

MINUTES
SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
July 22, 2014

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Sharon Town Hall at 5:30pm with Chairman William A. Heitin, Clerk John J. McGrath and Selectman Walter B. Roach.

Executive Session

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health of an individual, pending litigation, consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-represented personnel, and at the end, to return to open session. Discussion of any of these in open session would be detrimental to the Town.

(Heitin - Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye
McGrath: Aye
Roach: Aye

The Board returned to open session at 6:40pm.

Police Officer Appointment – Brian Kamp

Police Chief Joe Bernstein asked the Board to offer Brian a conditional offer of employment as a full-time police officer in the Town of Sharon. He is a native of Sharon and has done well in testing and his performance as a reserve intermittent police officer warrants this.

The Board believes he is a great addition to the Sharon Police Department

MOTION: To offer Brian Kamp a conditional offer of employment with an open date
(McGrath – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

The Board held a moment of silence for Sharon Firefighter James Davenport, who passed away on July 9, 2014.

Chairman Heitin announced that the 20th Annual Square Jam will take place on Thursday, August 7 from 6:00-8:30pm in Post Office Square and invited all residents to attend.

Civil Defense Relocation Discussion

Fire Chief Jim Wright and Police Chief Joe Bernstein were present for the discussion, along with Mike Polimer from Civil Defense and Public Works Superintendent Eric Hooper.

Chairman Heitin noted that the fire station was always to be utilized post-construction/move for Civil Defense. The Fire Chief agreed that the plan was for Civil Defense to move into the old fire station, but a new plan has been drawn for Civil Defense to move into an expanded auxiliary building at the new

public safety building. The plan would be to do that option if there is sufficient capacity when they go out to bid. The estimated cost, without soft costs, is \$375,000. There are some long term benefits and probably some shortfalls. Chief Bernstein noted that the old fire station could free up some space here at Town Hall.

Mr. Polimer said that they take a hit with respect to square footage in the new location but believes it is important to be with police and fire. DPW Superintendent Hooper believes it is absurd to move a second tier department into premium space when a primary department doesn't have enough space of its own. Selectman Roach explained that he was on the study committee and the discussions have always been for Civil Defense to move into the existing fire station. He believes it is ludicrous and believes Superintendent Hooper is right.

Chief Bernstein noted that he and Chief Wright are providing this as an option – if the Board doesn't agree, that's fine. Selectman McGrath believes that we could get use out of the fire station for the time being. Mr. Polimer believes it is a shame to cheap out in the new building and that this issue didn't come up sooner because Civil Defense didn't want to rain on anyone's parade. He said the location is not a big deal.

Selectman McGrath asked the Chiefs if this plan is beneficial or it should be studied further. Chief Bernstein believes it is beneficial for Civil Defense to be there, but we have to look at cost as well as more infringement on DPW. Chief Wright said that with respect to process, a direction needs to be decided very soon, because as we get into the detail on the construction documents, two sets of drawings will need to be done. He would prefer not to have a "maybe". Chairman Heitin asked if the Board could have until their next meeting and the Board will make a decision. Selectman Roach noted that this project was supported by Town Meeting and at the polls – they gave us the money for a public safety building – but would rather give money back to the taxpayers. Mr. Polimer asked if the public safety building could be named after Bernie Rosenberg.

250th Anniversary Committee Update

David Clifton, co-chair of the 250th Anniversary Committee, is present for the discussion. He thanked the Board for allowing him to serve on the Committee. He said that they have 50 volunteers. They are excited about celebrating the Town's 250th birthday. He said that it should cost \$140-150K to pay for the yearlong events. They are placing banners around town, looking to paint the parade route red, white and blue. "Do You Remember When" is the theme of the celebration and is promoting that theme around town. Mr. Clifton reviewed some of the events over the course of the year, including the ball drop, black tie ball, parade in September, family walk, art & music festival, etc. They need more volunteers and are always looking for donations. They have coins that they are selling and presented one to each of the selectmen. They intend to rename the 2015 triathlon after Bob Sondheim.

The Board thanked Mr. Clifton for his time.

Public Hearing – Proposed Rotary Stop Sign – Massapoag Avenue

MOTION: To open the public hearing associated with the rotary stop sign on Massapoag Avenue
(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Town Engineer Peter O’Cain noted that cars don’t yield to the cars in the rotary. He reviewed the results of the speed study. They looked at delineators – they could narrow the roadway to force speed reduction. The results could be verified with a follow-up speed study and the lane narrows from 11 feet to 10 feet. Radar speed signs provide driver feedback – the sign could be installed in place of existing 25 mph sign prior to rotary. With respect to bicyclists and pedestrians, he reviewed ranges for lane width and noted that the grass strip could be reduced for widening on lake side, but only in some areas. Areas with no grass strip cannot be widened unless the sidewalk is narrowed. With respect to bike lanes, the width cannot be carried the full length of the project. The Federal Highway Administration recommended bike lane width is 4-5 feet. “Sharrows” (shared lane marking and signage) can be carried the full length on Massapoag Avenue in both directions. With respect to stop signs to force yielding the rotary, signs are not warranted in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Warrants are met for East and Quincy as per MUTCD.

Chairman Heitin asked for comments from the Board.

Selectman McGrath noted that “Sharon-ites” never treated it as a rotary. He noted that there have been a lot of near misses.

Berry Phillips, 2 East Street, has seen lots of accidents and supports a stop sign on Massapoag Avenue. His wife, Judith, noted that the sight lines for pedestrians in that area are bad.

Donald Brichta, 55 Mansfield Street – supports the Town Engineer’s proposal. He doesn’t believe that stop signs should be used to slow traffic. He believes the yield signs are in the wrong place.

Dana Carne, 76 Massapoag Avenue, read a statement. She noted that Massapoag Avenue is the only street in town that separates people’s properties.

Paul Bergeron, 266 Massapoag Avenue, does not support stop signs going into the rotary. He thinks Yield to Traffic in Rotary signs should be added. He supports the “no left turn” signs at Quincy & East Streets. He suggested “ripples” be put into the road as you approach the rotary. He doesn’t believe in “sharing the lane” signs for bikes.

Mitch Blaustein, 5 Tamworth Road, agrees with Mr. Bergeron.

Ken Olum, 156 Massapoag Avenue, doesn’t think we need stop signs. He thinks we need to better determine what the rotary is – he had no idea that people think East Street is part of the rotary – perhaps realignment of the rotary.

Eric Norman, 15 Franklin Road, noted that his children cannot safely cross at the intersection

David Nelson, 10 Massapoag Avenue, supports stop signs and believes a study should be done about realigning the rotary. He supports the idea of crosswalks.

Pat Zlotin, 130 Massapoag Avenue, commented that crosswalks are helpful but drivers need to know that when someone is in the crosswalk, people need to pay attention to the pedestrians.

Sara Beszterczey, 42 Massapoag Avenue, said people accelerate down Massapoag Avenue after they leave the rotary. People need physical slowing; signs are effectual.

Sophie Brichta, 55 Mansfield Street, noted that she has never had problems walking to school at the rotary crosswalk. She doesn't support a stop sign and supports placing a sign in the middle of the crosswalk.

Diane McElligott, 100 Massapoag Avenue, suggests continuing sidewalks on East and Quincy.

Selectman McGrath said that the ripples in the roadway could be a noise problem for those residents near the area. The proposed stop sign simplifies everything – everyone understands the rules of a stop sign. He noted that there have been a lot of near misses but some accidents – why keep chancing it. Stop signs also slow traffic leaving the rotary heading up Massapoag Avenue and provide pedestrians a better sense of security.

David Wluka, 64 Massapoag Avenue, asked Mr. O'Cain if the throat of East Street can be reconfigured. Mr. O'Cain replied that he looked at eliminating the rotary itself but he believes it will encourage speeding. He further added that the proposed stop sign wouldn't be an enforceable sign under MUTCD.

Karen Tanzer, 90 Massapoag Avenue, likes the idea of stop signs but believes attention should be paid to the stretch of Massapoag Avenue between the rotary and the Community Center.

Chairman Heitin wants to take back the feedback they received tonight and ask staff to come up with some new recommendations about Massapoag Avenue. He reminded the attendees that the Board is here tonight to address the rotary.

MOTION: To install stop signs at Quincy Street and East Street and “no left turn” signs at those two locations and traffic calming measures including additional signage, reconfiguration of Massapoag Avenue to include bikes lanes and narrowing the road

(Roach – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

With respect to granite curbing, the Police Chief expressed his full support for granite curbing and not a raised berm. Judy Anderson, 156 Massapoag Avenue, wants a raised berm so her bicycle can get onto the curb so she can get on the sidewalk in case of an emergency. Ken Olum, 156 Massapoag Avenue, advocates for no curbing at all. Selectman McGrath said that for public safety, granite curbing is the way to go. Eric Hooper, Superintendent of Public Works, said that we have to do away with the grass strip. Now the sidewalk will be right up against the street and granite curbing is best. They need five feet of sidewalk.

Dana Carne, 76 Massapoag Avenue, reiterated her support for traffic calming measures.

MOTION: To go with the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Works to go with granite curbing on Massapoag Avenue

(Roach – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To close the public hearing at 8:18pm
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

The Board took a brief recess.

Hampton Road Safety Discussion

Chairman Heitin noted that there are certain things that the Town can do in conjunction with the MUTCD.

Peter O’Cain, Town Engineer, reviewed the results of the Hampton Road speed study. In 2014, all roadway markings have been done for all crosswalks and roadway striping and new speed limit signs have been installed in both directions in two new locations, in addition to existing signs near beginning both ends of roadway.

What else can be done?

- 1) Continue traffic study and collect more data to determine speeds in other locations on Hampton and whether a speed issue exists.
- 2) If speed is an issue, install delineator “neckdowns” to reduce speed. Verify efficacy of delineator neckdown through follow-up speed study.
- 3) Public safety awareness campaign to make motorists aware of speeding and also pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- 4) Determine whether dedicated bike lanes desired by abutters to Hampton. Loss of on-street parking would result.

Mr. O’Cain noted that Hampton Road is a well-designed roadway.

Chairman Heitin said that several residents have offered to donate funds to install radar speed signs on Hampton Road. Eric Hooper, Department of Public Works Superintendent, commented that these radar speed signs are effective and make you aware of your actual speed. They intend to install these signs.

Gordon Buchsbaum, 141 Hampton Road, lives on the blind curve where the accident occurred. He believes a bike lane on that road is a bad idea. He thinks the road should be narrowed and widen the sidewalks.

Pranav Mehta, 96 Hampton Road, likes the idea of the speed radar signs. He feels physical barriers are needed – like stop signs at Aspen. He’d rather have a speed bump.

Moss Sidell, 161 Hampton Road, wonders why the curbing was taken away when the area was repaved. The sidewalks are in disrepair and that is why people are walking in the street. Overgrown trees and shrubs also take over the sidewalk. Mr. O’Cain said there are certain criteria that warrant stop signs—volumes of cars, volumes of accidents, pedestrians, etc. He noted that there was no particular location where more of the accidents occurred. Mr. Hooper said that the state looks at four way stop signs as precursors to stop lights. Mr. Sidell asked about increased police enforcement in the area. Chairman Heitin noted that we have limited resources in the police department. Chief Bernstein noted that most of the people they do stop are residents of the neighborhood. The results of the speed study show that the average speed is approximately 33 mph. Mr. O’Cain reviewed the warrants. Selectman Roach asked Mr. Sidell about the curbing that he said was removed. Mr. O’Cain noted that a different type of

curbing was added to replace that old curb. Mr. Hooper noted that DPW looked at widening the grass strip and narrowing the road. There were drainage issues that would result and very expensive.

Elisa Buchsbaum, 141 Hampton Road, brought up the poor conditions of the sidewalks. She noted that the data was taken after the accident, when people are more cognizant of their speed.

Seema Dixit, 81 Hampton Road, asked if the warrants are the same for cities and towns and Chairman Heitin replied yes. She asked about speed bumps. Chairman Heitin said that we used them temporarily but they didn't last. She believes enforcement is necessary and added that no amount of public awareness campaign will do.

Hari Allam, 25 Magnolia Road, said that speed control is required, at least seasonally. There are blind curves on Hampton, near Dogwood.

Preshant Kaitkay, 144 Hampton Road, noted that there are blind curves and driveways and signage is needed.

A resident from 80 Azalea Road believes the solar speed signs should be on the curves.

Elisa Buchsbaum, 141 Hampton Road, asked why were the amount of stop signs plentiful in other areas but not on Hampton. The response was that the other stop signs were included in the design of the road.

Chief Bernstein said that the Town has had to remove stop signs because the state said they are illegal. Stop signs are not the answer. Narrowing the road isn't the solution either. People need to pay attention. He further stated that the design of the road was not the cause of the accident.

Selectman McGrath said that accidents can occur on the most perfectly designed road. All it takes is one driver to cause an accident.

Preshant Kaitkay, 144 Hampton Road, asked when can they come back to see more data? Chairman Heitin replied that they are going to take the proper data, and get it when kids are back to school. Chairman Heitin noted that we are doing more enforcement.

Chairman Heitin thanked everyone for coming and they gained valuable input. He believes that every street in Sharon deserves this type of attention.

Approval of Minutes – July 2, 2014

MOTION: To accept the regular session meeting minutes of July 2, 2014
(Roach - McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Banner Request – Unitarian Church of Sharon

MOTION: To approve the banner request for the Unitarian Church of Sharon from August 28-September 8, 2014 in the first position to highlight their 62nd Annual Bean Supper
(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Banner Request – DJ Foundation

MOTION: To approve the banner request for the DJ Foundation from August 25-September 2, 2014 in the second position and again from September 8-15 in first position to highlight their 2nd Annual Costume 5K Run/Walk

(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Banner Request – Sharon Soccer Association

MOTION: To approve the banner request for the Sharon Soccer Association from August 11-18, 2014 in the second position to highlight their Fall Soccer Registration

(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Yard Sign Request – Sharon Soccer Association

MOTION: To approve yard signs at named well-traveled locations for the Sharon Soccer Association to announce their Fall Soccer Registration for the weeks of August 4, 11 and 18, 2014

(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Out-of-State Travel Request – Recreation

Chairman Heitin noted that there are available funds in their budget. Selectman Roach only believes that one should attend because someone needs to be around to run the department. Chairman Heitin believes this is a good opportunity for them and we can decide for next year that perhaps one or the other can go, but not both. Chairman Heitin noted that typically the department head would be the one to attend.

MOTION: To approve the request for one Recreation Department employee to attend the 2014 National Park and Recreation Association Congress and Exposition in Charlotte, North Carolina from October 14-16, 2014

(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Stipend for Assistant Collector

This agenda item has been held for a future meeting.

Conservation Commission Appointment

MOTION: To appoint Meredith de Carbonnel to the Conservation Commission for a term to expire on December 31, 2015

(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Zoning Board of Appeals Vacancy

The Board asked that the vacancy be posted.

Town Administrator Employment Agreement

This agenda item has been held for a future meeting.

Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight hours in advance of the meeting

Todd and Sara Chiaramida, 45 Richards Avenue, asked for an update as to the Maskwonicut Street bridge, as there is an increase in traffic on their road. Chairman Heitin said that state funding has been approved and the town is pushing the Governor and the Treasurer to sign the bond to get the funding for the project. He noted that the cost is in the millions - \$5 million. He asked that the Town Engineer get in touch with the Chiaramida's to offer additional information.

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:13pm
(McGrath – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**