

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES – December 19, 2022

7:00 p.m. - Chair's Introduction to Remote Meeting

Chair Cohen stated that this Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was being conducted remotely consistent with the July 16, 2022 Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency and that all members of the Board of Selectmen are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

Chair Cohen noted that the Order allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. He added that ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. Chair Cohen noted that this meeting will allow for Public Comment throughout the agenda. He indicated the various ways that the public may view or participate in this meeting as listed on the posted agenda.

Chair Cohen confirmed that the following members and persons anticipated on the agenda were remotely present and could be heard.

Board of Selectmen

Mitch Cohen
Julianne Hirsh
Kristen Wixted
Jason Perreault
T. Scott Rogers

Others

John Coderre, Town Administrator
Becca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator
William Lyver, Police Chief
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director

Any votes taken this evening will be by roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Hirsh of 19 Smith Road noted that he is the Director of the Goods for Guns buyback program. He thanked Police Chief Lyver for being one of nine communities in Worcester County who offer this program. Northborough collected 22 weapons and gave away trigger locks. A total of 191 weapons over the nine communities were collected.

Lisa Maselli of 13 Maple Street referred to the Complete Streets Project Prioritization Plan and requested that the Maple Street sidewalk be ranked before a sidewalk at Pierce Street from Hudson Street to Blake Street due to safety concerns on Maple Street. She is also in favor of new sidewalks on Allen Street between East Main Street and Hudson Street.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 5, 2022 MEETING

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to approve the December 5, 2022 meeting minutes as amended; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

CONSIDERATION AND VOTE TO ENDORSE COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PLAN

Town Planner Laurie Connors and DPW Director Scott Charpentier presented the final draft version of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) “Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.” The goal of the Complete Streets Program is to support safe and accessible options for all modes of travel, including walking, biking, transit, and motorized vehicles for people of all ages and abilities. The Board of Selectmen adopted the Complete Streets Policy in January, 2022, which was then approved by MassDOT. The Town was then awarded a \$35,200 technical assistance grant from MassDOT to aid in development of the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.

The presentation is summarized as follows:

Through a public outreach campaign, Public Works and Planning staff worked with a consultant to prepare the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan for Board of Selectmen and MassDOT acceptance. The plan contains a list of projects, in order of local priority, which identifies sidewalk, bicycle, and accessible transportation connectivity and safety improvements, cost estimates, and a schedule for implementation of those projects. Staff and the consultant prepared and distributed an on-line survey, which received 808 responses that were analyzed by the consultant. The list of 24 projects was then presented to the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC), at which time MPIC members identified their top projects and asked for one sidewalk project to be added to the list.

The survey results, list of 25 projects and evaluation criteria were presented to the Board at their October 17th meeting. Feedback was collected during the meeting and via email during the days following the meeting.

The consultant ranked the 25 projects using the following agreed-upon evaluation criteria:

- Benefits all users, incomes and abilities
- Enhances/creates a safe route to school
- Links neighborhoods to shopping, recreation areas and/or public facilities
- Addresses gap in sidewalk network
- ADA accessibility improvement
- Benefits public health and the environment
- Safety improvement
- Shovel-ready project
- Low-cost project or project with external funding opportunities
- Identified as priority project via public input

Projects may include new sidewalk construction to address gaps in the network, ADA upgrades to existing deteriorated sidewalks, ramps and pedestrian signals, roadway/intersection narrowing, installation of rapid flashing beacons to enhance safety, construction of bicycle lanes and shared-use lanes, installation of wayfinding signage, and transit improvements. Construction grants cannot be used for survey, land acquisition, or design services. These tasks must be funded through other means such as local appropriation (including ARPA) or Chapter 90 funds.

If the Board approves the Prioritization Plan this evening, it will then be submitted to MassDOT for final review and approval. With a locally adopted Policy and MassDOT-approved Prioritization Plan, Northborough will be eligible to seek construction funding of up to \$500,000 within a 4-year timeframe to aid in plan implementation. Staff expects to submit the Prioritization Plan for MassDOT approval by the end of this calendar year, allowing staff to initiate project design in advance of the next round of construction grant submissions, which are expected to be due May 1, 2023.

In response to questions by Board members, Ms. Connors responded that the top 10 projects that are listed in the Prioritization Plan do not have to be completed in the order they are presented this evening. For example, a specific project that is ranked at 9 may be completed first due to a pressing reason or a grant opportunity. Mr. Charpentier responded that residents would have the opportunity to provide additional input on those projects that require Town Meeting action.

In response to a question from Laura Ziton of 17 Franklin Circle, Mr. Charpentier explained that the proposed sidewalk extension on Maple Street will be between Bartlett Street and Ridge Road. He also confirmed that the Town is participating in the Safe Routes to School Program through the School District, adding that the School Department is the driving factor for grant applications under this program with help from the Public Works Department and consideration by the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to endorse the Northborough Complete Streets Project Prioritization Plan as presented; Selectman Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

REPORTS

T. Scott Rogers

- No report.

Kristen Wixted

- Asked when and where it is appropriate for residents to ask questions about the proposed budget. Mr. Coderre explained the budget process and noted that residents can be involved through publicly posted meetings of the Appropriations Committee and the Financial Planning Committee, which are typically held in January and February and during the annual joint budget meeting of the Board of Selectmen with the Appropriations Committee held in March.
- Asked if the first meeting of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Committee has been scheduled. Ms. Meekins noted that the first meeting of the DEIB Committee is scheduled for December 21st.

Julianne Hirsh

- Reported on the recent meeting of the Master Plan Implementation Committee. Noted that there will be an opportunity for business owners and residents to participate in an upcoming listening session.
- Noted that the White Cliffs Committee will meet on December 21st to review the 3 proposals that were received in regard to the reuse of the property. Added that residents can contact her with comments or ideas at her email that is located on the Town website.
- Wished everyone happy and safe holidays.

Jason Perreault

- Wished everyone happy and safe holidays.
- Extended his appreciation to Town staff and all the Boards and Committees for their efforts throughout the year that help make the Town as successful as it is.

Mitch Cohen

- Attended the recent Joint School Committee Meeting where they presented their budget. Acknowledged that the budget planning was a bit more challenging for the schools this year.
- Attended a recent meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission.
- Noted that the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals will meet to discuss the future of the Groundwater Advisory Committee. He expects that following this meeting, the Board of Selectmen will schedule this for discussion as well.
- Attended a recent meeting of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission where the topic of multi-use trails was discussed.
- Noted that the formal Town Menorah lighting event is scheduled on Sunday night, December 25th. He will continue to turn on the light bulbs each night at 5pm.
- Noted that the Library Trustees will be holding an Open House at the Library to formally welcome Library Director Jenn Bruneau who was hired two years ago during the pandemic. Also, Librarian Deborah Hirsh will be recognized as she retires after 17 years of service. Other new staff members will be introduced as well.
- Wished everyone happy holidays.

John Coderre

- Announced the recent new hires of Kaitlin Stacy as a full-time Reference Librarian and Phongsaly (Lee) Keomanivong as the Principal Assessor.

RENEWAL OF SELECTMEN'S LICENSES FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2023

Mr. Coderre noted that the list of Selectmen's licenses was included in the meeting packet. He recommended that the Board renew the licenses for the 2023 calendar year with the condition that each licensee receive a satisfactory inspection from the Building, Fire and Health Departments. In response to a question about whether or not a license should be renewed for a business that is temporarily closed, Mr. Coderre indicated that it is standard to renew a license if someone is temporarily closed due to a renovation or needed repairs.

Selectman Perreault moved the Board vote to approve the renewal of the annual licenses for the calendar year 2023 as indicated on the "2023 License Renewals List" with the condition that each licensee receives a satisfactory inspection from the Building, Fire and Health Departments and is in full compliance with both Municipal and State codes and regulations; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

INTERVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Recommendation for appointments to the Youth Commission and Historic District Commission.

Selectman Wixted reviewed each of the candidates ability and interest to serve on the Board or Committee to which they applied and made the following recommendations for appointment.

Selectman Wixted moved the Board vote to recommend Erica Zeiger for appointment to the Youth Commission for a partial three-year term as recommended by the Interview Subcommittee; Selectman Hirsh seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to recommend Amanda Derosier Millette for appointment to the Historic District Commission for a partial one-year term as recommended by the Interview Subcommittee; Selectman Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

REVIEW OF UPDATED BOARD, COMMITTEE OR COMMISSION APPLICATION FORM

Selectman Wixted indicated that at the December 13th meeting of the Interview Subcommittee, she and Selectman Hirsh reviewed the existing application to Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC) and discussed a number of revisions to make it more inviting and not so intimidating.

Following a review of the proposed changes by Selectman Wixted, a discussion ensued in regard to whether or not applicants should be asked if they regularly attend Town Meeting. It was suggested to update that question on the application by adding a note indicating that the applicant will still be considered and not be disqualified if they do not regularly attend Town Meeting. Mr. Coderre noted that per the Town Code, BCC Chairs or their designee are technically required to attend Town Meeting.

Chair Cohen noted that following tonight’s discussion, Executive Assistant Ms. Wackell will update the BCC application form based on the discussion this evening. The newly updated form will be presented at the Board’s next meeting for further consideration.

Laura Ziton of 17 Franklin Circle suggested that the application form include an explanation of what Town Meeting is to help raise awareness.

EXECUTION OF CEMETERY DEED 1162

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1162; Selectman Perreault seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Cohen invited comments from the public. There were none.


ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Wixted seconded the motion; the roll call vote was as follows:

Perreault	“aye”	Hirsh	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”	Cohen	“aye”
Wixted	“aye”		

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. December 19, 2022 Meeting Agenda
2. December 5, 2022 Meeting Minutes
3. Information Packet – Complete Streets Project Prioritization Plan
4. Information Packet – Renewal of Selectmen’s Licenses
5. Information Packet – Interview Subcommittee
6. Information Packet – BCC Application Form Update
7. Cemetery Deed