



Town of Swampscott
Select Board and Board of Health Joint Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 1, 2020 - 6:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Spellios (Chair), Naomi Dreeben (Vice Chair), Don Hause, Polly Titcomb, Laura Spathanas

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Hartmann, (Chair), Emily Cilley, Stephanie Goodman

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Allie Fiske, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Ron Mendes, Assistant Town Administrator of Administration and Finance; Gino Cresta, Assistant Town Administrator; Jeff Vaughan, Health Director; Graham Archer, Fire Chief; Sue Duplin (Town Clerk) Tom McEnaney (Town Counsel); Mike McClung (Town Moderator)

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No

COVID-19 UPDATE

Various Town Officials provided an update on the Town's response to COVID-19. Swampscott's Stay-at-Home order will remain in effect until May 4. Chairman Spellios featured several initiatives in the Town including Swampscott Recreation and the Public Library's new online programs, business promotion initiatives, and the new "Happy Birthday" fire truck initiative.

Health Director Jeff Vaughan spoke on the current number of cases in Swampscott and the crucial importance of continued social distancing. Select Board Member Naomi Dreeben gave an update about the food resources available to seniors as well as people of all ages. To date, over 900 meals have been provided to Swampscott residents since the program was implemented. This is thanks to the Swampscott Senior Center, Public Schools, Anchor Food Pantry, and the extensive volunteer network.

Swampscott Fire Chief Graham Archer provided an update about the Emergency Management Team clarifying the details of the Stay-at-Home order and under which circumstances people can leave their home. He also provided an update about Town operations.

TOWN ELECTIONS

Town Election is currently scheduled for Tuesday, April 28. Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 allows for the Select Board to vote to delay the Town Election to a date not later than June 30. Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Emergency Management Team Director, and Public Health Director recommended that the elections be delayed to Tuesday, June 2. The question was raised if the entire election could be handled by mail-in ballots. Town Counsel Tom McEnaney confirmed that physical polling locations do still need to exist.

TOWN MEETING

Town Meeting is currently scheduled for Monday, May 18. M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 9 allows for the Select Board to vote to delay Town Meeting so long as it completes business by June 30. The Town Moderator, Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Emergency Management Team Director, and Public Health Director recommend delaying Town Meeting to Monday, June 22 due to COVID19. Any further delay would be decided by Monday, May 4

On **MOTION** (Dreeben) and **SECONDED** (Titcomb) it was **VOTED** by roll call to move Town Election from April 28 to June 2. Naomi and Polly. Roll Call, Spellios (yes), Hause (yes), Dreeben (yes), Spathanas (yes), Titcomb (Yes)

On **MOTION** (Dreeben) and **SECONDED** (Spathanas) it was **VOTED** by roll call to postpone town meeting and have it start on Monday, June 22. Roll call, Spellios (yes), Hause (yes), Dreeben (yes), Spathanas (yes), Titcomb (Yes)

TREE BYLAW PRESENTATION

Toni Bandrowitz from the Open Space & Recreation Committee presented a proposed bylaw for the warrant at Town Meeting. The purpose of the bylaw is to preserve and protect public shade trees and town trees in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L Chapter 87 and to provide standards for the proper care of Town Trees. This would ensure that the Town is consistent with what they are doing in respects to Chapter 87.

The bylaw requires that a tree warden must hold a public hearing before removal of a public shade tree and public hearings can be consolidated into a single public hearing. The Tree warden will approve the removal of a tree if the tree interferes with structures, utilities, streets, etc. or if the tree is dead or diseased.

Prohibited activities including topping or stubbing trees, girdling tree trunks, poisoning tree roots, pollarding (unless done by tree warden), causing any other kind of injury. The provisions of this bylaw can be waived in the case of an emergency. If someone knocks down a tree, they must replace the tree within 12 months meeting specific criteria. There was a discussion about whether or not this should be decreased to 6 months.

There was also a discussion about to what extent the bylaw could hold utility companies responsible for damaging Town-owned trees. DPW Commissioner Gino Cresta has asked National Grid to alert the Town if they plan doing any tree work.

ORGANIC LAWN MAINTENANCE

Sarah Koch presented on behalf of the Organic Lawn Maintenance Task Force. Currently the Town follows an Organic Pest Management Policy authored by the Board of Health in 2002. Sarah highlighted several sections of this policy including the mandate that the use of toxic chemical pesticides by Town or private contractor is prohibited.

Currently, private contractors treat our fields and lawns – some with harmful chemicals, notably Phillips Park and upper and lower Jackson, which are in close proximity to playgrounds. Recommendation that we adhere to our current policy and stop application of these chemicals by private contractors, and future contracts should include this clause prohibiting these pesticides. Recommended new practices include a 3-year in-house organic maintenance transition plan, staff training, frequent soil testing and readjustments, and a 5-year plan to bring all lawn maintenance in-house. There was at one time an Athletic Field Committee that needs to be reconstituted.

Sarah introduced Chip Osborne of Osborne Organics, a national renowned expert in organic lawn care. Mr. Osborne spoke about his experience in Marblehead that does organic maintenance. All operations are done in-house. He explained that organic maintenance should be a systems-based approach and can't just be a product swap-out and involves a transition plan.

Mr. Osborne clarified that there would be no deterioration of field – they will only get better and will be sustained into the future as long as you are not just depending on product application but also taking other measures such as running an aerator through it. The Select Board confirmed interest in continuing this conversation and reconstituting the Athletic Field Advisory Committee. Marianne invited Sarah Koch to the next Board of Health meeting to discuss this. There will continue to be additional meeting on the subject internally.

On Select Board **MOTION** (Hause) and **SECONDED** (Titcomb) it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to adjourn the meeting.

On Board of Health **MOTION** (Cilley) and **SECONDED** (Goodman) it was **VOTED** (unanimous) to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47pm.

True Attest

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Allie Fiske".

Allie Fiske, Assistant to the Town Administrator