



Town of Swampscott Select Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 6, 2021
Swampscott High School – B129

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Spellios (Chair), Polly Titcomb, Neal Duffy, David Grishman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Don Hause

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Molly O'Connell, Senior Planner; Marianne Hartmann, Board of Health Chair;

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BOARD OF HEALTH APPOINTMENT

Marianne Hartmann (Chair) and Emily Cilley were present for this agenda item. Ms. Hartmann provided background into the selection process – 6 final candidates were interviewed, and they were all very qualified. This appointment is a 6-month appointment to fill a vacated seat which is typically elected in April 2022. This member could run to be elected if they choose. Select Board member David Grishman also provided his thoughts on the process and the high quality of the applicants. The search committee recommends Peter Sheckman for the position of Board of Health member. He is a retired internal medicine physician and infectious disease specialist who serves area hospitals and has practiced for decades.

On MOTION (Grishman) and SECONDED (Duffy) it was VOTED to appoint Peter Sheckman to fill the vacant seat on the Board of Health for a term to expire in April 2022.

On MOTION (Cilley) and SECONDED (Hartmann) it was VOTED to adjourn the Board of Health portion of the meeting.

This portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:16 PM.

Peter Spellios gave an update on the new elementary school, specifically the conversations between the Town and the Universalist Unitarian church about access easements. He provided some background on the process so far, and that Town Meeting approved acquisition of the easements. Since then, The Town and UU leadership have met and have collectively decided to use a third-party mediator to negotiate and finalize details. The Town appreciates the collaboration with the church and looks forward to a fair and reasonable solution.

Chairperson Spellios asked if the Board could give general consensus to issue the statement read at the Select Board meeting.

SWAMPSCOTT HOUSING AUTHORITY

Chairperson Spellios introduced the conversation, which is a continuation from their last meeting. Based on the letter of resignation from Naomi Dreeben from the Housing Authority Board and other events, the Board expressed concerns about the state of the Housing Authority leadership and state of the apartment homes. Chairperson Spellios wants this conversation to be productive and be focused on finding solutions and fully engaging the Housing Authority, and possibly DHCD, to help bring about change and perhaps a better understanding.

The Board discussed whether or not any Housing Authority meetings have taken place in B-129, which was offered to the Housing Authority by the Select Board as an accessible space, as the current Housing Authority meeting space is not ADA accessible and meetings are not recorded. The Board suggested a joint meeting to ensure the sharing of information and due process, so both parties understand each other. The Department of Housing and Community Development could potentially help facilitate accurate expectations.

Tara Cassidy from the Housing Authority Board was present not officially representing the Board. She noted that the Housing Authority is currently compiling a list of improvements made and grants received which will be shared with the Select Board members. She looks forward to increasing communication between the boards and working together to move forward.

Chairperson Spellios clarified that the state of housing authority's across Massachusetts is dire, and Swampscott is not the only community facing these issues. There are some ways to affect change, such as through public private partnerships. He suggested the following problems: 1) Disrespect to current Board Members – specifically Naomi Dreeben who has since resigned. 2) The Housing Authority's refusal of external offers of help, which further isolates the Housing Authority from the Town.

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald asked about the HA's annual and capital budget planning. Tara Cassidy says they receive a lot of grant funding and will be showing a list of those funds.

VERIZON PUBLIC HEARING – 6:30 PM:

Please take notice that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Swampscott, Massachusetts, as Issuing Authority for a cable television license under M.G.L. c.166A, will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 6:30 PM. The purpose of the public hearing will be to determine whether to issue a cable television license to Verizon. All applications, reports, statements and license drafts to be considered at the hearing that constitute public records under state law are available for public inspection during regular business hours and for reproduction at a reasonable fee. Members of the public are invited to attend and be heard on the topic: (a) whether the current cable operator is in full compliance with its currently-existing cable license; and (b) what are the Town's future community cable-related needs.

Media Arts Instructor / Cable TV Coordinator JoE Douillette provided an presentation on the current public cablecast offerings and program, the goals of the program, and what the negotiations could potentially provide for the Town and cable program as recommended by the Television Visioning Committee. Some of the proposed initiatives are to expand the existing capacity of the staff by adding an Assistant Coordinator, upgrading the auditorium to be a hybrid meeting space, and providing free use of the technology to the public.

The Board asked a number of questions about the negotiation process, potential upgrades, and affect on private cable bills. Chairperson Spellios expressed concerns that the amount the Town is requesting in negotiations is low.

If the Board has tentative approval, the Town will move forward with negotiations and bring back a contract to the Board in November. The Board would still like to be able to comment before the negotiations close, and decided to continue the item to before that date.

On **MOTION** (Grishman) and **SECONDED** (Titcomb) it was **VOTED** to continue the public hearing to 6:30 PM on November 3, 2021 All in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Brian Longin, recommended as a new appointment to the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee was present and introduced himself to the Board. On **MOTION** (Duffy) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) it was **VOTED** to appoint Brian Longin to occupy a 3-year term set to expire in 2022. All in favor.
2. On **MOTION** (Duffy) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) it was voted to approve all consent agenda items. All in favor.
 - Vote to appoint new member to the Open Space & Recreation Planning Committee
 - Vote to approve One-Day Liquor License Application for Sea Glass Village, Inc. for an event on October 15, 2021 from 5:30-7:30 PM at 40 Monument Ave.

D. Town Administrator's report

- Pedestrian safety efforts with Police Chief Kurz
- Comment letter to MASSPORT regarding the proposed Logan flight path changes
- The new precinct map based on the 2020 Census, a draft of which will be presented to the Board for a vote.

Select Board Member Neal Duffy thanked Mr. Fitzgerald on his efforts in regards to the flight path changes, but noted he'd like to make sure that the Board does not take an incorrect stance. He understands that these changes will benefit some communities; the point is that the changes should not move bad effects into one direction, but instead look to mitigate any and all effects. Vice Chair Polly Titcomb asked how we could get more community input on this, such as a petition on the Town website.

Chairperson Spelliios asked Mr. Fitzgerald for an update on the traffic study committee at the next meeting. He also asked for numbers to be presented in addition to the narrative about pedestrian safety so the Board can more clearly understand what is being done. He noted that the corner/median barriers put out by Gino are a good effort, but some of them have clearly been moved by cars and need to be moved back into position.

Chairperson Spelliios asked for a status update on National Grid work on multiple streets throughout Town. Many of these streets were recently paved and have now been complete dug up. National Grid should be repaving or providing monetary compensation to the Town.

SELECT BOARD TIME:

- A reminder that early voting begins this weekend and runs the week of 10/12.

On MOTION (Grishman) and SECONDED (Duffy) it was VOTED to adjourn the meeting. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

True Attest,

Molly O'Connell, Senior Planner

Minutes approved by Select Board in vote at meeting on 11/3/21