

**Town of Needham
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for March 10, 2015
Selectmen's Chamber
Needham Town Hall**

6:30 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens:
Priscilla Murray and Curt Runnels, 58 Curve Street, spoke with the Board about the building boom in Needham and its impact on the health of seniors. They asked the Board about mitigation, and to consider enforcing current by-laws, larger fines, and limiting the size of new homes on small lots.

7:00 p.m. Call to Order:
A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman John A. Bulian. Those present were Maurice P. Handel, Matthew D. Borrelli, Daniel P. Matthews, Marianne B. Cooley, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt.

7:00 p.m. Public Hearing - Consolidation of the Planning and Community Development Departments:
Ms. Fitzpatrick reminded the Board the Town consolidated the budgets of the Conservation Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals in 2010, and created the position of Director of Planning and Community Development. At that time, Ms. Fitzpatrick said the budgets for both departments were never combined. She stated the consolidation would enable the smooth transfer of funds between departments. Ms. Fitzpatrick said the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Board of Appeals all voted to support the plan, and asked the Board of Selectmen for its support.

Mr. Bulian invited public comment. No public comments were made, however, Ms. Fitzpatrick stated written support was received from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Board of Appeals.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to approve the creation of a Planning & Community Development Department as presented by the Town Manager in a proposal dated March 3, 2015.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Mr. Handel noted approval does not change the operation or responsibilities of each Board.

Mr. Matthews commented that while no public testimony was given tonight, the issue is not new. He said there has been a fair amount of discussion, and interested parties have had an opportunity to be heard publicly or otherwise.

11. Accept gift of \$225,000 from the Needham Crossing Improvement Corporation for 2nd Avenue improvements.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

7:10 p.m.

Property Tax Relief & Assistance for the Elderly and Disabled: Evelyn Poness, Treasurer/Collector, Dave Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Finance, and members of the Property Tax Assistance and Taxation Aid Committees appeared before the Board to discuss the efforts underway to increase contributions to the relief funds. Members of the two committees include: Thomas Mulhern, Patricia Harris, Elizabeth Handler, Jill Kahn-Boesel, Helen Newton, and Peter Hess.

Ms. Poness thanked residents who contributed over the years and said the funds have helped many senior citizens. She said the Property Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled Fund was established in 2004 and has awarded \$161,830 to 381 recipients since 2005. Ms. Poness said contributions have gradually dropped since 2008 and 2009 resulting in a letter writing campaign to the newspapers as well as inserting envelopes into monthly bills. Ms. Poness said awards for 2015 may be lower than prior years. Ms. Poness mentioned possible ways to encourage donations to the fund, including the ability to make donations on the Town's website, public service announcements on the Needham Channel, utilizing the Town's Facebook page, placing envelopes at Town Meeting, and soliciting donations from local businesses.

Ms. Poness said that the Property Tax Assistance Program was established in 2009 and since that time \$60,144 has been awarded to 161 recipients.

Mr. Bulian said the issue of increasing the Property Tax Assistance Program contribution was discussed at the Board of Selectmen meeting on January 13, 2015. He noted the amount was set at \$27,500 for the Property Tax Assistance Program for FY2016.

Mr. Matthews said he likes the creative thinking to raise funds and feels the two funds should be linked, as in previous years. He suggested focusing on raising funds during one quarter a year. He said the fund would do better if residents are able to donate using the Town's website.

Ms. Cooley suggested changing the color of the contribution envelope every year. She asked about advertising restrictions.

Mr. Davison said the Town is allowed to insert an envelope, but cannot advertise, promote, or incentivize people to donate. He said using the website is allowed, but the Town must be mindful of the limitations and the perception of conflict of interest.

Mr. Bulian said a private organization could raise funds as part of a fundraising event.

Mr. Borrelli said getting the word out is critical, as many people did not realize the need or the decrease in funds. He suggested putting information in the annual Exchange Club phone book.

Mr. Bulian said awareness is critical as there is competition for many worthy causes. He thanked the committee members for their work.

7:30 p.m.

Statement of Interest - Mitchell & Pollard School:

Daniel Gutekanst, Superintendent of Schools and Michael Greis, Chairman of the School Committee appeared before the Board to review Statements of Interest for Mitchell School and Pollard School.

Mr. Greis said that at its meeting on March 3, 2015, the School Committee reviewed draft MSBA Statements of Interest for the Mitchell School and Pollard School. He said the School Committee is very supportive, and hopes the Board of Selectmen would vote on it in time for the April 9, 2015 deadline with the MSBA.

Mr. Handel said he is concerned the Town may overextend itself as the Hillside School has already been accepted for participation in the MSBA process.

Mr. Borrelli asked if there were a penalty should Needham need to withdraw, even though it is unlikely the Town would get to that position. He said the Town has its capital plan in place and could not sustain multiple projects. He also asked about full day kindergarten.

Mr. Greis said the more transparent and forward thinking the Town is with the MSBA, the easier it is to have ongoing conversations and not get to the point of withdrawing. Mr. Greis said a sub-committee is beginning to plan for full day kindergarten, but it could take years to implement.

Mr. Matthews asked about material changes in the SOI for each school, which were also filed in prior years. He said over time there will be an increasing number of legitimate requests for funding. He said he is inclined to think that if the Town found itself to have the opportunity to do two projects at once, it would be well advised to consider ways to manage it, although he does not think that will happen anytime in the near future. He commented he is more concerned with the list of projects vying for the same dollars increasing the timeline. He said the Town should "put its best foot forward," but should be prepared to act.

Dr. Gutekanst commented the SOI's are essentially the same but include upgrades and maintenance that have occurred, citing the modular classrooms at the Mitchell School as an example.

Ms. Cooley said she supports both SOI proposals, as they are an important part of keeping the MSBA up to date with the most recent information. She commented Mr. Matthews points are well taken.

Mr. Bulian said he supports both SOI proposals. He said the Board of Selectmen will vote on the issue on March 24, 2015.

7:45 p.m.

Local Initiative Program Housing Proposal:

Roy Cramer, Attorney, Mark Roopenian, Principal, Normandy Real Estate Partners, and Kevin Daley, Vice President, Development & Construction, Normandy Real Estate Partners appeared before the Board to present additional information in support of their request for the Board's consideration of a Local Initiative Program ("friendly 40B") for construction of an apartment complex at the newly acquired General Dynamics site near Second Avenue. Representatives from Normandy's project team were also in attendance to answer any questions.

Mr. Cramer said topics for discussion include Normandy's vision for the park, density, updated design, traffic, and fiscal analysis. He introduced representatives from Normandy's consulting team including Mark Roopenian, Kevin Daley, Brian Roessler from Elkus Manfredi Architects, Nancy Doherty from Tetra Tech, John Connery from Connery Associates, and Geoff Engler from SEB, LLC.

Mr. Roopenian described Normandy's vision for the park is a true "Live, Work, Play" environment on the forty acre property. He said the idea addresses many consumer needs, including residential, commercial, and retail. Mr. Roopenian said renovation of the current General Dynamics will serve different segments of the market, and can be renovated within a twelve month time frame. He said a true "Live, Work, Play" environment will have more people in the area on Saturdays and Sundays.

Mr. Daley spoke about density across the forty acre site with high end, mid level, and residential buildings in the mixed use area. He said a 400 unit apartment complex is scaled appropriately for the area.

Mr. Roessler reminded the Board of the schematic presented at the February 10, 2015 meeting. He proposes a redesigned plan that reduces the height of the building and exposure of parking along Second Avenue and A Street.

Ms. Doherty presented an analysis of the trip generation for the entire General Dynamic site. She said most traffic today comes in to the site in the morning, but with an apartment complex much of the traffic would be leaving and not adding to existing traffic.

Mr. Connery summarized the fiscal impact of the residential and commercial components of the project. He said net annual benefit to the Town is projected to

be approximately \$1.65 million. He discussed school costs, as well as non-school costs including Police, Fire, and Health departments.

Mr. Handel asked for the anticipated number of park employees likely to live in the apartment complex.

Mr. Borrelli said he appreciates the new design and numbers. He asked about the timing of the full build out and its benefit to the Town. He commented about the number of units and said he is concerned about its impact to the Town. He suggested reducing the number of units. He asked about proposed mitigation to the Town and about traffic signals.

Mr. Matthews said the information is very helpful. He said time is a value and that he is hopeful an agreement can be reached.

Ms. Cooley said she appreciates the additional traffic information presented.

Mr. Bulian said he likes the redesign and the vision for the park.

8:25 p.m.

Town Manager:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager appeared before the Board with 2 items to discuss:

1. Accept and Refer Zoning Amendment

Ms. Fitzpatrick said that at its meeting on March 10, 2015, the Planning Board voted to place an article on the warrant for the 2015 Special Town Meeting amending the zoning by-law regarding retaining walls. She said under State law, the Board has fourteen days to accept the proposed amendment and refer the amendment back to the Planning Board for its review, public hearing, and report. She said the Board's action in this matter is not discretionary.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to accept the proposed zoning amendment and to refer the proposed amendment to the Planning Board for review, public hearing, and report.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0.

2. 2015 Annual Town Meeting Preparation

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed with the Board preparation for the 2015 Annual Town Meeting. She said the last opportunity to discuss the draft warrant will be on March 24, 2015, and several Town Meeting presentations are scheduled on that evening including Public Works, Solid Waste, Central Avenue bridge, sidewalk needs assessment, and the Retirement Board. She said on April 15, 2015 the Board will meet with the Planning Department, the PPBC, and School Committee regarding the high school project.

Ms. Fitzpatrick reviewed changes made to the warrant since the Board's last meeting.

8:30 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Committee Reports

Mr. Handel reported the Council of Economic Advisors discussed the mixed use Route 128/Highland Avenue retail zoning and potential residential overlay district, and its economic potential for the area. He said the Planning Board is also analyzing the area.

8:35 p.m. Executive Session: (Exception 6)

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board of Selectmen vote to enter into Executive Session.

Exception 6 - To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. Not to return to open session prior to adjournment.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Mr. Bulian polled the Board. Unanimously approved 5-0.

A list of all documents used at this Board of Selectmen meeting are available at:
<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID=>

Note: The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.