

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES – July 19, 2021**

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

Chairman Perreault stated that this Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of June 16, 2021, an 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.

Chairman Perreault 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. Chairman Perreault noted that this meeting will allow for Public Comment only under the Public Comment portion of the agenda. He indicated the various ways that the public may view or participate in this meeting as listed on the posted agenda.

Meeting Business Ground Rules

Chairman Perreault covered the ground rules for effective and clear conduct of the business. He asked members of the Board to mute their phone or computer when not speaking and to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate meeting minutes. He will go through the items on the agenda. Following presentations, Board members will be offered an opportunity to speak, followed by staff members answering any questions, if necessary. Those responding will be asked to wait until the floor is yielded to them. Members were asked if they wish to respond to the comments of others, to do so through the Chair, taking care to identify themselves.

Any votes taken this evening will be done by roll call to ensure that the records of the vote are clear and accurate to the members attending the meeting remotely.

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

Board of Selectmen

Jason Perreault, Chair
Leslie Rutan
T. Scott Rogers
Kristen Wixted
Julianne Hirsh

Others

Rebecca Meekins, Assistant Town Administrator
William Lyver, Police Chief
David Parenti, Fire Chief
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 28, 2021 MEETING

Selectman Rutan moved the Board vote to approve the June 28, 2021 meeting minutes; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Wixted	“aye”	Rutan	“aye”
Hirsh	“abstained”	Perreault	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”		

7:05 p.m. - PUBLIC HEARING

To consider an application to transfer the All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License from RJ & JJ Holdings, Inc. to Saranda, Inc. d/b/a Steakloft Bar & Grille for premises located at 369 West Main Street.

Attorney David Officer was remotely present along with applicant Niko Agora who has submitted an application for the transfer of the All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License from RJ & JJ Holdings, Inc. d/b/a The Steakloft Restaurant to Saranda, Inc. d/b/a Steakloft Bar & Grille for premises located at 369 West Main Street.

Mr. Agora indicated that he is purchasing the former Steakloft Restaurant and plans to make some updates to the inside décor and menu. He also plans to add an outdoor seating area. He is TIPS certified and will serve as the full-time manager. He has managerial experience in the food and alcohol industry as the owner of Monti's Pizza in Northborough since 1999 and the previous owner of two clubs in Worcester.

Chairman Perreault noted that Detective Sergeant Brian Griffin has conducted a background check and has no concerns to report as to the suitability of Mr. Agora and Mr. Hasani owning the restaurant and with Mr. Agora serving as manager.

Selectman Rogers moved the Board vote to close the public hearing as there were no comments from the public; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Wixted	“aye”	Rutan	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”		

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to approve the application to transfer the All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant License from RJ & JJ Holdings, Inc. to Saranda, Inc. d/b/a Steakloft Bar & Grille for premises located at 369 West Main Street; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Wixted	“aye”	Rutan	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”		

7:15 p.m. - KRISTIN BLACK – HEALTH AGENT

Approval and Execution of Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA)
for Local Public Health Services.

Ms. Black informed the Board that the Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) for Local Public Health Services will create a new shared services arrangement for public health services with the Towns of Boylston, Southborough and Westborough. This IMA is related to the recently awarded Public Health Excellence Grant for Shared Services. She added that the total grant amount is \$950,000 over a 3-year period and provides contracted nursing services, a shared Health Inspector position, food and housing inspectional software and equipment for the collaborating communities.

Ms. Black indicated that the Northborough Board of Health held a public hearing and voted to recommend the adoption of the IMA as presented. Town Counsel has reviewed and approved the IMA as to form.

Ms. Black briefly outlined Northborough's financial and administrative responsibilities as the host Town, as well as the obligations of the other collaborating communities at the request of Selectman Rogers. Selectman Rutan noted that according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the State anticipates 3 renewal options each for a 3-year period, with a final end date of procurement on June 30, 2033.

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to approve and execute the Inter-Municipal Agreement for Local Public Health Services as presented by Health Agent Kristin Black and to authorize the Chair of the Board of Selectmen to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board, Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Wixted	“aye”	Rutan	“aye”
Hirsh	“aye”	Perreault	“aye”
Rogers	“aye”		

7:25 p.m. - TIMOTHY KAELIN – DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE
Update on the Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

Diversity & Inclusion Committee (D&I) Chair Timothy Kaelin was remotely present to provide an update on the efforts of the D&I Committee since they first began to meet in December of 2020. Before his presentation, Mr. Kaelin acknowledged the efforts of the following members of the D&I Committee: Assistant Town Administrator Becca Meekins, Diedra Wrighting, Virginia Simms George, Mariam Ibrahim, Hamilton Soriano, Mary Leach, Lauren Bailey Jones and Lashika Holland.

Mr. Kaelin noted that the efforts of the D&I Committee have focused on training, recruiting and hiring, strategic planning and community engagement. Mr. Kaelin reviewed the following:

- The scope and charge of the D&I Committee
- The results and analysis of the 15 question survey that included 5 demographic based questions and 10 diversity & inclusion based questions.

Mr. Kaelin noted that the one of the goals of the D&I Committee when talking to the various departments and committees was to gain a better understanding of how diversity, equity and inclusion fit into their operations. He noted that the D&I Committee met with the following departments and encouraged the public to view the YouTube videos of these meetings.

Police Chief William Lyver – February 4, 2021 D&I Committee Meeting

The discussion focused on recruitment challenges today compared to 15 years ago and diversity training and policies. In terms of gender, the Police Chief discussed how having a diverse police department would improve the safety of both the department and the community. An important note is that Northborough hired the first female patrol officer in the Country in 1973, which gives Northborough a history of gender diversity in the department.

Fire Chief David Parenti – April 1, 2021 D&I Committee Meeting

As with the Police Department, the Fire Department faces the same challenges with recruitment in terms of the number and quality of candidates that apply for open positions, as well the challenging educational requirements for an EMS/Firefighter. During the meeting, Chief Parenti discussed the leadership strategies that are currently in place to ensure that the department is well versed in diversity and inclusion. Due to a lack of female candidates who have the EMS background, there are no female firefighters at this time. It is the hope that the new Fire Station will help with diverse recruitment in terms of providing a clean, healthy and safe place to work with the modern tools and safety precautions that the new station will provide.

School Superintendent Greg Martineau and Rhonda Webb - May 6, 2021 D&I Committee Meeting

Superintendent Martineau and Director of English Language Education Rhonda Webb discussed the Vision 2020 Program, which focuses on developing a new vision and strategic plan to guide the work of equity and inclusion in the school system. It was noted that the future of diversity and inclusion is already being seen in the elementary and middle schools. Ms. Webb discussed the Coalition of Equity Program, which focuses on building a community partnership and creating conditions for courageous conversations to prepare students for college or careers with a background in diversity and inclusion. An equity audit is also scheduled to be conducted on the diversity of the faculty and staff to ensure that diversity in the student body is represented. Again, as with other municipal departments, it is challenging to recruit a more diverse faculty and staff. The D&I Committee will collaborate with the School Department's Coalition of Equity to combine resources.

Community Affairs Committee – June 3, 2021 D&I Committee Meeting

Community Affairs Committee Chair Suzy Cieslica and Member Pam Markey discussed some of the events they are working on and their efforts to recruit new members. There is a great opportunity for the Community Affairs Committee and the D&I Committee to collaborate on future community events, including Black History Month, Women's History Month, Pride Month and others.

Recreation Director Allison Lane – June 3, 2021 D&I Committee Meeting

Recreation Director Allison Lane discussed her efforts to ensure that the Recreation Department and facilities are accessible to everyone. She discussed the current construction project to make Assabet Park fully accessible. Also discussed was the walking path located at the Senior Center and her efforts to provide diversity and inclusion training for her staff that oversees the recreation camps.

Library Director Jenn Bruneau – July 1, 2021 D&I Committee Meeting

Library Director Jenn Bruneau discussed her efforts to facilitate conversations around diversity and creating partnerships with community members through a possible Lyceum, which would provide a place to give residents an opportunity to hear debates and lectures on diversity and inclusion. Ms. Bruneau also discussed her efforts to create safe spaces within the Library for difficult conversations to occur. Also discussed was the challenges with recruiting diverse applicants in the Library field.

Senior Center Director Liz Tretiak – July 1, 2021 D&I Committee Meeting

Senior Center Director Liz Tretiak reviewed the Senior Center's diverse programming, including PRIDE celebrations in June and "Pronoun and Pastries" with an LGBTQ Specialist. She also

spoke about the accessible walking path at the Senior Center in partnership with the Recreation Department. She spoke about the programming that creates community and intergenerational partnerships where high school students help run programs and work at the Bistro, for example. Lastly, she noted that as a whole, the senior population is very openminded and willing to learn about diversity and inclusion.

Mr. Kaelin noted that the focus of the D&I Committee is to: research and make recommendations that will improve the recruitment and hiring processes; education as it relates to a general lack of understanding and lack of exposure to diversity and inclusion; encourage residents to be open and willing to embrace improvement efforts in diversity and inclusion in the community; and to make improvements in our community that will benefit the already diverse youth in our community. The D&I Committee is also focusing on community engagement through planning events, such as a lyceum, as well as continued communication and data collection and analysis.

Mr. Kaelin noted that recent actions of the D&I Committee include the following:

- Survey
- Statement on Asian-American, Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Violence
- Statement on Juneteenth
- Community Outreach

Mr. Kaelin briefly reviewed the social media and communication efforts of the D&I Committee in developing a consistent cadence of social media posts related to the diversity and inclusion in the Town of Northborough.

Lastly, Mr. Kaelin reviewed the plans of the D&I Committee over the next 6 months, which include:

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan
- Continue meeting with Departments and Committees
- Community Listening Session and Outreach Strategies through Facebook and other social media outlets
- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Community Calendar

Chairman Perreault thanked Mr. Kaelin for his presentation and noted that D&I Committee members Diedra Wrighting, Virginia Simms George, Mary Leach, Lauren Bailey Jones and Lashika Holland were also remotely present at the meeting. Lauren Bailey Jones gave credit to Regional School Committee member Kathleen Howland for educating the D&I Committee on what a lyceum can do to provide for community-based intellectual discussions for all members of the community. Diedra Wrighting thanked Mr. Kaelin for his presentation and thanked the Board of Selectmen for taking charge to create the D&I Committee.

Members of the Board extended their appreciation to Mr. Kaelin for spearheading the D&I Committee and to the Committee members for their efforts thus far. All Board members look forward to hearing their recommendations. Assistant Town Administrator Becca Meekins noted that the D&I Committee is hoping to make its recommendations to the Board by the end of this calendar year.

REPORTS

Kristin Wixted

- Noted that the Community Affairs Committee will host its first summer concert at the Ellsworth MacAfee Park on Sunday, July 25th from 5-7PM.
- Attended the recent Council on Aging meeting at the Senior Center where they were discussing Applefest events.
- Encouraged those who are concerned with traffic & safety issues to continue to contact the Board by email or through public comment.
- Noted that the Town Administrator will provide an update on the Town's efforts regarding traffic & safety at the Board's next meeting.
- Noted that residents are asking if the Board of Selectmen has any plans for the following: enforcing zoning violations by trucks leaving the Amazon facility; a safety zone; cameras facing Amazon and FedEx driveway; how to keep trucks from idling in parking lots around town; and possible regional collaborations regarding traffic & safety solutions.
- Requested that the Board add traffic & safety as a monthly agenda item.
- Noted that on July 21st the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) will hold and record a regional discussion regarding all new distribution centers in area towns and will discuss how the significant increase in truck traffic is being handled.

Julianne Hirsh

- Noted that under the Town Administrator's report from the June 28, 2021 Selectmen's Meeting, Mr. Coderre announced that the State revenue outlook is projecting that the State will close out FY2021 with an estimated \$4 billion above budget. He added that in addition to Northborough, the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Fiscal Policy Committee is strongly advocating that the State increase the Chapter 90 transportation funds from \$200 million to \$400 million across all communities. She requested that a presentation be added to a future meeting agenda about how decisions will be made on where to spend these funds and the various programs that may be entitled to them. She also requested information on Covid Relief Funds, the Rescue Plan Act and any various programs that the Town may be entitled to.
- Requested that the traffic & safety report that is expected to be presented at the next Board meeting be scheduled in the form of a public hearing to allow residents to call in.
- Asked if there is an official policy on how public meetings are conducted? Ms. Meekins responded that there is no formal policy in place at this time. Mr. Coderre and herself will discuss making policy recommendations to the Board at a future meeting prior to April of 2022, at which time the State Mandate allowing public bodies to meet entirely remotely will be lifted.
- Requested a status update on when the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) is expected to begin meeting. Chairman Perreault noted that Mr. Coderre had indicated that the Town is in the process of contracting with a consultant to provide guidance and work with the MPIC.

T. Scott Rogers

- Noted that there are approximately 23 current vacancies across the Boards and Committees and encouraged residents to apply.
- Attended a recent Leadership Conference Webinar on mental health police initiatives.
- Attended a recent meeting of the Conservation Commission.
- Attended the MMA's meeting on municipal finance and open meeting laws.

- Noted that the BOS Interview Subcommittee met to interview candidates for the Cultural Council and Board of Library Trustees. Additional interviews for Boards and Committees are being scheduled. The BOS Interview Committee plans to make its recommendation for appointments at the Board's August 23rd meeting.
- Noted that the Open Space Committee is reviewing and will make recommendations on whether or not to pursue purchasing properties on Howard and Whitney Streets.
- Noted that the MMA's National League of Cities has been conducting seminars on racial equity and leadership.
- Encouraged residents to report any illegal traffic & safety activity immediately to the Police Department.
- Encouraged residents to visit the Traffic Safety page on the Town website for common questions and general procedures.

Leslie Rutan

- Requested an update on the anticipated completion date for the road project in the Town center. Mr. Charpentier responded that the project should be completed by the end of August with the final paving taking place this year or next spring.
- Noted that the Community Affairs Committee has launched its Summer Concert Series. More information can be found on their Facebook page.
- Thanked those that contribute to the Northborough Food Pantry.
- As a member of the BOS Interview Committee, thanked those residents who take the time to apply and be interviewed.
- Encouraged residents to visit the Traffic Safety page on the Town website. Thanked Mr. Charpentier for maintaining this very informative page.

Jason Perreault

- Reminded residents that a Bylaw was passed at this year's Annual Town Meeting to set fines for traffic violations. All bylaws passed at a Town Meeting must first be reviewed and approved by the Attorney General's Office before any enforcement of those fines can take place.
- In response to an earlier question by Selectman Hirsh regarding the Chapter 90 Funding, he noted that it is likely that the State will factor this into their budgeting process for FY2023. He does not anticipate any windfall funding coming from this.
- Noted the passing of former Police Chief Ken Hutchins. Extended his condolences to his family. Chief Lyver shared highlights of Chief Hutchins' career in law enforcement.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Perreault noted that the Public Comment portion of the agenda allows for the public to provide input, comments, questions, or concerns. The Board will not engage or deliberate in any detailed discussion, nor will it take action or make any commitments in real time in response to any public comment. If they are able, present Town staff may respond to any questions that can easily be answered. Those who wish to speak under Public Comment will be admitted to the meeting as an attendee and will be asked to provide their full name and address for the record. Public comment will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

Amy Poretsky of 47 Indian Meadow Drive asked who made the decision to hire a consultant to work with the Master Plan Implementation Committee? Where did the funding come from to hire a consultant? Is there a time limit of how long this consultant will work with the MPIC? She confirmed with Chairman Perreault that she will follow up with an email.

Rachel Armstrong of 10 Hemlock Drive asked if Chapter 90 Funds can be used for sidewalks? She expressed her frustration that the Town did not communicate earlier that zoning bylaws passed at the Annual Town Meeting could not be enforced until approved by the Attorney General's Office. Lastly, she asked that the Board consider creating a Town Facebook page to allow for conversations about traffic & safety. Chairman Perreault clarified that all zoning bylaws approved at Town Meetings require the review and approval of the Attorney General's Office before they can take effect.

Selectman Wixted moved the Board vote to execute Cemetery Deed 1121; Selectman Rogers seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Wixted	"aye"	Rutan	"aye"
Hirsh	"aye"	Perreault	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"		

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Hirsh moved the Board vote to adjourn; Selectman Rutan seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

Wixted	"aye"	Rutan	"aye"
Hirsh	"aye"	Perreault	"aye"
Rogers	"aye"		

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. Wackell
Executive Assistant to the
Board of Selectmen

Documents used during meeting:

1. June 28, 2021 Meeting Agenda
2. June 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes
3. Memorandum – Promotion of Police Officer
4. Information packet – Conservation Restriction
5. Information packet – Chapter 61A Land