

**Town of Needham
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for February 23, 2016
Needham Town Hall**

6:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: Residents in the vicinity of Dana Place including David and Sarah Miller, Stephan and Sophia Buckley, Paul O’Keefe, Kate Doerr, and Liz Paulson discussed their concerns with idling, unattended, diesel trains overnight citing noise and air pollution. They asked the Board for help in finding a solution for all parties.

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

7:00 p.m. Newly Promoted Firefighters:
Dennis Condon, Fire Chief appeared before the Board to introduce newly promoted firefighters Lieutenant Patrick Muir, Captain Peter Vigliano, and Deputy Fire Chief Matthew Dooher.

Chief Condon said the firefighters have done a great job for the department and it is a pleasure to promote them. He commented the Town will be well served by their efforts.

The Board congratulated the firefighters on their promotions and wished them well.

7:05 p.m. Public Hearing: Eversource Energy - 25 Enslin Road
Maureen Carroll, Eversource Energy representative appeared before the Board requesting permission to install about 7 feet of conduit from pole 365/3. She said this work is necessary to provide underground electric service to 25 Enslin Road, Needham.

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager said all paperwork is in order.

Mr. Handel invited public comment. No comments were made.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 7 feet of conduit from pole 365/3. This work is necessary to provide underground electric service to 25 Enslin Road, Needham.

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

7:08 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

APPOINTMENTS

- 1. PPBC User Representatives for Public Safety Building Feasibility Study** **Dennis Condon (indefinite)**
John Schlittler (indefinite)

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Sign the Warrant for the Annual Town Election Warrant scheduled for April 12, 2016.**
- 2. Approve NBA’s request for “meter free” parking in the downtown and the Heights for Saturday’s in March as part of the “March into Spring” campaign.**
- 3. Approve a request from the Exchange Club of Needham to sponsor 4th of July fireworks on Sunday, July 3, 2016 (rain date of July 4, 2016) and activities on Sunday, July 3, 2016, and Monday, July 4, 2016. Activities on the 4th will include a Flag Raising on the Town Common, the Grand Parade, a 5K road race, the Crafts Fair/Flea Market, and athletic competitions for younger children. Coordination of all additional activities will be made with appropriate Town Departments.**
- 4. Approve minutes of January 26, 2016, February 9, 2016, and February 10, 2016 Open Session meetings; and January 26, 2016 and February 9, 2016 Executive Session meeting minutes.**
- 5. Grant permission for the following residents to hold block parties:**

Name	Address	Party Location	Party Date	Party Rain Date	Party Time
Brooks Goddard	50 Otis Street	Otis St. between Manning & Webster	5/15/16	5/22/16	12PM-3PM

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

7:09 p.m. Introduction of New Director of Veterans Services: Christopher Coleman, Assistant Town Manager/Operations appeared before the Board to introduce Ms. Sarada Kalpee, the new Director of Veterans Services for the West Suburban Veterans District. The West Suburban Veterans District is comprised of the communities of Needham, Wellesley, Weston, and Wayland. Mr. Coleman said a search for candidates was conducted by colleagues from Wellesley who did a fabulous job finding top quality candidates. He said he and Ms. Fitzpatrick participated in the search process and are very happy to have Staff Sergeant Kalpee join the district.

Staff Sergeant Kalpee gave a brief background saying she has been in the Army Reserves for 13 1/2 years as a diesel mechanic and instructor. She said she spent 14 months as a Veterans Service Officer in the City of Boston and said she looks forward to the challenges in the West Suburban district.

The Board congratulated Staff Sergeant Kalpee and welcomed her to Needham.

7:12 p.m. Major Trails Projects 2015:
Matt Varrell, Director of Conservation and Patty Carey, Director of Park and Recreation appeared before the Board with an update on the major trail projects from 2015. Mr. Varrell provided narrative for a video describing each project, which he said was a collaborative effort of many people in Needham. He spoke about projects at Ridge Hill Reservation, the Charles River Pathway, the Bay Colony Rail Trail, and the Eastman Conservation Area which he said is the “jewel in the crown” behind Newman School.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented access to walking trails and nature has been a high priority for residents who completed the Citizen’s Survey. She said the Eastman project is an amazing amenity for the Town. She also pointed out the Barnes Pathway was part of the mitigation for the Charles River Landing project, beginning where the corner of 4th and 2nd Avenues meet and running to Highland Avenue. She said it is an interesting connection between the Charles River and Newton.

Ms. Carey said the Needham portion of the Sudbury Aqueduct trail connects Great Plain Avenue through Olin and Babson Colleges, the Wellesley Country Club, through the Eliot School to Echo Bridge and is in the design phase. She said the entire Sudbury Aqueduct trail essentially connects the Town of Sudbury to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir in Chestnut Hill.

The Board thanked Mr. Varrell and Ms. Carey for their work.

7:20 p.m. Town Manager:
1. An Act to Modernize Municipal Finance and Government

Ms. Fitzpatrick discussed with the Board legislation filed by Governor Baker to modernize many financial and operational functions of cities and towns. She said the proposed legislation is terrific and that while some changes do not apply to the Town of Needham, some do apply. She said she hopes to attend the hearings and be supportive of items that improve the efficiency of government. She noted changes in Procurement procedures, Direct Deposit, Insurance/Restitution Funds threshold, and Right of First Refusal on tax exempt property, to name a few.

Mr. Handel asked if the Town should be concerned with any changes.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said she did not believe there are any concerns for the Town and commended the Baker administration for listening to the people and putting practical changes into use.

Mr. Borrelli asked if a letter from the Board of Selectmen to State delegates supporting the legislation would be helpful. Ms. Fitzpatrick said a letter would be helpful.

Mr. Matthews suggested Chairman Handel and Ms. Fitzpatrick may want to meet with Senator Ross, Senator Rush, and Representative Garlick to get input on how the Town can be helpful. He said he suspects some items may become controversial and some questions will tie up the legislation. He commented if done right, the legislation could get done this session and/or in the not too distant future.

Mr. Handel concurred with Mr. Matthews suggestion.

7:30 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Close Ascertainment Hearing - Verizon

The current cable television license held by Verizon will expire on December 4, 2016. A Cable Television Public Ascertainment Hearing for Verizon was conducted at the February 9, 2016 Board of Selectmen's meeting as mandated by the renewal provisions of the Federal Cable Act. The Board Chair, Mr. Moe Handel, stated at the conclusion of the hearing that the hearing record will remain open for fourteen (14) days to receive any additional written comments for inclusion into the hearing record. The period has expired. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated one additional letter was received from The Needham Channel with some interesting and helpful feedback they would like to see in the license renewal. Mr. Handel said comments from The Needham Channel will be considered in deliberations.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to close the Ascertainment Hearing for Verizon.

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

2. Board Goal Update

The Board discussed progress toward the Board's FY2016-2017 goals. Mr. Handel said there is a major piece of zoning being put forth by the Planning Board at the May 2016 Town Meeting relating to the creation of an overlay zone in Mixed-use 128 to allow for multi-family housing. He noted some concern by members of the Board of Selectmen and asked for comment.

Mr. Bulian said he believes mixed-use is the vision and an important part for the Needham Crossing area. He said a residential component will house some employees of the businesses and will cut down of vehicular traffic. Mr. Bulian commented the proposed zoning article for the Wexford Street area should be similar to that of Charles River Landing which has a higher percentage of 1 bedroom units, a smaller percentage of 2 bedroom units, and no 3 bedroom units. He said the configuration will achieve a balance that addresses the need for workforce housing while reducing the likelihood of a large student enrollment.

Mr. Borrelli agreed with much of Mr. Bulian's comments and stated this is the first time as a Board, outside of Chapter 40B, to craft zoning to benefit the Town. He said it is an opportunity to impact a large scale development in the area for the benefit of Needham. Mr. Borrelli said apartments and condominiums for people

who are down-sizing should be available, not high rent apartments people can't afford.

Mr. Matthews said further discussion on the article is necessary. He said allowing denser residential development in the area was part of trying to get the Town to plan its own housing strategy, as opposed to constantly being under the threat of litigation under Chapter 40B. He said now with the proposed zoning and at the same time finally achieving 10% State SHI count for affordable housing, the Town should step back to review. He said there are two issues, commenting there are specific goals the Town wants to try and achieve. He said the Town has a good school system, and for people who aspire to have good educational opportunities for their children, the Town should try to reduce economic barriers. He said he understands there are different views which could be addressed when a specific project is being designed because everything under zoning is subject to a special permit process that is extremely strict in which the Planning Board has an extraordinary level of control. Mr. Matthews said the wording of the article should be reviewed. In particular, he said the definition of affordability should match with State regulations and statutes. He said he is concerned that the language in the article states that at least 10% of the units be affordable in the area, but he said that number is not high enough. He said he feels that way because it's an area where the Town should try and have more affordable housing because it's less likely to happen in other areas. Mr. Matthews said the Town's current affordable housing percentage is at risk of eroding as more single family housing is built. He said whenever significant multi-family housing is allowed, the Town should look to have 20% affordable units in order to keep the Town from slowly slipping back into a situation of under 10% affordable housing. He said it is important the Town continue to have the ability to control its own zoning and not become a target for development it does not want.

Ms. Cooley said she supports the zoning for mixed-use and inclusion of residential housing. She said she hears the concerns but takes comfort in the special permit approval process, which will give the Board time to solidify its opinion. She said more thought is needed as to the potential impact.

Mr. Handel said when zoning was crafted, a consultant told the Board the number of potential students was relatively low for this particular development. He said the economics of the municipal services is still cost effective (cost of services vs. the value of the property and real estate taxes it yields). He said Mr. Matthews pointed out a legitimate concern. He said the Board will have an opportunity to comment at the Planning Board's meeting on March 15, 2016, and it would be good to have a summary of points made tonight.

Mr. Bulian said it may be beneficial to break the project into two smaller complexes to include 55+ housing. He said he is not a fan of 3 bedroom apartments and is concerned about the number of students in the schools. He said the actions of the Board of Selectmen and the Zoning Board of Appeals with respect to development

on Greendale Avenue will bring additional students. He said the units have yet to be built, but the numbers will be higher than Charles River Landing. He suggested being cautious. He said it is clear to him it is unlikely anything will be built in the foreseeable future due to the complexity of the location and the need for 2 acres. He concurred the Town is living in a post Chapter 40B environment that needs to be managed. He agreed with Mr. Matthews that the Town needs to be aware and not fall back under the 10% affordable housing threshold. Mr. Bulian said he is concerned about achieving affordable residential housing without it being subsidized. He said the answer lies in very difficult decisions and that he is not sure how to do it.

Mr. Borrelli said this is the only opportunity for the Town, in the next 10 years, to impact and satisfy a need of both workforce and 55+ housing. He said it would be ideal to satisfy both needs.

Mr. Handel said the time to do something is now, and summarized the Board supports the concept, wants realistic housing for the needs of the Town not to overburden its resources, without compromising the 10% affordability ratio.

Mr. Matthews said there are 2 issues (1) is the language of the warrant article sufficient for the Board's purposes and (2) are there other issues. He commented it is important the Board of Selectmen speak with one voice.

Ms. Cooley wondered if there was data relating to the percentage of the units that are statutorily affordable. She wondered what that would do to the price of the other units. She said her experience is that the percentage pushes the price higher on the other units. She commented it is a significant concern. She said she agrees with Mr. Matthews's point of staying "ahead of the curve," but it is in conflict with Mr. Borrelli's question about general affordability. She said she is hopeful the schools will absorb the students coming into already approved development. She noted, other than the Mill Creek development, the building is within a single school district in a part of town under significant redevelopment.

Mr. Bulian said he envisions people moving from a single family home and purchasing property in the same price range. He said he is interested in providing housing for people in the lower range of the Needham housing market who no longer wish to maintain and upkeep of a single family home. He asked if the warrant article should delineate between one or two complexes.

Mr. Handel said it may be better to concentrate efforts on the type of housing rather than where to put various sized housing. He said the market should decide within the constraints of the special permit requirements, rather than dictate a certain type.

Mr. Borrelli agreed high end units are not going to satisfy the current need.

Mr. Matthews said if Town Meeting approves the article, the Planning Board will have the discretion to make the decisions regarding development guidelines. He said it is important to share the Board of Selectmen view with the planners and for the public to understand the policies.

3. Committee Reports

Mr. Handel said a meeting will be held on March 2, 2016 at 7 p.m. at the Eliot School regarding the closure of the Eliot/Central Avenue bridge in July 2016 for up to 6 months for construction. He invited the public to attend.

8:10 p.m.

Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting of February 23, 2016.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. 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=>