



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

Tel: 508-657-2800 * 508-966-4425

December 21, 2020

The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Michael Connor. All members of the Board were participating in the Arcand meeting room with the exception of Mr. Spencer who was absent. Also actively participating in the meeting was Town Administrator Denis Fraine and Administrative Assistant Hilarie Allie. The remote meeting was being monitored by Jim Kupfer, Town Planner and Zoning Officer. It was determined by Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place that no in-person attendance of Board members or any member of the public would be permitted at this meeting. This meeting was accessible to the public via the Zoom online option.

PACE - Mass Development

Mr. Connor introduced Wendy O'Malley with the PACE program which is an energy improvement financing program recently rolled out by Mass Development. It will allow commercial property owners to access third party financing for energy improvements and efficiency. The financing will be tied to the property itself for a maximum of 20 years. This program is required to have a municipal opt in or the property owner cannot apply for the financing through Mass Development. Mr. Connor asked what the dollar range was for financing and Ms. O'Malley stated no more than \$250,000 and a typical project would be adding solar panels or replacing an existing roof or energy efficient replacements. Mr. Martinis asked if the schools could take advantage of this program and Ms. O'Malley stated municipalities and federal governmental entities are ineligible because they don't pay taxes and because the loans are paid back through a betterment assessment that is built in and collected the same way as property taxes. Ms. Grant asked if the Town would have any financial obligations to this program. Ms. O'Malley stated there is none. The Town would only act as a pass through for the assessment repayment and would have no financial obligations. The Town is asked to bill and collect on these assessments. Mr. Fraine asked how the application process worked and Ms. O'Malley stated the property owner would first work with an energy contractor to determine the cost of the project and would then come to Mass Development with their application. At that time they would review the application to ensure it meets all guidelines while working with the department of energy resources and then notify the Town of a pending application. Mr. Fraine asked Mrs. MacKinnon if she thought her office had any questions and she stated she is confident her office could work through the logistics of billing for these assessments. With no further questions, on a Martinis/Grant motion, the Board voted 4-0 with one member absent to enroll Bellingham in the Mass Development PACE Program.

Adoption of the 2020 Master Plan Update

Mr. Kupfer presented to the Board the updated Master Plan that was 2 years in the making. He stated the completion of the review and update was a team effort and recognized all those who were involved. He stated they were able to take the previous Master Plan and amend and add to it by way of surveys, talking with residents, data from the Community Opportunity Group and other various resources. Mr. Connor asked how to take this document from the shelf to a document that is utilized. Mr. Kupfer stated the Board should meet annually to discuss and using the implementation strategies matrix is crucial. Mr. Martinis suggested the Board review the Master Plan annually in June after new Board members are elected and the Board agreed this would be a great time. Mr. Martinis questioned whether or not the Board should wait on adopting the plan until Mr. Salisbury's piece was added and Mr. Kupfer stated he had already received the draft and has no issues with it. The Board agreed now would be the time to adopt.

On a Grant/Martinis motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to adopt the Town of Bellingham 2020 Master Plan.

Planning Board Vacant Seat Appointment

Mr. Connor stated the Planning Board was looking for an endorsement from the Selectboard to appoint Elizabeth Berthelette to the Planning Board to fill the vacant position that comes from the resignation of Russell Lafond. This is typically done at a joint meeting but because of posting issues the Selectboard will make their appointment tonight and the Planning Board will appoint tomorrow night.

On a Martinis/McNulty motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to appoint Elizabeth "Liz" Berthelette to the vacant Planning Board position which she will hold until the Annual Town Elections in May 2021. The Board congratulated Liz and encouraged her to run for Mr. Lafond's 1 year unexpired term at that time.

On a McNulty/Grant motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to award Contract 2020-DTR2 Dead Tree Removal on various streets (phase 2) to the low bidder Malec Tree Service Inc. of Harrisville, RI in the amount of \$29,447.08.

On a Grant/McNulty motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to abate the November Capital Improvement, Sewer, Stormwater, Trash and Water charges in the amount of \$1,453.44.

On a Grant/McNulty motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to approve the December 7th minutes as submitted.

Subway – Common Vic License

Mr. Fraine stated the treasurer/collector's office put together some information for the Board regarding the outstanding real estate taxes and water charges that are owed to the Town by the owner of Subway and it's building. It would take them an additional 8 months to pay off what is currently owed if they continue with their current installment

plan. Mrs. MacKinnon spoke to their bank and encouraged them to work with the property owner and either restructure or refinance the loan and if that would happen then the Town would be made whole on what is due. It is her recommendation that the Board grant the common vic license.

On a Martinis/McNulty motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to grant the common vic license to Subway at 170 Pulaski Blvd.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Fraine stated the Town entered into a 20 year Payment in lieu of Tax (PILOT) agreement with ANP, the power plant on Maple St on January 1, 2001. It included a 10 year extension to be exercised at the sole discretion of the Town and the agreement is set to expire December 31st if the Town does not exercise the option. If the Board opted to let the agreement expire the property would go on the tax rolls and be exposed to the same abatement process as any other property. Currently ANP pays \$2.6m annually with a 3% depreciation each year and a 2.5% escalation applied annually resulting in a net decrease of 1/2% each year. There is a provision that allows the Town to asses all upgrades and improvements, as a result the plant has not lost value over the past 20 years. He and Mrs. MacKinnon have discussed the 10 year extension with an energy consultant who believes it would be wise to extend given the volatility in the energy market. Plus, it would take away any uncertainty regarding the Town's largest tax payer. Mr. Fraine is recommending the Board vote to approve this extension.

On a Martinis/Grant motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to extend the American National Power Plant Payment In lieu of Tax Agreement for an additional 10 years expiring December 31, 2030.

Mr. Fraine stated at the last meeting the Board discussed a host community agreement with Your Green Package for delivery of cannabis service that would be provided outside of Bellingham. This agreement would be in the same format that was used for the agreement with Frozen 4 for their delivery agreement. There is a \$2500 annual contribution to the DARE program and a provision requiring their vehicles be registered in Bellingham and be limited to 6 parking spaces inclusive of employees. The annual payment will be 3% of Gross Sales which is the maximum amount allowed by the CCC. Mr. Fraine is recommending the Board vote to approve the agreement.

On a Martinis/Grant motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to accept the Host Community Agreement with Your Green Package.

The Town will be renting a space to store 2 street sweepers and a vac truck for the winter months. The DPW is tight on space and they can't garage all the existing vehicles into the current space because of COVID rules.

Mr. Fraine stated after Wednesday the Municipal Center will be going to 'By Appointment Only' at least through the holidays in order to cut back on foot traffic. There will be signage on the doors posting phone numbers for each office and the announcement will be posted on the Town website. A code red will go out to alert the residents as well.

Old Business

Mrs. McNulty wanted to give praise to Tim Aicardi once again for working with Sunoco to clean up their parking lot.

Mr. Martinis stated he has been working with Amazon to clean up the intersection at Maple Street and Route 140 specifically when the vans leave the warehouse and proceed to fill up on gas. He has asked that they go straight and enter the Rapid Refill parking lot in the back as opposed to taking a right and then a left into the parking lot of Rapid Refill. Mr. Martinis asked if it was possible to ask Amazon if they would be willing to do an annual payment in lieu of registration taxes for the vehicles stored at the facility. Mr. Fraine said they are paying registration somewhere and that might be a difficult ask but it is an incentive for the Town to keep on them and the numbers of vehicles registered has gone up to 67 out of a possible 150.

New Business

Mr. Fraine stated someone went into the parking lot at the Senior Center and cut out the catalytic converter out of two of the vans so the vans will now be parked at the Police Station. However, he stated there is some good news to come out of the Senior Center. Devlin's Restaurant did a fundraiser and as a result donated \$1000 to the Senior Center that will go towards their meals program.

Mr. Connor wished everyone a Happy Holiday and a much needed welcome into 2021.

On a Grant/McNulty motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 with one member absent to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hilarie J. Allie".

Hilarie J. Allie
Administrative Assistant