



Town of Swampscott
Joint Board of Assessors and Select Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 9, 2020 – 6:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Spellios (Chair), Polly Titcomb, Neal Duffy, David Grishman, Don Hause

BOARD OF ASSESSORS MEMEMBERS PRESENT

Neil Sheehan, Linda Paster, Tasia Vasillou

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Ron Mendes, Assistant Town Administrator of Administration and Finance; Allie Fiske, Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives; Marzie Galazka, Director of Community & Economic Development; Chief Ron Madigan, Police Chief; Angelica Noble, Police Department Admin; Rich Baldacci, Building Commissioner

The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm

Chairperson Peter Spellios stated that the next meeting will be a joint Board of Health meeting to address increase in COVID-19 positive cases in Swampscott and regionally.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Naomi Dreeben asked to clarify the order of the agenda, particularly the Elm Place project.

SOLID WASTE

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald provided an update on the Solid Waste Program, reviewing solid waste disposal data over the last month. For the month of October, recycling has increased by 25% over the previous year. November has seen a 39% increase in recycling since November of 2019. Trends also indicate a decrease in non-recycled solid waste.

Vice Chair Polly Titcomb reviewed the makeup of the Solid Waste Committee and the process taken to select 5 applicants for the Solid Waste Committee. Ms. Titcomb introduced each candidate: Emily Westhoven, Heather Roman, Frank Smith, Wayne Spritz, and Jonathan Gold. Each member will occupy a one-year term. Jonathan Gold spoke to mention the importance of

reviewing our recycling trends, contamination, and education. Mr. Spritz mentioned that the schools produce a tremendous amount of solid waste and he believes there are opportunities to review this.

On **MOTION** (Titcomb) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) it was **VOTED** by roll call to appoint Emily Westhoven, Heather Roman, Wayne Spritz, Jonathan Gold, and Frank Smith to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee for a 1-year term. Roll call: Grishman (YES) Titcomb (YES) Duffy (YES) Hause (YES) Spellios (YES)

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

On **MOTION** (Grishman) and **SECONDED** (Duffy) it was **VOTED** by roll call to enter into a public hearing pursuant to G.L. ch. 40, s. 56, FY2021 Classification of Real and Personal property according to its use and the possible adoption of local levy percentages among the various classifications, and the possible votes concerning residential exemption and small commercial exemption options.to go into public hearing. Roll call: Titcomb (YES) Duffy (YES) Hause (YES) Grishman (YES) Spellios (YES)

Assistant Town Administrator Ron Mendes provided an overview of the Tax Classification Hearing presentation as presented at the November meeting. There was a conversation regarding recreational land and the golf course and how that land is assessed and taxed and the exemptions that apply to this property type. Members of the board expressed concern that such a large space in Swampscott has a significant tax exemption yet is an exclusive club that does not serve the community as open space might typically. Town Administrator Fitzgerald emphasized that this should be a priority and that there must be an effort to address this. Neil Sheehan commented that it would be a very difficult to change this.

Mr. Mendes provided more detailed information regarding the Residential Exemption Option. This shifts the tax burden from owner-occupied building to non-owner occupied and higher-valued properties. If this exemption were adopted, 4,000 families would benefit at expense of 833 families who would see a higher tax bill. 178 homes would break even.

On **MOTION** (Titcomb) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) , it was voted by roll call to approve the 3 votes outlined below. Roll Call: Grishman (YES) Duffy (YES) Titcomb (YES) Hause (YES) Spellios (YES)

MOTION #1: I move that the board select a Residential Factor of .946165 (a CIP Shift of 170%) for the Fiscal Year 2021 Tax Levy; and in order to implement this policy, the Board hereby authorizes Susan Duplin, Town Clerk, to certify this vote on the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Gateway System.

MOTION #2: I move that the board choose to not adopt a Residential Exemptionf or Fiscal Year 2021.

MOTION #3: I move that the board adopt a Small Commercial Exemption of 10% of the value of qualifying parcels.

On MOTION (Vasillou) and SECONDED (Sheehan) it was VOTED by roll call to adjourn the Board of Assessors portion of the meeting. Roll call: Vasillou (YES) Sheehan (YES)

40B PROJECT

The Select Board discussed a potential proposal for a development between Elm Place and Pitman Rd. off of Essex St. for a 128-unit housing complex under 40B. The State will send the Select Board a letter that will request their comment on the application and the project. The other duty of the Select Board is to ensure the community is involved in all aspects of this process.

The 40B process gives property owners to seek exemptions from zoning due to low-income housing. An application has not been filed with the zoning board, so this is being preliminarily discussed for educational purposes.

Adam Stein, the Senior Vice President of Winn Companies provided a presentation regarding the proposed project. Winn properties is a private family-owned company that has developed more than 150 properties, many including low-income, senior, and veteran housing.

Their proposal will consist of a structure of 128 units, 64% of which will be income restricted at various levels of affordability. Mr. Stein provided a rendering of the property. In regards to timeline, they have submitted project eligibility submission to DHCD and it is under review. In early winter, the plans will be reviewed by various departments. The permit application would be submitted in January 2021 with a construction start of 2022.

In response to questions from the board, Winn explained that there is less than 1 parking space per unit – a total of 109 for 128 units. There was a lot of concern expressed regarding traffic and it was recommended that they review potential traffic flow upgrades as part of this project. The board recommended that Winn representatives reach out to the community and engage them early in the process.

TOWN FEES

Town Administrator Fitzgerald spoke briefly about reviewing fee schedules annually now in February in preparation for the annual budget process.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

Tania Lillak from the Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee provided an update on the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The last Open Space Plan was developed in 1983. Through a community process, this draft of the plan was created. This plan doesn't have to be updated entirely but does need to be reviewed and a new action plan developed. The COVID-19 pandemic did affect the committee's ability to engage the community in the way they normally would hope.

Some of the highlights from the survey include beaches, sidewalks and walkable streets, neighborhood parks, protected conservation areas, bike paths, playgrounds, public boat access, athletic fields, indoor recreation facilities, and tennis courts.

The draft plan has been posted online and the Select Board will now have to submit a letter of recommendation with the submission of the plan to DCR. Director of Community & Economic Development Marzie Galazka provided an update on some ongoing projects including Johnson and Windsor Park.

LIQUOR LICENSES

Angelica Noble from the Police Station provided a presentation that outlined all establishments whose liquor license is up for renewal. Currently, 13 restaurants hold an All Alcohol Section 12 License, 1 restaurant holds a Wine and Malt Section 12 License, 3 establishments hold an All Alcohol Package Store License, 2 establishments hold a Wine and Malt Package Store License, 3 clubs hold an All Alcohol License, and 1 club holds an All Alcohol Veterans Club License.

The presentation indicated that 4 establishments owed money to the Town and 4 need to commence changing their manager on record. These are stipulations for the final vote.

On **MOTION** (Hause) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) it was **VOTED** by roll call to approve all liquor licenses with stipulations provided in presentation. Roll call: Hause (YES) Titcomb (YES) Duffy (YES) Grishman (YES) Spellios (YES)

There was a discussion regarding the effect COVID-19 has had on how processes have been digitized. The Select Board requested that at the first meeting in January, that the Town list recommendations for processes that should continue post COVID-19 that have benefited Town operations.

COMMON VICTUALLER PROCESS

Common Victualler Licenses are required for any businesses that serve food and have indoor and/or outdoor seating. Director of Community and Economic Development Marzie Galazka shared a list of 33 establishments requesting a common victualler license for 2021. She also shared the list of 7 establishments holding an Entertainment License. There will be no charge for Common Victualler and Entertainment License in 2021.

Chairperson Spellios asked that the Select Board consider ways that we can promote supporting businesses during COVID and purchase gift cards.

On **MOTION** (Grishman) and **SECONDED** (Hause) it was **VOTED** by roll call to approve all Common Victualler

Ms. Galazka reviewed the new Microloan Grant program. Businesses must be a physical establishment in Swampscott, for-profit, not exceed 5 employees, and the owner of the business must be income eligible. The business must be in operation and have been established prior to January 1, 2019. Applicants can contact the Community Development by Friday, January 15.

On **MOTION** (Hause) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) it was **VOTED** By roll call to approve the Common Victualler and Entertainment License as seen in Marzie Galazka's presentation. Roll call: Titcomb (YES) Hause (YES) Duffy (YES) Grishman (YES) Spellios (YES)

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Vote to approve gift of funds from Cummings Properties to be used by the Swampscott Fire Department.
- Vote to approve application for Change of Manager for Red Sauce Inc. DBA Mexicali located at 443 Paradise Rd. Swampscott, MA 01907
- Vote to approve meeting minutes of November 24, 2020 meeting

On **MOTION** (Hause) and **SECONDED** (Grishman) it was **VOTED** by roll call to approve the Consent Agenda. Hause (YES)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

- COVID-19 Update
- Micro-enterprise Grant Program
- Department of Public Works
- Capital Planning
- FY21 State Budget Update
- Solid Waste Committee
- Anti-Racism Update
- Lighting Town Hall
- School Update
- Budget Development
- Town Fees
- Blighted Properties
- Solid Waste
- Animal Control
- Personnel Updates
- Interface Roll-Out

On **MOTION** (Grishman) and **SECONDED** (Hause) it was **VOTED** by roll call to adjourn the meeting. Roll call: Grishman (YES) Titcomb (YES) Duffy (YES) Titcomb (YES) Hause (YES)

Meeting adjourned at 10:17 PM

True Attest,



Allie Fiske, Assistant to the Town Administrator

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Select Board 12/16/20

