**INFORMATION FOR VOTERS**

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON

2020 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

The following are written by Town staff and are intended to be brief and unbiased explanations of the proposals.

1. **Authorization to sell/transfer 40 Grove Street.** The Selectboard seeks to transfer this town-owned single family home to the Town’s Affordable Housing Trust, which will then offer the home as an affordable home ownership opportunity with a permanent affordability requirement.
2. **To Modify Town Code Chapter 48, Alarm System.** The proposed changes will update the bylaw to reflect current operations and implement a more fair and effective method for billing for false alarm activations. The objective is to encourage owners to properly maintain their systems and repair identified problems, but not penalize owners for having life safety systems.
3. **To Modify Town Code Chapter 41, sec. 41-7 Addressing of Town Meetings Restricted.** If passed, this article would delete a 2019 bylaw provision that prohibits voters at an annual or special town meeting from “calling for a vote” when articles are being debated. The current bylaw allows for discussion to continue “….until every registered voter of the Town in attendance has had an opportunity to speak on the issue at hand…”
4. **To Accept Mass General Law Chapter 59, sec. 57C Establishing Quarterly Tax Payment System.** The Selectboard seeks to change the Real Estate and Personal Property Tax billing from semi-annual to quarterly, starting in fiscal year 2022.
5. **To Appropriate from the Receipts of the Wastewater Treatment Plant $50,000 for the operation of the Sewer Division.** Additional funds are required for the wastewater division because of increased prices we must pay to have processed sludge hauled away. The increases were much more than was anticipated during development and approval of the annual budget. This request will increase the “contracted hauling” line item from $164,000 to $214,000.
6. **Authorization to pay prior fiscal year invoices.** This will allow the Town to pay invoices from last fiscal year out of the current year’s budget.
7. **Tax Financing Agreement, 430 Park Street.** This will authorize the Selectboard to create and enter into a TIF for this property, the former Housatonic Curtains mill. A TIF is an economic inventive agreement for commercial properties where substantial investments in real estate are not assessed at their full new value right away; rather, the increased value is phased in over time.
8. **Sewer Easement, 79 Bridge Street.** Since the former Searles School is privately owned, the Town requires an easement in order to repair or replace the sewer main running through the parking lot.
9. **Sidewalk Easements, Housatonic Main Street.** The Main Street sidewalk extension to North Plain Road is a grant-funded Complete Streets project, but because Main Street is so narrow, some of the work will occur on private property.
10. **Taking or Eminent Domain of “Owner Unknown” Parcels on Tom Ball Ridge.**  There are three parcels of unbuildable land on the GB/Alford border, totaling approximately 48.5 acres, whose ownership is unknown. The town’s acquisition of clear title to these parcels will enable a larger landscape scale preservation of the entire ridge, totaling 600 acres of wildlife habitat, scenic views, important watersheds, and public access opportunities.
11. **Zoning: Editorial Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw.** This amendment will make small zoning bylaw edits so references to the Special Permit Granting Authority (or “SPGA”) are accurate, and rename “Board of Selectmen” to Selectboard, to be consistent with the Town Charter.
12. **Zoning: Amend Section 3.1.4, permitted uses in the Downtown B District.** This amendment will update the Table of Use Regulations for the downtown business district to reflect the purpose of the district, and to ensure uses that are incompatible with the district are not permitted.
13. **Zoning: Amend Section 3.2, Accessory Uses.** This amendment will update the setback and height regulations for accessory dwelling units. Taller accessory buildings, up to 25 feet maximum, must comply with a zone’s setback requirements.
14. **Zoning: Amend Section 3.1.4, Accessory Uses.** This amendment will clarify that ADUs are permitted in all districts, as is already set forth in Section 8.2. It does not change the existing law.
15. **Zoning: Amend Section 8.2, Accessory Dwelling Units.** This amendment will allow ADUs to be slightly larger (900 square feet would equate to a 1-bedroom unit), remove unnecessary design requirements, and allow for the possibility of multiple ADUs for farmworker housing.
16. **Zoning: Definitions of Accessory Dwelling Units and Moveable Tiny Houses.** This amendment will allow an ADU to be in the form of a Moveable Tiny House (MTH), and will define what a MTH is. This includes provisions to ensure an MTH has a sense of permanence and adequate utilities**.**
17. **Zoning: Amend Section 4.1.2, Maximum Lot Coverage.**  This amendment will allow for small but conforming lots to be in zones served by public utilities to be built in accordance with current setback regulations, and not be constrained by a low percentage of buildable area.
18. **Zoning: Amend the Design Advisory Committee and Design Review regulations.**  This article updates the Design Advisory Committee (DAC), clarifying the DAC’s membership, authority and jurisdiction, and its review standards, and recommends that Special Permit and Site Plan Review applicants also appear before the DAC.
19. **Zoning: Amend Section 8.5, Planned Unit Residential Development.** These amendments will amend PURD regulations so it encourages compact and efficient subdivision design in keeping with the density already permitted by the zoning of the site.
20. **Zoning: Amend Section 3.1.4, Swimming Pool regulations.** This amendment will change the strict requirements for swimming pools in the Table of Use Regulations so the zoning bylaw does not conflict with or impose stricter standards than the Building Code.
21. **Zoning: Amend Section 3.1.4, Residential Use permissions and Special Permit Granting Authority.** This amendment will designate the Planning Board as the Special Permit Granting Authority, allow three family in more zones by right, and amend the permissions for multifamily uses in specified zones.
22. **Zoning: Amend Section 9.2, Water Quality Protection Overlay District.** This amendment will clarify that requirements of one subsection of the WQPOD are the stricter and higher standards, in case there is a question of which subsection should be followed.
23. **Zoning: Amend Section 8.4, Mixed Use regulations.** This amendment will clarify the amount of floor space required for nonresidential uses in order for a development to be considered “mixed-use.”
24. **Zoning: Add new section for conversion of nursing homes to multifamily use.** This amendment will provide a way for existing nursing homes to be converted to a more marketable use: multifamily housing. A special permit would be required.
25. **Zoning: Amend Section 7.18, Marijuana Establishments, to establish a maximum number of -retail establishments.**  This amendment would propose a limit of seven (7) retail marijuana establishments in Town. At this time there is currently one (1) in operation, and there are five (5) others that have host agreements with the Town.

**Articles 26 - 32** are proposed by citizen petitioners; explanations for those are not included in this pamphlet.