

**Town Of Needham Board of Selectman
Minutes for March 10, 2009
Needham Town Hall**

6:45 p.m. Informal Session:

7:00 p.m. Call To Order:

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman James Healy at 7:00 p.m. Those present were: John Bulian, Daniel P. Matthews, Gerald Wasserman, Denise Garlick (7:25 p.m.), James Healy, Assistant Town Manager Chris Coleman and Recording Secretary Greg Cooper.

7:00 p.m. Public Hearing - NSTAR Petition for Central Avenue: Maureen Carroll, NSTAR representative, appeared before the Board to request permission to install approximately 7 feet of conduit on Central Avenue, Needham to provide new overhead/underground electric service to #1509 Central Avenue. Mr. Healy opened the public hearing for comment. No one from the public commented.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve and sign petition from NSTAR to install approximately 7 feet of conduit @ pole 8/182 Central Avenue, Needham in order to provide new overhead/underground electric service @ #1509 Central Avenue, Needham.

Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 4-0.

7:05 p.m. Consent Agenda:

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

CONSENT AGENDA *=Backup attached

- 1.* Approve a request from the Exchange Club of Needham to sponsor 4th of July fireworks on Friday, July 3 and 4, 2009.
2. Accept the donation of an 8 x 12 flag to be flown on the Town Common from Derek Eaton, representing the Norfolk Lodge A.F. & A.M. The value of the flag is \$187.00.
3. Accept the following donations to the Needham Health Department's Gift of Warmth fund:
 - \$150 from Mrs. Thomas Sagafi
 - \$15 from the Grace Lutheran Church
 - \$250 from the Needham Community Council, Inc.

- 4.* Approve one day special Wine & Malt license application received from Kimberly Christie, for the St. Joseph's Cabaret 2009 event. The event will be held on Friday, March 13, 2009 from 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. at the St. Joseph Elementary School Gym, 90 Pickering Street, Needham.
5. Accept the following donations made to the Needham Free Public Library for the period of February 5, 2009 - March 4, 2009:
 - Mitchell School Counselor Elizabeth Barnes donated two copies of her book, *A Family Guidebook on Bullies, Self-Esteem and Hidden Hurts!* (\$20.00)
 - The Friends of the Library gave the library a \$13,000 check for the second half of the annual collection enhancement requests.
 - Needham author Wendy Gelberg gave the library a copy of her new book, *The Successful Introvert: How to Enhance Your Job Search and Advance Your Career* (\$19.95)
 - Jackie Lundell donated 34 new books in the "Hardy Boy" series (\$204.00)
 - Karen Jerome Skillins gave the library \$120.00, 10% of the sale price for a painting that she had displayed in the Friends Gallery.
 - John F. Dewey donated the following music CDs:
 - *This One's for Basie*—Buddy Rich (\$15.00)
 - *Timeless*—Charlie Parker (\$15.00)
 - *Goodnight Angel*—Artie Shaw (\$15.00)
 - *Weary Blues*—Muggsy Spanier (\$15.00)
 - *Django Reinhardt, 1910-1953* (\$15.00)
 - Library program puppeteer Lesley Smith donated a copy of her CD, *School Songs From Her Most Popular Shows* (\$15.00)
 - Henry Ragin donated a copy of the DVD, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (\$15.00)
 - Author Roger Paulson gave the library a copy of his seven-volume reference set, *Archives of the Airways* (\$153.65)
 - Frank H. Schaller sent the library a copy of his book, *African American Women Inventors, 1884-2003* (\$25.00)
- 6.* Approve February 24, 2009 minutes.
- 7.* Sign the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting Tuesday, April 14, 2009.
- 8.* Water and Sewer Abatement #1084.
Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 4-0.

7:05 p.m. Downtown Design Project Zoning Proposals;
Members of the Planning Board, the Downtown Design Study Committee, the Planning Department Staff and Ken DiNisco (Planning Consultant) appeared before the Board to discuss the zoning articles contained in the 2009 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. DiNisco provided the Board with an overview of the Downtown Design Project, which spans from Rosemary Street to Needham Junction. He stated that the goal is to encourage housing, stimulate business activity and improve traffic flow and parking. Mr. DiNisco reviewed the proposed development plan and design guidelines. Lee Newman, Planning Director, explained that there are six articles that are being proposed to implement the plan. Jeanne McKnight, Planning Board, stated that a public meeting on the articles was held on February 17, 2009 which was well attended. She reviewed some of the general feedback received at the meeting. Mr. Bulian expressed his continuing concern over the issue of parking and how the proposal addresses this need. Mr. Matthews stated that the proposed changes may impact more than just the narrow area targeted. Mr. Wasserman would have liked to see a more aggressive effort to promote affordable housing. Mr. Healy hopes the rezoning and other measure will improve the downtown and hopes the business community is supportive of the proposed changes. Ms. McKnight stated that some property owners were involved in the design project and the changes do not restrict any existing rights but only offer more opportunity. The Board thanked all of those involved in developing the proposal.

7:55 p.m. Board Discussion:

1. Property Tax Relief:
The Board discussed the proposed contribution level of the Town for the Needham Property Tax Assistance Program. Mr. Wasserman reviewed the changes to the statement of intent. He stated that the last sentence had been removed and a maximum contribution of \$25,000 was being proposed. Mr. Wasserman stated that the Town's maximum contribution is still \$10,000 more than the most recent private contributions so there is room

growth of the program. The Board expressed its support of property tax assistance but acknowledged the current and future fiscal challenges facing the Town.

Motion by Mr. Wasserman that the Board of Selectmen vote to endorse the following statement of intent:

"As an initial guideline, the Board of Selectmen proposes to recommend an annual appropriation level for the proposed Needham Property Tax Assistance Program equal to the amount of private contributions to the town's statutory voluntary tax relief program during the preceding fiscal year, up to a maximum appropriation amount of \$25,000 (2008 dollars). the voluntary fund has been receiving contributions of approximately \$15,000 per year."

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

2. Town Hall Project:

The Board discussed information provided by the design architect regarding possible upgrades to the Town Hall second floor meeting hall space. Mr. Healy stated that the architect's letter estimated the cost to prepare the building for the potential upgrade of the hall at a future date would be approximately \$100,000. The upgrade would cover improvements to the HVAC ductwork, installation of an extra conduit system, and increased electrical capacity. Mr. Healy stated that an answer on whether to pursue the upgrades is necessary by March 24, 2009 to not impede the progress on the project. The Board discussed allowing time for private groups to raise the necessary funds. Ms. Garlick expressed her support for the upgrade to allow for the flexibility to improve and expand the uses of the Hall in the future. Mr. Wasserman suggested that if the Board is not going to vote on the issue it should at least provide a sense of whether it would pursue the upgrades so that fundraising efforts can begin. Mr. Bulian expressed his support for the upgrade if private funding were raised. Mr. Matthews does not see the Town Hall as an entertainment venue and sees far greater needs for private contributions in other areas of Town. He stated that he is willing to wait two weeks to see if funds are raised. The Board discussed the potential difficulty in raising private contributions with no guarantee that the Town will

take advantage of the upgrade and expand the use of the Hall in the future. Ms. Garlick stated that a part of the upgrade investment will improve the acoustics of the Hall and provide immediate benefits. Mr. Healy asked each Board member for their position on the upgrade. Mr. Bulian, Mr. Wasserman and Ms. Garlick supported the effort. Mr. Matthews opposed the initiative. Mr. Healy elected not to take a position but expressed concern over expectations of proponents if the upgrade is completed.

3. Committee Reports:

a. Field Lights Hearing:

Mr. Bulian provided the Board with an overview of the public hearing held at the Newman School on February 25, 2009 to take comment on the field lights at Memorial Park. He stated that there was good attendance and most of the feedback was favorable. Mr. Healy stated that the sound system at Memorial Park needs to be evaluated. He stated that another hearing will be held in the future once the lights at DeFazio Field have been in use for a season. Mr. Healy asked Mr. Coleman to ask Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager, to look into the issue of safety lighting at DeFazio.

b. Town Meeting:

Mr. Healy stated that Finance Committee has asked to work with the Board on how to expedite the movement of Town Meeting discussion on Articles where the Board and Finance Committee are in agreement. Mr. Matthews proposed that the Board and Finance Committee explore making a joint presentation on Articles which there is agreement on. Mr. Healy recommended speaking with the Town Moderator.

c. Nike Site:

Mr. Healy stated that the School Committee has been approached by the Community Farming Group seeking to use the Nike Site. Mr. Healy stated that the Board had discussed the site as a possible location for additional recreational space. Mr. Matthews stated that it could be years before a future use is agreed upon and he is okay with use of the

property in the interim as long as the farm group's use of the property is on a year to year basis with the understanding that the Town plans on using the property in the future. The Board expressed its desire to be involved in future use discussions with the School Committee. Mr. Matthews suggested that the Town Manager draft a letter to the School Committee on the issue for the Board's review and signature. Mr. Wasserman stated that the Board should have another discussion with regard to the Board's desired use of the property.

d. Town Hall:

Mr. Healy reported that the Town received good news from its Bond Counsel that the current design and apportionments of Community Preservation Funds is consistent with the Community Preservation Act. He stated that the Community Preservation Committee is not inclined to seek addition counsel to review the eligibility of the project.

e. Senior Center Exploratory Committee:

Ms. Garlick announced that the Committee would be holding a public meeting on March 23, 2009 at the Stephen Palmer Center from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. to discuss senior center needs.

8:55 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to adjourn the March 10, 2009 Needham Board of Selectmen Meeting.

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