

Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, December 8, 2020
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/830124974485>

5:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No Activity.

6:00 p.m. Call to Order:

A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Maurice P. Handel. Those participating were Matthew D. Borrelli, Marianne B. Cooley, Daniel P. Matthews, John A. Bulian, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, Dave Davison, ATM/Finance, Katie King, ATM/Operations, and Sandy Cincotta, Support Services Manager. Recording Secretary Mary Hunt recorded the meeting remotely.

Mr. Handel announced this open meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020 due to the current state of emergency from the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. He noted all public gatherings have been suspended as advised and directed by the Commonwealth. And, as such, suspending the requirement of the open meeting law to have all meetings in a public, accessible, physical location while encouraging and allowing members of all public bodies to participate remotely. Mr. Handel stated the meeting will include public comment and the Needham Select Board and all attendees are convening by Zoom, as posted on the Town's website identifying how the public may join. He said all supporting documents used at this meeting are available on the Town's website www.needhamma.gov.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that this meeting be continued to the Select Board's next scheduled meeting on Tuesday, December 22, 2020, if a technical problem develops that makes it impossible for the Select Board to conduct the meeting in this format.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:02 p.m. Tax Property Classification Hearing:

Chip Davis, Director of Assessing and members of the Board of Assessors including Walter McDonough, Stanley Winston, and Arthur Tzouros spoke with the Board regarding the allocation of the fiscal year 2021 tax levy among the various classes of property in Town.

Mr. McDonough read a prepared statement saying the third quarter of FY2021 will be the first tax bill that has produced usable values from the new Tyler Technologies IAS CAMA software. He noted it is the capstone to a project that has been underway since the downsizing of the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services several years ago. He said overall, the average change in value for all types of real estate in the conversion was less than 1%. He commented the efforts of the entire assessing staff through all of 2019 and 2020 led to this result, which was well below the 2.5% discrepancy rate called for in the conversion

contract. He said Needham's conversion accuracy was extensively reviewed by the DOR staff throughout the summer and early fall. He said Needham is beginning to see tangible feedback from the "small house" zoning changes instituted two years ago. He noted that while some builders appear to have changed their game; in that they are now buying older homes to upgrade, add to, and sell as what could be termed "semi new construction"; the teardown/rebuilt cycle has not abated. He said if the current sales price boom for all new construction continues, it appears, the new zoning regulations will have no detrimental effect on the market. Mr. McDonough said in what could be termed a "more lucky than good" move, the Assessing Department contracted with a new vendor to gather field data on residential new construction. He said the fact that this vendor was in place prior to the onset of the current health crisis proved to be a godsend, in light of the fact, that the technology that they employed allowed complicated properties to be measured without actually getting close to the property. Additionally, he said to track interior renovations, normally updated by onsite inspections, the office innovatively shifted gears yet again by sending letters to homeowners asking that they respond as to the progress on the projects underway. He said this effort will hopefully avoid a diminution of new growth going forward, in spite of the pandemic restrictions on the staff.

Mr. McDonough commented on Needham Crossing projects on the horizon, in addition to the planned revitalization and expansion of the Avery Manor property which he said bodes well for the continued expansion of the personal property account inventory. Unfortunately, he said, the Town has already been advised that the number of smaller accounts will become economic victims of the virus. He said values of established commercial properties moved slightly upward, for the seventh year in a row, in what for calendar 2019 appeared to be a stable commercial/industrial sector.

Mr. McDonough said FY2022 will undoubtedly tell a different story. He noted FY21 values are based on calendar 2019 economic activity, but FY2022 values will be based on CY2020 activity. He said that while many landlords will be cushioned by leases that obligate 2020 payments from their tenants, there will surely be necessary economic concessions made to retain tenants going forward. He said the effects of these possibilities are not predictable at this time, but what is certain is that properties that function as service businesses such as hotels will require severe downward adjustments based on the pandemic induced reduction attributable to the property. He credited staff, working in a combined onsite/remote environment, with meeting all benchmarks in all areas of assessment operations.

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

Ms. Cooley said a comment was received ahead of the meeting by someone asking the Board to move the maximum amount to commercial properties, if possible. She noted a formula is in place that does move a significant portion of the tax burden to

commercial properties. She acknowledged the burden on commercial property owners, who are also facing a challenging time.

Mr. Borrelli suggested it may be a time to consider a shift back from commercial properties. He said there may or may not be a way to help the commercial property owners.

Mr. Matthews spoke about the history of annually meeting with the Assessors. He commented on the legal and technical decisions regarding the surcharge the Select Board will place on commercial assessed properties vs. residential properties. He commented on the maximum allowable shift and its effect on businesses, noting the Town has been creative in its thinking and provided some relief, but more needs to be done. He suggested the maximum allowable shift is not the right tool to use to help businesses.

Mr. Bulian read a letter from a resident saying the level of taxes are becoming unaffordable. He concurred residential taxes have been going up too fast, noting a year ago he spoke about slowing the rate. Mr. Bulian pointed out the pandemic has shown that people need food and help, and it is a tough time for everyone.

Mr. Borrelli suggested Select Board members keep an open mind as to the shift.

Mr. Handel said it makes sense to review the shift, noting equity is key.

Motion by Mr. Matthews that the Select Board establish a residential factor of 0.8861 for the purposes of setting the Fiscal Year 2021 tax rates.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:23 p.m. Appointments and Consent Agenda:

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

APPOINTMENTS

- 1. Needham Cultural Council Joni Schockett (term expires 6/30/2023)**
- 2. Needham Cultural Council Bala Muthukaruppan (term expires 6/30/2023)**
- 3. MBTA Advisory Board Duncan Allen (term expires 6/30/2023)**

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Approve for calendar year 2021 requests for license renewals of Restaurant – All Alcoholic Licenses for each of the following establishments (subject to receipt of required completed paperwork):**
 - Zucchini Gold, LLC d/b/a The Rice Barn**
 - Bertucci’s Restaurants, LLC d/b/a Bertucci’s**
 - Henry Hospitality Inc. d/b/a The James**
 - Mount Blue Two, LLC d/b/a Blue on Highland**
 - New Garden, Inc. d/b/a New Garden Restaurant**

- TDRG Needham, Inc. d/b/a Cook Needham
 - Fusion Cuisine, Inc. d/b/a Gari
 - Sol Soul Family Foods, LLC d/b/a Hearth Pizzeria
 - SAI Restaurants, Inc. d/b/a Masala Art
 - Fu Yuan, Inc. d/b/a Fuji Steak House
 - Low and Zhang Co. d/b/a Mandarin Cuisine Locus
 - Eat Farmhouse LLC d/b/a The Farmhouse
 - Needham Food and Beverage LLC d/b/a The Heights
 - Capella LLC d/b/a Cappella • Spiga, LLC d/b/a Spiga
 - Latin-A Group LLC d/b/a Latina Kitchen and Bar
 - Poet King Restaurant Group LLC. d/b/a Hungry Coyote
 - Pancho's Taqueria Needham, LLC d/b/a Pancho's Taqueria
2. Approve for calendar year 2021 request for license renewal of Restaurant – Wine and Malt Beverage License for the following establishment (subject to receipt of required completed paperwork):
 - French Press LLC d/b/a French Press Bakery & Café
 3. Approve for calendar year 2021 requests for license renewals of Package Stores- All Alcoholic Beverages for the following establishments (subject to receipt of required completed paperwork):
 - Innovative Distributing Concepts, LLC d/b/a Bin Ends
 - Lianos Liquors, LLC d/b/a Needham Center Wine & Spirits
 - Needham Wine & Spirits, LLC d/b/a Needham Wine & Spirits
 - Reveler Beverage Company, LLC d/b/a Reveler Beverage
 - vinodivino 3, LLC d/b/a vinodivino
 4. Approve for calendar year 2021 requests for license renewals of Package Stores- Wine and Malt Beverages for the following establishment:
 - Volante Farms
 5. Approve for calendar year 2021 request for Innholder – All Alcoholic License Renewal for the following establishments:
 - Needham 365 Bev, LLC. d/b/a Residence Inn
 - Needham Cabot Concessions, LLC d/b/a Sheraton Needham Hotel
 6. Approve for calendar year 2021 requests for license renewals of Club – All Alcoholic Beverage Licenses for the following establishments (subject to receipt of required completed paperwork):
 - The Needham Golf Club • Village Club Building Assoc. Inc.
 - Lt. Manson Carter Post #2498 V.F.W. of U.S.
 7. Approve for calendar year 2021 requests for license renewals of Common Victualler Licenses for the following establishments (subject to receipt of required completed paperwork):
 - Bagels' Best, Inc. d/b/a Bagels' Best Café
 - Bertucci's Restaurants, LLC d/b/a Bertucci's
 - Beth Israel Deaconess – Glover Café
 - Mount Blue Two, LLC d/b/a Blue on Highland
 - C & D Management, Inc. d/b/a Brothers Pizza & Restaurant
 - Coffee and Fresh Bagels Inc. d/b/a Café Fresh Bagel
 - Capella LLC d/b/a Cappella

- **Chef Mike's LLC d/b/a Chef Mike's**
- **North Hill Needham, Inc. d/b/a Central Avenue Café**
- **LPM Holding Co., Inc. d/b/a Epicurean Feast - Cutler Lake**
- **1095, LLC d/b/a Comella's Restaurant**
- **TDRG Needham, Inc. d/b/a Cook Needham**
- **Your Other Oven, Inc. d/b/a Domino's Pizza**
- **Lin and Xie Corp. d/b/a Dragon Chef Restaurant**
- **ND Donuts d/b/a Dunkin' • ND Donuts d/b/a Dunkin'**
- **ND Donuts d/b/a Dunkin'**
- **Eat Farmhouse, LLC d/b/a The Farmhouse**
- **French Press LLC d/b/a French Press Bakery & Café**
- **Select Group, Inc. d/b/a Fresco Restaurant**
- **Fu Yuan, Inc. d/b/a Fuji Steak House**
- **Fusion Cuisine d/b/a Gari • 1056 Gyro and Kebab House Corp d/b/a Gyro and Kebab House**
- **Needham Food and Beverage LLC d/b/a The Heights**
- **Poet King Restaurant Group LLC. d/b/a Hungry Coyote**
- **Henry Hospitality Inc. d/b/a The James**
- **Three Sons, Inc. d/b/a Kosta's Pizza & Seafood**
- **Latin-A Group LLC d/b/a Latina Kitchen and Bar**
- **Low and Zhang Co. d/b/a Mandarin Cuisine Locus • SAI Restaurants, Inc. d/b/a Masala Art • McDonald's Restaurant – Needham**
- **D & L Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a Mighty Subs**
- **The Needham Golf Club, Inc. • International Needham House of Pizza d/b/a Needham House of Pizza**
- **A New Leaf • New Garden Inc. d/b/a New Garden Restaurant**
- **Select Pizza d/b/a Nicholas' Pizza**
- **PAN LLC. d/b/a Panella's Market & Deli**
- **Boston Bread LLC d/b/a Panera**
- **Pancho's Taqueria Needham, LLC d/b/a Pancho's Taqueria**
- **Needham 365 Bev. LLC d/b/a Residence Inn**
- **Zucchini Gold, LLC d/b/a The Rice Barn**
- **Needham Cabot Concessions, LLC d/b/a Sheraton Needham Hotel**
- **Servente Bakery & Café Inc. d/b/a Servente Bakery & Café**
- **Spiga, LLC • Starbucks Coffee Company**
- **Sol Soul Family Foods LLC d/b/a Hearth Pizzeria**
- **Subway of Needham LLC d/b/a Subway**
- **Yeat Inc. d/b/a Sweet Basil**
- **H & B Pizza, Inc. d/b/a Sweet Tomatoes Pizza**
- **Niki Corp. d/b/a Town House of Pizza**
- **Treat LLC d/b/a Treat Cupcake Bar**
- **Lt. Manson Carter Post 2498 V.F.W. of U.S.**
- **Village Club Building Assoc. Inc.**
- **Volante Farms**

8. Approve for calendar year 2021 requests for various license renewals as detailed below for the following establishments (subject to receipt of required completed paperwork):
 - Needham 365 Bev. LLC d/b/a Residence Inn - Innkeeper
 - Needham Cabot Concessions, LLC d/b/a Sheraton Needham Hotel – Innkeeper
 - Olin College – Lodging License
 - Babson College – Lodging License • 7-Eleven – Special Permit (24 hr. retail sale of food)
 - Yeat Inc. d/b/a Sweet Basil – Special Permit (Carry In Beer/Wine)
 - Needham Cabot Concessions, LLC d/b/a Sheraton Needham Hotel – Sunday Entertainment
 - Needham Cabot Concessions, LLC d/b/a Sheraton Needham Hotel – Weekday Entertainment
 - SAI Restaurants, Inc. d/b/a Masala Art – Weekday Entertainment
 - SAI Restaurants, Inc. d/b/a Masala Art- Sunday Entertainment
 - Mount Blue Two, LLC d/b/a Blue on Highland – Weekday Entertainment
 - Mount Blue Two, LLC d/b/a Blue on Highland – Sunday Entertainment
 - New Garden Inc. d/b/a New Garden- Weekday Entertainment
 - Henry Hospitality Inc. d/b/a The James- Weekday Entertainment
 - Henry Hospitality Inc. d/b/a The James- Sunday Entertainment
9. Approve for calendar year 2021 the following requests for Class I & Class II Used Car Dealer Licenses (subject to receipt of required completed paperwork):
 - Auto International Ltd.- Class II • Beth L Auto Sales – Class II
 - Center Automotive – Class II • Chestnut Motors - Class II
 - Copley Motorcars – Class II • Needham Service Center – Class II
 - Muzi Chevrolet – Class I • Muzi Motors, Inc. – Class I
10. Accept the following donations made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: \$1000 from Bradley White, \$500 from Edward & Carol De Lemos, \$500 from Heffernan Associates, \$250 from Copley Motorcars, \$250 from Maryruth Perras, \$250 from Needham Florist, \$100 from Karen Beth Hoffman, \$100 from Kate Carter, \$100 from Marianne Cooley, \$100 from Pura Vido, \$50 from Elizabeth Ann Ritvo, \$50 from Ipsit Vahia, \$50 from Jennifer Quinn, \$50 from Patricia Ahern, \$25 from Barbara Levitov, \$25 from Beth Marcus, \$25 from Donna Vello, \$25 from Jean Higgins, \$25 from Jennifer Byrne, \$25 from Maura Casey, \$25 from Patricia Carey, \$20 from Lisa Tran, and \$10 from Joan Schockett.
11. Water and Sewer Abatement Order #1300
12. Accept a \$1,000 donation made to the Needham Health Division's Traveling Meals Program from the Darshana Thakore Family Fund.
13. Approve name change for the Needham Cultural Council to the Needham Council for Arts and Culture.
14. Extend expiration of Spring Licenses from August 31, 2020 to April 30, 2021.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:25 p.m.

Approve Sale of Notes:

Dave Davison, ATM/Finance and Evelyn Pones, Town Treasurer reviewed the results of the bond anticipation note sale and discussed the upcoming borrowings with the Select Board. Mr. Davison discussed the sale of the note, premium associated with the note, and the projects it will finance. He asked the Select Board to approve the sale, noting the appropriate documents have already been signed electronically.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to approve and sign Motions A - F listed below:

Motion A

Move that the Board approve the sale of a \$2,800,000 1.75 percent General Obligation Bond Anticipation Notes (the “Notes”) of the Town dated December 18, 2020, and payable April 15, 2021, to Piper Sandler Co. at par and accrued interest, if any, plus a premium of \$11,396.00.

Motion B

Move that in connection with the marketing and sale of the Notes, the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Sale and Preliminary Official Statement dated November 19, 2020, as revised December 1, 2020, and a final Official Statement dated December 3, 2020, each in such form as may be approved by the Town Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Motion C

Move that the Town Treasurer and the Select Board be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a significant events disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the Town, which undertaking shall be incorporated by reference in the Notes for the benefit of the holders of the Notes from time to time.

Motion D

Move that we authorize and direct the Town Treasurer to establish post issuance federal tax compliance procedures and continuing disclosure procedures in such forms as the Town Treasurer and bond counsel deem sufficient, or if such procedures are currently in place, to review and update said procedures, in order to monitor and maintain the tax-exempt status of the Notes and to comply with relevant securities laws.

Motion E

Move that any certificates or documents relating to the Notes (collectively, the “Documents”), may be executed in several counterparts, each of which shall be regarded as an original and all of which shall constitute one and the same document; delivery of an executed counterpart of a signature page to a

Document by electronic mail in a “.pdf” file or by other electronic transmission shall be as effective as delivery of a manually executed counterpart signature page to such Document; and electronic signatures on any of the Documents shall be deemed original signatures for the purposes of the Documents and all matters relating thereto, having the same legal effect as original signatures.

Motion F

Move 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 votes.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

It was noted Theodora Eaton, Town Clerk is observing the meeting remotely.

6:30 p.m. Director of Public Works:
Carys Lustig, Interim DPW Director spoke with the Select Board regarding three items:

1. Sign Notice of Traffic Regulation Revision - Chestnut Street at Oak Street
Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to approve and sign the Notice of Traffic Regulation Permit #TS20-12-08 for the amendment of existing Traffic Signal Regulation Permit #B-1500a Chestnut Street at Oak Street by eliminating the lag green phase for Chestnut Street northbound.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

2. Sign Notice of Traffic Regulation Revision - Central Avenue at Great Plain Avenue
Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board vote to approve and sign the Notice of Traffic Regulation Permit #TS20-12-08a for the amendment of existing Traffic Signal Regulation Permit #B-1652 Central Avenue at Great Plain Avenue by revising the signal timing of the Central Avenue northbound and southbound approach phases and exclusive pedestrian phase.
Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

3. Public Works Snow & Ice Preparation Update
Ms. Lustig provided an update on the Public Works Department’s preparation for the upcoming snow season. She commented on the Town’s snow program and things that may be different this year, due in part, to the pandemic and some challenging market conditions. Discussion ensued on staffing requirements and heavy equipment needed for handling snow. Ms. Lustig spoke about the difficulty attracting contractors to work the snow season, noting turnover and less snow, and that Needham is down about 16 pieces of equipment, much of it heavy equipment. She said for the upcoming season, it is anticipated public safety will still be facilitated during snow events, but not to the level of efficiency in prior years. She

asked residents to be aware of the challenges, knowing a good snow service will still be provided. She commented on new Covid-19 protocols in place, and the new Snow and Ice Pilot program for the downtown.

Mr. Borrelli asked what the protocol is for ice melt on sidewalks at schools, particularly at the high school. Ms. Lustig said salting sidewalks is extremely labor intensive and not usually done unless there is an extreme icing event.

Ms. Cooley asked if the sidewalk snow program can be done in the Heights? Ms. Lustig said the program is limited at the moment and meant to test equipment purchased by the Town. She said it is possible for a more comprehensive program in the future.

6:45 p.m.

Town Manager:

Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager spoke with the Board regarding four items:

1. Proposed Snow Removal & Snow Hauling Exemption Legislation

Ms. Fitzpatrick recommended the Select Board authorize the submission of a proposal to exempt snow removal and snow hauling services from the provisions of M.G.L. c. 30B - the Uniform Procurement Act - to the Town's legislative delegation.

Motion by Mr. Borrelli that the Select Board authorize the Town Manager to contact the Town's legislative delegation and propose an amendment to M.G.L. c. 30B to include "snow removal and snow hauling" in the exceptions listed under Section 1(b)(17).

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

2. Heather Lane Definitive Subdivision & Heather Lane Extension Residential Compound and Definitive Subdivision

Ms. Fitzpatrick told the Select Board that the Planning Board required two declarations of restrictive covenants and a conservation restriction as a condition of the Board's approval of the Heather Lane Definitive Subdivision Plan and the Heather Lane Extension Residential Compound and Definitive Subdivision Plan. It was noted Select Board approval and execution of these items is required for them to be operative. The documents have been reviewed and approved by Town Counsel. She asked for the Select Board's approval.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Select Board approve and sign the Heather Lane Declaration of Restrictive Covenants dated December 1, 2020; the Heather Lane Extension Declaration of Restrictive Covenants date December 1, 2020; and the Heather Lane Conservation Restriction to Town of Needham, Massachusetts dated December 1, 2020.

Second: Mr. Borrelli. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

3. Preliminary FY2022 - FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan

Ms. Fitzpatrick and Dave Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Finance discussed with the Board the preliminary FY2022 - FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan. It was noted a vote on the final plan is scheduled for December 22nd.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on recommendations in tier 1 of the CIP proposed for funding through tax levy, debt, and warrant articles. She said the FY2022 submission was amended for the completion of the public safety buildings, not included in the prior version. She said it is a work in progress and updated information on costs associated with the project are expected in early February. Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on items awaiting further study including the schools master plan, public works facility, and the Emery Grover building. She told the Board, absent a decision on the Emery Grover building, improvements will need to be performed at the building.

4. Town Manager's Report

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked Katie King, ATM/Operations for an update on the Over Zero workshop.

Ms. King commented on the Over Zero workshop held online. She said 51 people gathered on Zoom over the last 3 Tuesdays and included a broad section of the Needham community. She said discussion was based on how to collectively respond to identity-based harm, discrimination, physical harm and violence, and harassment. She said attendees also discussed what a potential Needham Response Network could look like, and that the next steps include compiling attendee feedback into one draft document to be shared and discussed.

Mr. Matthews thanked Ms. King for her work and in helping to organize the workshop.

Ms. Cooley said it was powerful to meet people she has not had an opportunity to work with before, and that the 51 people committed to action is very helpful.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on the floral arrangements outside Town Hall, thanking John Cosgrove for his generous donation.

Ms. Cooley reported the tent on the Town Common has been removed for the winter, but the tables will stay throughout the season. She encouraged people to get takeout from restaurants and enjoy their meal outside in the fresh air.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented on the Town's Covid-19 response, noting Cindy Roy Gonzalez, Public Information Officer is working on a campaign of messaging the public to continue to wear masks, wash hands, gather in small groups, and to think about their actions which could expose people who could be harmed by the virus. Mr. Borrelli said the "stay home" aspect is a little much, as children are going to school and Town officials are trying to promote the public to support local retail shops and restaurants. Ms. Fitzpatrick said the message can be targeted.

Ms. Fitzpatrick reported the Governor issued a directive that the state is rolling back to Phase 3, Step 1 of the Commonwealth's reopening plan. She cited changes affecting business and restaurants.

7:07 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. 40 B Housing Guidelines & General Housing Policy

The Board discussed local and regional housing issues and policy, including a draft update to the Town's 40B guidelines circulated in September, comments, and related materials.

Mr. Matthews commented on SHI housing and market-affordable housing, and the draft update for the Town's Chapter 40B guidelines. Discussion ensued on housing policy and initiatives in Massachusetts and in Needham. Mr. Handel said the issue is regional and highly complicated. He said Needham is actively working as a community and several boards have major responsibilities related to housing.

Mr. Bulian thanked Mr. Matthews for the presentation. He commented on the Select Board's commitment to affordable housing over the years, evidenced by the growth of the 40B apartment complexes. He referred to developers, questioning how they "get those rents?" He said he is amazed how much money people pay on a monthly basis, for market units, noting all the units are filled. He said the vacancy rate is very small.

Mr. Handel noted lack of supply means you must pay a high rate to live within commuting distance to Boston. Mr. Handel invited Denise Garlick, State Representative to comment. Ms. Garlick thanked Mr. Matthews for the presentation. She said she shares the Select Board's concern on housing. She said she is deeply committed to the work of the Needham Housing Authority, recognizing the Charles River Center and the number of fully integrated group homes strengthening the Town of Needham.

Mr. Borrelli thanked Mr. Matthews for the robust presentation. He suggested the Town focus on home ownership and home buyer programs. He said zoning incentives should also be considered. He noted his experience indicates the hardest units to rent are the affordable units, because income qualifications are very restrictive. He spoke about SRA zoning and federal money for subsidized housing. He suggested making the process as least restrictive as possible for people that will qualify and that want to live in Needham.

Ms. Cooley said all of this discussion is happening because of the ministerial act of trying to update 40B guidelines. She said updating the guidelines triggered many comments from the community and that the issue is a complicated problem.

2. Committee Reports

Mr. Handel said as a participant in the Needham Unites Against Racism Initiative meeting held on Monday, he was moved by the quality of the discussion and the way people are beginning to be able to talk to each other about some very uncomfortable issues. He said Ms. Cooley's leadership is key.

Ms. Cooley said the committee is phenomenal and is working to trust each other, while allowing difficult comments to be made. She said the level of participation will bring the Town to a better product overall, and that the meeting last night revolved around a vision to guide the work of the committee. She said time must be taken to get the vision right, and that a draft document will soon be offered to the Select Board and community for comment. Ms. Cooley commented that discussion on policing did not occur as most of the meeting was spent on formulating the vision and key items to be included in that vision.

Mr. Borrelli concurred the group is excellent. He noted a positive email he received regarding Lisa Smith-McQueenie, facilitator of the NUARI discussion. Ms. Cooley agreed Ms. Smith-McQueenie is terrific.

7:58 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Borrelli that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting of Tuesday, December 8, 2020.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

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

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