

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for November 12, 2019
Needham Town Hall
Powers Hall**

- 6:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No activity.
- 7:00 p.m. Call to Order:
A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair John A. Bulian. Those present were Maurice P. Handel, Matthew D. Borrelli, Marianne B. Cooley, Daniel P. Matthews, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt.
- 7:00 p.m. Introduce Public Information Officer:
Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager introduced Cyndi Roy Gonzalez, the newly appointed Public Information Officer for Needham. Ms. Fitzpatrick said the Town's social media presence has skyrocketed since Ms. Gonzalez started working eleven days ago. She commented Ms. Gonzalez brings fifteen years of work experience in the public sector and already fits in as part of the Needham team.
- The Board congratulated Ms. Gonzalez on her appointment and wished her well in her new position.
- 7:05 p.m. Public Hearing for the Removal of (1) One Public Shade Tree at 66 Otis Street, Needham, MA:
Edward Olsen, Tree Warden, Parks & Forestry Superintendent appeared before the Board to discuss a request from Karen Langsner, 66 Otis Street to remove one public shade tree located in the grass berm. It was noted this tree has been negatively impacted by the demolition of the previous dwelling and the new construction of a home on this property. The Public Shade tree sustained serious and direct root damage as a result of the construction activities for the new home. Over the past year this tree has begun to show signs of crown decline and dieback. Mr. Olsen said he is concerned these signs are of an impending slow death. Mr. Olsen stated he does not object to the removal of the tree, at the owner's expense, and recommends a donation be made in the amount of \$500 to cover the cost of purchasing two trees to replace the loss of this tree.
- Mr. Bulian invited public comment.
- Alan Langsner, owner of 66 Otis Street said he hates the idea of cutting the tree down, but said safety is his concern. He asked for the Board's approval to remove the tree.
- Brooks Goddard, 59 Otis Street acknowledged the tree must be removed, and stated the planting of two Sugar Maples in front of the house are necessary in addition to planting some ornamental trees, which he said would help the neighborhood look

nicer. He asked for the sidewalk, damaged during construction, be replaced. Mr. Brooks stated he placed two notices concerning the sidewalk on the Town's See Click Fix website.

Emily Abbott, 60 Otis Street reiterated the damage to the tree is from the developer's treatment of the neighborhood while building the house. She said many trees have needlessly been removed, resulting in higher profit for the developer. She concurred the sidewalk must be replaced. Ms. Abbott said she is heartbroken with the number of trees that have been removed, as people move to Needham because of the shady tree lined streets.

Mr. Bulian closed the public hearing and asked for Board comment.

Discussion ensued on replacement of two new trees.

Mr. Matthews suggested it may make sense to impose restrictions when working in and around public shade trees and sidewalks.

Ms. Cooley acknowledged removal of the tree is necessary. She commented planting two new trees in the berm will potentially lead to the same root constriction problem. She asked if shade trees could be planted on private property, where roots would have more room to grow? Mr. Olsen said Needham has a tree planting program, planting 70 to 80 trees a year, the majority of which are planted on a front lawn. He said trees planted in a front lawn become private property, noting the Town therefore does not have legacy costs associated with the trees.

Mr. Borrelli asked if a Sugar Maple tree is the best choice of tree to plant? He suggested another type of tree be planted. Mr. Olsen said Otis Street is very narrow, suggesting a Crab Apple tree may be a better choice. He commented the \$500 donation is for two Sugar Maple trees to be planted elsewhere in Needham.

Mr. Bulian suggested Rick Merson, DPW Director go look at the sidewalk on Otis Street.

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to approve and sign the Public Shade Tree Hearing form for the removal of one 26.5 inch Sugar Maple tree in front berm of 66 Otis Street.

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

7:23 p.m.

MWRA Grant/Loan Approval:

David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Finance and Evelyn Pones, Town Treasurer/Controller appeared before the Board to discuss the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority offer to member communities of a zero-interest loan for certain sewer system improvements. The program also provides a grant. Mr. Davison noted the grant is for \$360,000 and the loan is for \$440,000. He asked that

the Board approve the Bond and the financial assistance agreement with the MWRA.

Motion by Mr. Handel that:

Motion A

The sale of the \$440,000 Sewer Bond of the Town dated November 18, 2019, to Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (the “Authority”) is hereby approved and the Town Treasurer or other appropriate Town official is authorized to execute on behalf of the Town a Loan Agreement and a Financial Assistant Agreement with the Authority with respect to the bond. The bond shall be payable without interest on November 15 of the years and in the principal amounts as follows:

Year	Installment
2020	\$88,000
2021	\$88,000
2022	\$88,000
2023	\$88,000
2024	\$88,000

and further,

Motion B

That each member of the Select Board, the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing vote.

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

Mr. Davison noted the attendance of Tedi Eaton, Town Clerk as witness.

7:27 p.m.

Appointments and Consent Agenda:

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Select Board vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

APPOINTMENTS: No Appointments were made at this meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Approve the following donations made to the Needham Park and Recreation Commission: \$784.61 from Cricket Field Neighbors for a donation to Cricket Field; \$1,000 from Middlesex Savings Bank for Arts in the Parks/Children’s Theatre Performances; \$50 from Magomed Imakaev for a donation to**

Rosemary Pool; \$25 from Evelyn Wall for a donation to the Trust Fund for Parks; and \$50 from Claire Blum for a donation to the Trust Fund for Parks.

2. Approve the following donations made to Needham Youth & Family Services to be used towards future programs in the Youth & Family Services Department: \$100 from the Purrington family; \$25 from the Farse Family; and 60 from the Schneiderman family.
3. Accept the following donations made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: \$250 from Ms. MaryRuth Perras, \$400 from Edward and Carol De Lemos, and \$3000 from JMS Family Foundation, Inc.
4. Accept a \$200 donation made to the Needham Health Division’s Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (SPAN) from the Needham Golf Club.
5. Approve a One Day Special Wines & Malt Beverages License for Jennifer Howard Schroeder, of the Needham Human Rights Committee, to host an event called “Free At Last Wrongful Convictions” on Friday, November 15, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Center at the Heights located at 300 Hillside Avenue, Needham, MA.
6. Accept a donation of an AED (automated external defibrillator) at Memorial Park from Needham Flag Football. The defibrillator is valued at \$1,408.88.
7. Accept a donation of \$1,100 from Rockland Trust Bank for the Needham Lights event on December 7, 2019.
8. Ratify Veterans’ Day Proclamation
9. Approve SolarizeMass Plus Banner for use in the Chapel Street Banner Showcase program as administered by the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund. These (5) five banners will be displayed as soon as possible from November through March 2020.
10. Water & Sewer Abatement Order #1283
11. Grant permission for the following residents to hold block parties:

Name	Address	Party Location	Party Date	Party Rain Date	Party Time
Ratify - Emily Roach	24 Ellicott St.	Hatfield Park	10/20/19	10/27/19	3pm-6pm
Ratify - Kelly Allen	103 Sylvan Rd.	Oak Crest/Sylvan	10/20/19	N/A	2pm-6pm

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

7:27 p.m.

Town Manager:

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

1. Green Communities Designation
Ms. Fitzpatrick reminded the Board of the public hearing it held on October 16, 2019 where it received input as to whether the Town should seek Green Communities Designation. Ms. Fitzpatrick recommended the Select Board adopt the Energy Reduction Plan and Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy (SB-ADMIN.006) and to submit an application for Green Communities Designation,

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board vote to adopt the Energy Reduction Plan and Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy and to submit an application for Green Communities Designation.

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

Mr. Matthews commented the process has been through, with positive community feedback. He said a number of specific questions were satisfactorily answered by the consultant and the program makes sense.

Ms. Cooley observed the public hearing comment period from the October 16, 2019 Select Board meeting was left open, with further positive comments received. She said the Finance Committee had been worried about increasing the obligations of the Town without sufficient controls, however, were persuaded that adopting the plan and applying for Green Community Designation was the responsible thing to do.

Mr. Handel noted the Select Board made sure the Town could fully meet the obligations of being a Green Community.

The Board moved on to the Pedestrian Safety Audit Public Hearing.

7:32 p.m.

Pedestrian Safety Audit Public Hearing:

Richard Merson, Director of Public Works, Nicole Rogers, Engineer, Greenman-Pedersen, and John Diaz, Director of Innovation, Greenman-Pedersen appeared before the Board with an update on the progress toward the implementation of the preliminary high-risk crosswalk location recommendations.

Mr. Diaz spoke about the benefits of investing in pedestrian safety, compiling information, and listening to community concerns for the safety audit. He commented on the likelihood of severe injury or fatality based on speed and that pedestrian related collisions town-wide are on the rise.

A Powerpoint presentation was viewed. Ms. Rogers commented on policy recommendations including the possibility of a lower town-wide speed limit, safety zone implementation, crosswalk installations, high-risk crosswalk locations, wheelchair ramp accessibility, and traffic signs and street lighting upgrades.

Mr. Handel commented on speed limits and traffic calming options on major roads, particularly on Highland Avenue, the intersection of Hillside Avenue at West Street, and crosswalks along Webster Street.

Ms. Cooley commented on the parking/bike lane on Beaufort Avenue and its lack of crosswalks, and the speed limit on Dedham Avenue at DeFazio Park, suggesting the current 40 mph limit should be lower.

Mr. Borrelli commented on the crosswalks at the intersections of Linden Street and Maple Street at Great Plain Avenue, while noting the elimination of the crosswalk at the train tracks. He said he would like some solutions for the area. Mr. Borrelli shared his concern for traffic on Webster Street, suggesting further discussion is necessary before installing bike lanes. He wondered if the hawk signal system would be better, rather than a supplemental system to slow traffic.

Mr. Bulian invited public comment.

Richard Oppenheimer, 668 Webster Street said he likes some of the ideas in the audit, but some suggestions are problematic. He noted Highland Avenue near Memorial Field should have two crosswalks at the stairs, not one. He said he favors using devices rather than enforcement to slow traffic. He suggested Great Plain Avenue in the downtown should be one lane in each direction, not two, with diagonal parking. He said consideration should be given for controlled intersections on Webster Street, particularly at Kingsbury Street and May Street. Mr. Oppenheimer said more stop signs are needed on Manning Street.

Felicia Mathias, 354 Webster Street commented on a petition signed by 500 residents who want an automated crosswalk warning light system, reduced speed limits, radar signs, posted speed limits, and increased street lighting on Webster Street from Kingsbury Street to Rosemary Street. She said she spoke with the TMAC and MassDOT concerning the intersection of Webster Street at Highland Avenue due to the number of times she and her children, while walking to Eliot School, were nearly hit by cars making a right on red. She said while signs are posted, there is confusion. Ms. Mathias noted the audit does not consider Temple Beth Shalom on the corner which is frequently used.

Discussion ensued on the impact on signaling at the intersection of Webster Street at Highland Avenue when the state begins their work as it relates to the corridor project along Highland Avenue.

Anita Ritchie, 1024 Greendale Avenue thanked the Town for commissioning the audit. She asked for clarification on the meaning of “state speed zone in a thickly settled area,” noting children walk and bike to Broadmeadow School.

Ms. Rogers said Greendale Avenue is a special speed regulation road. Mr. Diaz clarified regulatory state speed limit signs cannot be changed, even if a 20 mph speed limit is adopted by the Town. He said a regulated state speed sign surpasses a “thickly settled” 30 mph speed sign. He commented, in most cases, changing the speed limit will not change driving behavior. He said Greendale Avenue is a straight, wide open road. Mr. Diaz said a speed study could increase the speed limit, saying the character of the road must be changed first, then do a speed study.

Ms. Cooley said the Town has options when it comes to 40 mph roads. She said knowing that if the Town were to undertake traffic calming measures, it is a

legitimate question. She said there are areas around school crossings where it makes sense to narrow the roadway to reduce speed.

Jeff Friedman, 28 Perrault Road said periodic enforcement can be effective. He suggested a police car be parked at the intersection of Pickering Street at Great Plain Avenue so drivers become aware of possible enforcement.

Mr. Handel said the issue is societal and that drivers are distracted. He said the Needham community should speak with state and federal representatives about the growing problem that affects everyone.

Mr. Bulian said pedestrians must take responsibility to make sure they are seen. He said everyone needs to be careful.

Mr. Bulian closed the public hearing.

Ms. Cooley said it would be worthwhile to petition state representatives to support allowing towns to use camera enforcement, which is currently prohibited.

Discussion ensued on complete street grants, lighting, sidewalk visibility, stairs at Memorial Park onto Highland Avenue, traffic calming measures around schools, and signage.

The Board thanked the presenters for the information.

Mr. Merson updated the Board on the RFP's for projects in the preliminary study, including sidewalk inventory, handicap accessibility, and signage.

The Board resumed discussion of Town Manager agenda items.

8:44 p.m.

Town Manager:

2. Town Manager Report

Ms. Fitzpatrick recognized Christopher Coleman, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Operations who will be leaving Needham to join the Town of Westwood as the new Town Administrator. Ms. Fitzpatrick acknowledged Mr. Coleman's 14 years of service to Needham and the impact he has had on the Town and its employees. Ms. Fitzpatrick said Mr. Coleman will be hard to replace and thanked him for his dedication to Needham, wishing him the best in his new role in Westwood.

The Board congratulated Mr. Coleman, offering him their best wishes and congratulations. They thanked him for all his "behind the scenes" work for Needham.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said a coffee will be held Wednesday, November 20, 2019, at 3:30 p.m. in Powers Hall to thank Mr. Coleman for his service to Needham. The public is invited to attend.

9:53 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Committee Reports

No Committee Reports were made.

9:55 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting of Tuesday, November 12, 2019.

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

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting are available at:

<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID=>