrator to sign the contract, Matt Mecum seconded. Voted all in favor.

Discussion on proposed waiver changes: Parks and Recreation:

Currently two waivers outside of the Town Hall gym which is causing confusion. Looking to combine them into one waiver. Pam suggested some changes and told her board about it and they did not have any objections.

Matt Mecum made a motion to authorize Parks and Recreation to combine the waivers for Town facilities, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Vote to approve donation of an umbrella and stand for Center Park from the Leblanc/Frechette families:

Matt Mecum made a motion to approve donation of an umbrella and stand for Center Park from the Leblanc/Frechette families, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Human Resources position discussion:

Matt stated the only change he wondered about was if the board would like to change the HR position to report directly to the Selectmen. Jamie believed it previously stated it falls under the direction of the Board of Selectmen, but Matt stated it was changed; discussed having it report to the TA. Seth stated the way it's worded is as if the person doesn't report to anybody. Seth didn't believe they should necessarily report to the Board of Selectmen and does see the advantage of not reporting to the Town Administrator as it would keep things autonomous, and asked Stephen if he had any thoughts on that; they should report to someone. Matt stated reporting to the Board makes sense because if there's any significant issues are going to end up on their plate anyway. Jamie stated its under the general direction of the board of selectmen. Jamie suggested it state The purpose of this position is to provide human resource services to the town and to provide employment related support and guidance to the board of selectmen. Matt suggested it state employment related support and guidance. Jamie stated he is fine with that and they will just strike the Town Administrator from the wording and have it say human resources services to the town and to provide employment related support and guidance. Seth stated he does not believe it is addressing the question of who they necessarily report to. Jamie stated it says this position is under the general direction of the board of selectmen. Seth stated he is fine with that and asked Stephen for his thoughts. Stephen stated employment related support and guidance to town offices and departments to town offices, meaning any employee can come in. The position is under the direction and shall report to the board of selectmen. Attorney David McCay stated that from an operational standpoint, that's a lot of nitty gritty for the board of selectmen to take on. There are situations where the employee will need to go to someone other than the direct

supervisor and does not believe this precludes that and we can certainly add policies that do that. Stephen stated he was thinking general with the Town Administrator and then there's something that the board of selectmen need to be informed of. Matt stated that if anything he feels like we are opening it up more than closing it and feels like it's already the way it reads that we already operate. Jamie asked why we don't just use the same one we did when we hired Jeff, and Matt responded that this is the same one we are just talking about making some minor changes. April stated it is the same document. More discussion occurred regarding how the position should be set up. Matt stated his concern is that if an employee wants to talk to HR they should feel like they're talking to an impartial person, and if they feel like they're just talking to someone that's an extension of the TA then that's not the case. It's a concern employee have brought up before and brought up again. Stephen stated the description would state – the purpose of this position is to provide human resource services to the town and to provide employment related support and guidance to town offices, boards and departments. The position is under the general direction and supervision of the selectmen. The rest of the document is fine.

Matt Mecum made a motion to approve the human resources administrative job description with edits as discussed and to allow the town administrator to place the ad, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Review and approve animal control officer job description:

Board of Health is discussing this in their meeting tonight. There have been a couple people who have expressed interest to the Town Clerk and she's pushing it off to Dennis Costello who is bringing it up in his report tonight. Matt stated it really falls under them anyway right and we were just trying to push this along to get someone in the position. Pushing this discussion off until the next meeting.

Vote to appoint BoS representative to Joint Berlin-Boylston Budget Committee:

Jamie stated that BBRSD Chair Michael Totman reached out to himself and April a week ago looking to do a joint meeting with both towns, totally unlike what they did last time, but they didn't include us in discussions. Matt stated they did, to be fair, we did go. Matt stated he spoke with Michael Totman and the superintendent to see if they can start the conversation earlier and maybe come up with a three-year plan so we know what we are looking at. Keith from Berlin will be their representative. Seth stated the process would start at the end of the calendar year and the finance committee were always kind-of involved in the earlier part. A Finance Committee member will be there as well.

Jamie Underwood made a motion to appoint Matt Mecum to the joint Berlin-Boylston Budget Committee discussion, Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor.

Town Administrators Report to the BOS:

1. *Assistant Facilities Position:* April and the Facilities Tech interviewed an applicant today for the role. We both feel they would be a good fit for the position. It was voted previously for April to be allowed to send out an offer letter and the board approved of her doing so.

2. *Lightning Strikes:* Insurance Adjuster has been out and approved placing the fire panel at the flag estate and the necessary repairs for the elevator at the townhouse. Its about \$14,000 for the panel and to do all the smoke heads.
3. *DEP Reporting:* The Department of Environmental Protection is requiring the town to file a large entity reporting requirement on all medium and heavy-duty vehicles weighing more than 8,5000 lbs. All departments affected by this report have been notified and waiting on the information to send the report.
4. *Traffic Logics Quote:* Received quote for the electronic traffic signs the board approved at the last meeting for the Sewall Streets - \$12,528. April approved the quote and the order is being filled.

Selectmen's Miscellaneous:

Seth stated when the Waste and Recycling Committee was here, we discussed putting out a mailer to be sent out with our town clerks census or other document. Was the financing discussed and decided on? April stated the Waste and Recycling Committee was going to go back to discuss it and let us know.

*At 8:30 PM, Matt Mecum made a motion to go into **Executive Session:** (closed to the public). **Per MGL c.30A, §21, (3):** To discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. – “Mary K. Cutter v. Town of Boylston and Boylston Water District, Civil Action No. 2385CV00178” and “Mary K. Cutter et al. v. Town of Boylston Zoning Board of Appeals, Civil Action No. 2385CV00264.” Not to return to open session. *Seth Ridinger seconded. Voted all in favor. Matt: Yes, Seth: Yes, and Jamie: Yes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Mack, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

Meeting Materials

Agenda	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Sign In Sheet	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
09/11/23 Draft Meeting Minutes	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Town Planner Report	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Town administrators Report	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
RFS – Senior Center Feasibility Study	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Part Time HR Administrator Job Description	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Animal Control/Dog Officer Job Description	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
CMRPC – Hazard Mitigation Plan Update	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Email from BBRSD Chair Michael Totman	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Planning Board Clerical Admin Job Description	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office
Davidian Farm – License Agreement	On File in The Board of Selectmen's Office

Meeting Minutes Approved: BoS Meeting 10/23/23.