



TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

January 25, 2021 Regular Selectboard Meeting via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER SELECTBOARD REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00 pm, those “present” via zoom: Ed Abrahams, Kate Burke, Leigh Davis, Bill Cooke, and Town Manager, Mark Pruhenski.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. August 24, 2020

b. September 14, 2020

i. One correction - item 5.6 Public hearing “Holly Hamer” spelled incorrectly.

E. Abrahams made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2021 and September 14, 2021 meeting as amended; B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; E. Abrahams, “aye”; S. Bannon, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; and L. Davis, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.

3. SELECTBOARD’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

- a. L. Davis – Looking for a status update on the State of Affairs in Great Barrington regarding COVID, as well as updated information regarding Phase II vaccinations.
- b. E. Abrahams – Historical Commission is looking for a status update regarding Searles School from Mr. Mahida. E. Abrahams also pointed out how efficiently vaccination clinics are being run at WEB DuBois Middle School, specifically highlighting Berkshire Health Systems, Fairview Hospital, Berkshire County Board of Health, Community Health Programs, and Heather Barbieri.

4. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

- a. Housatonic Water Works Updates
 - i. Engineers from DPC and AECOM did a site visit the previous week. Sean VanDeusen also met with the engineers and made copies of maps for them to keep as source documents.
- b. COVID19 Status – Rebecca Jurczyk provided a health update that M. Pruhenski shared with the board. In summary, there has been an outbreak in result to the holidays. 68 positive cases are reported in long-term care facilities. First dose of Pfizer vaccine has been administered to long-term care patients.
 - 1. L. Davis asked if Fairview Hospital is taking in COVID-related patients, or if they must go straight to Berkshire Medical Center. R. Jurczyk replied that Fairview has the capacity to take those patients in, but they are not treating the critically ill patients. R. Jurczyk explained that patients should call the hotline if they are experiencing COVID symptoms and then visit Fairview Hospital.

- c. Katie Ornstein will be working as a Marketing/Social Media intern for the next 5-6 months. K. Ornstein is a Great Barrington resident and a Film/Theater student at Dartmouth college.

5. LICENSES AND PERMITS

- a. Recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals on the Special Permit application from Frank Leonard Mirchin and Ruthanne Mirchin, for the expansion of a nonconforming home at 73 Castle Hill Avenue, Great Barrington, filed in accordance with Section 5.3, 5.5, and 10.4 of the zoning bylaw.
 - i. L. Davis recused herself from the discussion and motion.
 - ii. David Shrair represented Frank and Ruthanne Mirchin during the call.
 - iii. David Potter and Criag Okerstrom-Lang shared the proposed expansion with the board members.

E. Abrahams made a motion to send a positive recommendation of the Special Permit Application from Frank Leonard and Ruthanne Mirchin to the Zoning Board of Appeals; B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; E. Abrahams, “aye”; S. Bannon, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; and L. Davis, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Regional District Planning Committee Budget Request Presentation
 - i. Lucy Prashker, Chair of the Regional School District Planning Board, shared information on the operations of the planning board. L. Prashker also shared the Planning Board’s budget request.
 - ii. L. Davis asked if other towns (i.e. Lee, Lenox, Richmond) will be able to participate in this process. S. Bannon said this is a discreet process with BHRSD and SBRSD. Other towns may partake, but that would be a separate project. L. Davis asked how COVID19 impacted the financial soundness of the school district. L. Prashker explained that hopes were that enrollment numbers would increase with people moving to Berkshire County as a result of COVID19. In reality though, enrollment did continue to decline, most likely as a result of home schooling or private schooling.
 - iii. K. Burke shared her concern that the budget is requesting less money than the project actually needs. L. Prashker explained that the Planning Board is hoping for a grant, but that the numbers may be adjusted if necessary.
 - iv. L. Prashker explained that each town (regardless of size) is being asked of the same amount of money due to the fact that each town has the same amount of representation on the Planning Board.
- b. Lover’s Lane & Rt. 7 intersection discussion with MassDOT & GBDPW
 - i. Francisca Heming, MassDOT, said that the town has jurisdiction to do what they want with the intersection and MassDOT will support the decision.
 - ii. Pat Tierney, MassDOT, shared findings of the crash analysis done on the intersection. There have been 2 accidents recorded at the specific intersection that MassDOT had access to. MassDOT added signage and will continue to monitor throughout the seasons.
 - iii. L. Davis believes that the intersection needs to be adjusted, that crash analysis is not sufficient in deciding what to do next.

- iv. S. Bannon believes that the next step should be planning a meeting that includes the stakeholders and general public.
 - v. S. VanDeusen reached out to Data Engineering for an analysis of what would happen if changes were made to the intersection.
 - c. 2021 Town Meeting and Election Calendar
 - i. Jenn Messina and Michael Wise discussed the calendars with the board.
 - ii. Michelle Loubert believes that Adam Hinds and Smitty Pignatelli should be contacted regarding elections being held prior to the Annual Town Meeting.
- E. Abrahams made a motion to approve the 2021 Town Meeting and Election Calendars as amended; B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; E. Abrahams, “aye”; S. Bannon, “aye”; K. Burke, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; and L. Davis, “aye”; All in Favor, 5-0.
- d. Personnel Policy
 - i. K. Burke highlighted that the dress code policy is vague, but that she does not want anyone to feel discriminated against. K. Burke also believes that any tattoos that may be hurtful in regard to religion or ethnicity be required to be covered up. Lastly, the harassment section should include ramifications of harassment that takes place out of the workplace.
 - ii. E. Abrahams believes that Columbus Day should be listed as Indigenous Peoples Day. E. Abrahams also stated that the Marijuana Policy should be more specific.
 - iii. The Personnel Policy will be voted on at the February 8, 2021 meeting.
 - e. Request to subordinate a Real Property lien from the CDBG FY14 Housing Rehabilitation program
 - i. Chris Rembold shared information on this request to subordinate the lien so that the homeowner can refinance their mortgage.
- E. Abrahams made a motion to subordinate the real estate lien from the CDBG FY14 Housing Rehabilitation Program; B. Cooke seconded; Roll Call Vote; E. Abrahams, “aye”; S. Bannon, “aye”; B. Cooke, “aye”; and L. Davis, “aye”; All in Favor, 4-0.

7. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

- a. Trevor Forbes, 325 North Plain Road, believes that the setup of the meetings discussed in item 6C is potentially undemocratic and should be discussed.

8. SELECTBOARD’S TIME

9. MEDIA TIME

- 10. ADJOURNMENT Chairman Bannon adjourned meeting by unanimous consent at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Brooke M. Morehouse
Recording Clerk*