

## October 25, 2021 Regular Selectboard Meeting via Zoom

### 1. CALL TO ORDER SELECTBOARD REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00pm; those present via zoom: Ed Abrahams, Leigh Davis, Eric Gabriel, Garfield Reed. Town Manager Mark Pruhenski; Assistant Town Manager, Chris Rembold. Other attendees: Great Barrington Tree Warden, Michael Peretti; Housatonic Improvement Committee members.

### 2. CONVENE AS SEWER COMMISSIONERS

#### a. Sewer Billing Changes

- i. S. Bannon made a motion to convene as Sewer Commissioners; E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, "aye," S. Bannon, "aye," L. Davis, "aye," E. Gabriel, "aye," G. Reed, "aye." All in favor, 5-0.
- ii. M. Pruhenski asked the Selectboard to approve the addition of new houses or additions to existing homes with new dwelling units (details in Selectboard packet).

L. Davis motion to accept; E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, "aye," S. Bannon, "aye," L. Davis, "aye," E. Gabriel, "aye," G. Reed, "aye." All in favor, 5-0.

L. Davis made a motion to reconvene as Selectboard; E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, "aye," S. Bannon, "aye," L. Davis, "aye," E. Gabriel, "aye," G. Reed, "aye." All in favor, 5-0.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. November 2, 2020
- b. November 9, 2020
- c. February 16, 2021
- d. February 17, 2021

L. Davis made a motion to accept meeting minutes: November 2, 2020; November 9, 2020; February 16, 2021; February 17, 2021; E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, "aye," S. Bannon, "aye," L. Davis, "aye," E. Gabriel, "aye," G. Reed, "aye." All in favor, 5-0.

### 4. SELECTBOARD'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS

- a. G. Reed stated he was approached by residents asking if the area behind Fiesta Restaurant could be turned into a town square. Also, the Senior Tax Deferral program was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting and the Selectboard will be updated.
- b. L. Davis stated the Selectboard-Planning Board subcommittee meeting is October 27, 5:30pm. Short-term rentals and the Senior Tax Deferral program will be discussed.

### 5. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. Housatonic Water Works – M. Pruhenski thanked the Selectboard for hosting the October 12 community meeting. Stakeholder meetings have concluded, and he recommended the Selectboard schedule an Executive Session to review four options for Housatonic Water Works due to legal issues that will be discussed. S. Bannon suggested November 15, 2021. 6:30pm and Selectboard members agreed.

- b. North Main Street Parking – M. Pruhenski provided an update on the 60 new parking stalls that will continue to be painted on north Main Street. As an 8-hour zone it will benefit both employees and downtown merchants. E. Abrahams suggested this be promoted widely.
- c. Taconic Parking Lot – M. Pruhenski reported that construction and paving will be completed by the holiday shopping season.
- d. Lake Mansfield Road – C. Rembold reported that the Lake Mansfield Task Force will meet October 26 to review the latest set of plans. A community meeting will be held by the second week of November. They are making good progress.
- e. Berkshire Busk – Gene Carr, Berkshire Busk Festival Director, presented attendance, impact, and results from this year’s Festival. Overall, there was a lot of positive feedback and good PR/social media buzz – it was also successful in attracting people to downtown. Gene thanked the Selectboard for its support.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

S. Bannon requested a motion to open a Public Hearing and read the permit request:

- a. Special Permit application from Benjamin Wohlfert, PO Box 1347, Canaan, CT, for work in a floodplain and water quality protection overlay district at 121 Bridge Street, Great Barrington, in accordance with Sections 9.1, 9.2 and 10.4 of the Great Barrington Zoning Bylaw. Proposed work is within the 100-year flood plain of the Housatonic River, and consists of demolition of the existing single family home and construction of a new single family home.

L. Davis made a motion to open a Public Hearing for a Special Permit application from Benjamin Wohlfert. E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

- i. C. Rembold stated the applicant’s agent and civil engineer Brent White of White Engineering was present.
- ii. B. White stated this plan was approved three years ago - the current request is to approve a revised plan that includes a slightly larger footprint for the house. The new plan continues to address the specific concerns of the floodplain and water quality protection overlay district.
- iii. E. Abrahams asked did he consider the suggestion of the Planning Board to raise the floor? B. White stated that the plans are not yet final, but he is confident it will be at the proper elevation.
- iv. S. Bannon asked for audience comments – none raised.

L. Davis moved to approve the findings of fact for the Special Permit 924-21 as written and referenced in exhibit A. E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

L. Davis made a motion to close the Public Hearing. E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

L. Davis made a motion in view of approved findings of fact to approve Special Permit 924-21 for Benjamin Wohlfert for work in a floodplain and water quality protection overlay district at 121 Bridge Street; E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

S. Bannon noted there were 30 attendees and 7 panelists at the meeting.

b. Chapter 87 Public Shade Tree Hearing

L. Davis made a motion to open a Public Hearing on Chapter 87 Public Shade Tree. E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

- i. Ryan Kress, Arborist, National Grid stated he has been assessing, pruning and removing trees to protect power lines working with Michael Peretti, Great Barrington Tree Warden. The issue is a disagreement over the removal of two trees – at 85 Lake Buel Rd and the corner of Butternut Lane and Lake Buel Rd that have proximity to the power lines. R. Kress recommended removal of both trees; M. Peretti stated that the trees can be effectively pruned instead. M. Peretti consulted with Eric Haupt who agreed with his position. The discussion covered tree condition, potential hazards, and maintenance.
- ii. Holly Hamer, chair GB Tree Committee, stated she did not have direct knowledge of the situation, but endorsed M. Peretti as most knowledgeable.

L. Davis made a motion to close the Public Hearing on Chapter 87 Public Shade Tree. E. Abrahams seconded. Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “aye,” G. Reed, “aye.” All in favor, 5-0.

L. Davis made a motion to act on the recommendation of Tree Warden, Mike Peretti to keep the two trees discussed; E. Abrahams seconded.

- ii. G. Reed and E. Gabriel expressed concern over potential danger posed by the trees hitting the power lines.
- iii. L. Davis stated her reliance on M. Peretti’s expert opinion.

Roll call vote: E. Abrahams, “aye,” S. Bannon, “aye,” L. Davis, “aye,” E. Gabriel, “no,” G. Reed, “no.” All in favor, 3-2.

7. PREVIOUS BUSINESS

- a. Housatonic Improvement Committee Update – Members of the Housatonic Improvement Committee (Dan Bailly, Angela Lomanto, Daniel Bialowas, Patrick Barrett, Selectboard member Eric Gabriel) provided an update on recommendations for the Housatonic School including history, process, considerations and parameters for reimagining the school as an integral part of village life. They requested Selectboard support in issuing a new request for proposals for the development of the property. Additional detail will be provided following this weekend’s charette, and the Committee will provide the Selectboard with an executive summary and report. S. Bannon suggested scheduling a follow up discussion at the end of November.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Selectboard Liaison List – M. Pruhenski provided a list of Selectboard board/committee assignments and asked if any changes. E. Gabriel expressed interest in being part of Housatonic Water Works precinct B work. S. Bannon stated that discussions would be at the Selectboard level go forward.

9. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

- a. S. Bannon read an email from Carol Bosco Baumann objecting to the charette and ongoing discussions about the Housatonic School due to the lack of viable proposals to-date. She asked that the parcel remain public owned.
- b. Charlie Williamson thanked the Selectboard for recouping embezzled funds.

10. SELECTBOARD'S TIME

11. MEDIA TIME

12. ADJOURNMENT – Chairman Bannon adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 7:09pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow  
Recording Clerk