

MINUTES
SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
February 17, 2015

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Sharon Town Hall at 7:01pm with Chairman William A. Heitin, Clerk John J. McGrath, Selectman Walter B. Roach and Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr.

Edward Roach, American Legion – Memorial Day Ceremony Discussion

Mr. Roach is the past Commander of the American Legion Past and is a lifetime Sharon resident. He talked a little bit about the history the Memorial Day activities here in Sharon. He feels strongly that the heritage and tradition of Memorial Day is Rock Ridge Cemetery and in front of Sharon Town Hall. He added that Lake Massapoag has nothing to do with Memorial Day. He feels that appropriate signage should be placed at each entrance of Memorial Park Beach, recognizing veterans. He thanked the Board for allowing him to voice his opinion.

Selectman Roach asked Mr. Roach if he is looking for the Board of Selectmen to make a decision about the location of the Memorial Day ceremonies. Mr. Roach said that many veterans feel the same way as he does. Selectman McGrath told Mr. Roach that he looking to get a memorial to veterans at Memorial Park Beach and that there is no current proposal to move the Memorial Day ceremonies to the lake. Unless there is a majority of the American Legion or VFW members that want the ceremonies moved, it will not move.

The Board thanked Mr. Roach for his time.

Lealdon Langley – Water Management Advisory Committee Interview

Mr. Langley said that he was contacted by a member of the Water Management Advisory Committee to see if he would be interested serving again, as he has previously served. He felt this was a good time to get involved again. He also served on the Conservation Commission. He works for the Department of Environmental Protection and previously managed the water management program at DEP. He has a background in water issues. He wants to help the town secure its water supply. Selectman Roach feels he could hit the ground running, given his experience and past involvement with the Committee. Chairman Heitin said that he hopes to have someone from the Committee come to an upcoming Selectmen's meeting for an update on some important topics.

The Board thanked Mr. Langley for his time.

Keevin Geller, Conservation Commission – Watercraft Use/Boat Ramp Signage Discussion

Mr. Geller noted that the Conservation Commission met recently and voted on several issues involving the lake. He noted that there needs to be an ongoing dialogue on the issues facing the lake, as no one wants a repeat of last year. On an unrelated topic, he wanted the Board to know that the Conservation Commission voted in favor of connecting with the MWRA. With regard to the lake, the Conservation Committee is requesting the Board of Selectmen mandate that the Police Department conduct more patrols in the boat launch area, as this may show people that the police are present. Selectman McGrath noted that the boat launch area is routinely patrolled and that Chief Bernstein has a plan to address the early morning hours and doing more proactive patrolling.

The other issue Mr. Geller wanted to speak about relates to signage related to invasive species and what can happen if these invasive species are brought into the lake. He said that people aren't even aware of the issue and these better signs could be educational. Selectman McGrath asked if anyone who gets permits are given a flyer, educating people about the dangers of invasives and Mr. Bluestein from the Recreation Advisory Committee replied that people are given information.

Selectman Roach suggested that a kiosk be installed to help provide education. Chairman Heitin believes there are a lot of signs and perhaps an inventory should take place. Mr. Bluestein asked who is in charge of signs and Chairman Heitin said that the Board of Selectmen can manage the sign. Mr. Geller believes the signs should make their point but not be harsh. Mr. Geller offered to provide examples from other states.

The Board thanked Mr. Geller for his time.

Beach Procedures Discussion

Chairman Heitin noted that this topic was discussed at the previous meeting. The first issue is whether or not to keep the beach open past 6:00pm. Recreation Director Amanda Levasseur prepared an amended schedule that would shift lifeguards around.

Mr. Turkington said that the other topic was providing a parking pass for high school students – it would allow them to park at the beach during the school year, except during the winter, and then also access to the beach during the summer. This could generate \$6,000-\$10,000 per year. If the Board supports this pass, he will work with Ms. Levasseur to get this up and going by April 1.

Chairman Heitin asked that this proposal be moved forward and the Board will vote on this at the next meeting.

Fields Use Discussion

Chairman Heitin said that a group of residents, town officials and local sports organizations have met over the last year or so to talk about the current fields,

Paul Driscoll from Sharon Soccer Association began by talking about the composition of the Field Committee. They discussed existing field space, demonstrate the need for additional field space, explore new field opportunities, and present cost estimates to develop new field space as well as improve existing field space.

Sharon school and youth sports organizations are in need of new and improved field space to conduct and accommodate their athletic activities. The last new field space was created in 1993; two soccer fields at Gavins Pond, when Sharon had a population of 15,517 in 1990. Sharon's 2010 population grew to 17,612 and is expected to grow further to 19,089 by the year 2030. During the past twenty years a new sport to the town, lacrosse, was organized and now boasts an enrollment of 200 boys and girls but does not have dedicated field space. Sharon residents have formed an adult cricket club that will also need outdoor field space and they would like to organize a youth cricket team. Organized school and youth sports programs rely heavily on well-maintained school and town owned facilities. Growing programs are struggling. Approximately 40% of school-aged children participate in field sports.

Sharon's excellent school system and social diversity will continue to attract new residents with school aged children placing further strain on existing athletic fields.

Land to build new fields in Sharon is scarce. The town contains approximately 15,600 acres of total area; however approximately 40 percent, or roughly 6,700 acres, is restricted use by conservation restrictions, conservation easements, agricultural land, wetlands, Lake Massapoag, Borderland State Park, Moose Hill Reservation, and Massachusetts Audubon reservations. There is no land available at the five public schools in Sharon to build new fields. A soccer field or a football field or a lacrosse field requires only two acres of land. We can surely find the space and the funds to create a safe environment for the children of Sharon to enjoy the countless benefits of athletics. Mr. Driscoll spoke about the many benefits of youth sports.

In 2007 the town undertook a study to update its Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). In addition to addressing the community's desire to preserve open space within the town the report also assessed youth athletic needs. In particular the study found "Sharon also hosts a thriving athletics environment for

competitive team sports, including sports of the public schools and independent youth athletic leagues. Among these, football, lacrosse, softball, baseball and soccer have gigantic demand. These programs are growing, with both baseball and soccer now holding sessions in both fall and spring. Competition between sports groups for practice/play space has created heavy use of existing field areas, motivating many townspeople to seek to create new active-recreation areas. This documented need for additional field space has been unmet to date. The report further addresses the need to adequately maintain existing athletic facilities.

This report will review existing field space, demonstrate the need for additional field space, explore new field opportunities, and present cost estimates to develop new field space as well as improve existing field space.

The analysis undertaken to prepare this report has clearly demonstrated the need for additional field space as well as improvements to existing fields. The football and lacrosse teams practice on undersized and poorly maintained fields. The soccer teams, both recreational and travel, practice on overcrowded fields. Fields at the Sharon Middle School have suffered from deferred maintenance along with the lack of proper irrigation. The Sharon High School fields are over used and provide poor playing surfaces. Heights and Cottage Elementary Schools have no available land to develop full sized playing fields. The fields at East Elementary School are in need of rehabilitation and maintenance. The fields at Ames Street suffer from poor drainage.

The population of Sharon has grown since the last new field space was developed in 1993 and will continue to grow. The town leaders are urged to take a long term approach to the need for additional field space and continue to be a steward of the fields already in existence by maintaining them in such a fashion so future generations of children will be able to enjoy the benefits of safe athletic competition. Sharon's excellent educational reputation and the town's social diversity should be matched by similar opportunities to excel at athletics so the children of Sharon will be fully developed in body, mind and spirit.

The recommendation from the report is to build two new fields at the Gavins Pond site and conduct major rehabilitation to fields at the high school, middle school, East Elementary, Ames Field, Gavins Pond and establish a stronger maintenance plan for all fields. They are for funding to improve existing fields, funding to build the two new multi-purpose fields at Gavins Pond and annual expenditures to maintain town owned fields, a portion of which will be paid by the town sports associations. Mr. Driscoll noted that Community Preservation Act and Capital Outlay funds are available as well as private donations and donations from youth sports groups.

Selectman Roach asked what the two new fields at Gavin's Pond would be. Mr. Driscoll replied that no decision has been made yet. Football and lacrosse does not have dedicated space. Chairman Heitin noted that the intention is for these two new fields would be multi-purpose fields. Selectman McGrath asked if the neighbors would be supportive of two new fields at Gavin's Pond and asked if the Committee has looked into that. Chairman Heitin said that you could reconfigure the existing fields to be able to add in another one and parking could be added after the fact. Selectman McGrath noted that more fields will impact the neighbors. Mr. Bluestein said that it is unlikely that all fields would be used at once – allowing fields to rest is important and there shouldn't be more traffic than there is now. Mitch Blaustein added that there are no lights or concession stands there, in order to accommodate the neighbors.

Selection of Members to the Police Chief Screening Committee

Chairman Heitin noted that a number of candidates applied for the opportunity to serve on the Police Chief Screening Committee. The Committee would work with a consultant and the Town Administrator to find a number of candidates for the position of Police Chief.

Mr. Turkington is soliciting proposals for recruitment and an assessment center and background checks for five candidates for Chief. The deadline for proposals is March 10 and he will provide the results to the Board. He is a strong proponent for an assessment center. Selectman McGrath is not sold on assessment centers, and is planning on talking to other communities about their experiences with assessment centers.

Selectman Roach said that the firm the town used in the search for the Fire Chief did an excellent job and the Fire Chief was impressed as well. He added that this is an important job and is worth the money.

Selectman Roach asked Selectman McGrath if he is going to participate in the selection of the Police Chief Screening Committee process, or if he is going to abstain from the discussions if he is considering becoming a candidate for the position of Police Chief. Mr. Turkington explained the timeline of the process. Chairman Heitin noted that the intention of the Board would be to select a Police Chief with all three members.

Chairman Heitin noted that Michael Feldman was appointed by the Personnel Board to serve at their representative, the Board of Selectmen must select four and the Town Administrator will serve as an ex officio member.

MOTION: To support opening the search to candidates both inside and outside the police department
(Heitin – Roach) 2-O-1 **PASSES** (Selectman McGrath abstaining)

MOTION: To appoint Thomas Gillen to the Police Chief Screening Committee
(Roach – Heitin) 2-O-1 **PASSES** (Selectman McGrath abstaining)

MOTION: To appoint Jacqueline Modiste to the Police Chief Screening Committee
(Roach – Heitin) 2-O-1 **PASSES** (Selectman McGrath abstaining)

MOTION: To appoint David Fixler to the Police Chief Screening Committee
(Heitin – Roach) 2-O-1 **PASSES** (Selectman McGrath abstaining)

MOTION: To appoint James Glaser to the Police Chief Screening Committee
(Heitin – Roach) 2-O-1 **PASSES** (Selectman McGrath abstaining)

Mr. Turkington hopes to hold an organizational committee in the next couple of weeks and then they will meet again with the consultant.

MOTION: To appoint Town Administrator Fred Turkington as an ex-officio member of the Police Chief Screening Committee
(Heitin – Roach) 2-O-1 **PASSES** (Selectman McGrath abstaining)

Consent Calendar

- Vote to accept regular minutes of February 3, 2015
- Vote to approve Fiscal Year 2016 consolidated proposed budget for Selectmen's sector budgets in the amount of \$13,134,466 - **HELD**
- Vote to appoint Treasurer/Collector Alicia McOsker auctioneer for an auction on March 13, 2015 for land owned by the Town at 845 Old Post Road
- Vote to approve Dreamfar's request to host the Dreamfar 10K on Sunday, January 25, 2016
- Vote to approve request Sharon Green Day to close a portion of High Street for their annual event, to be held on Saturday, May 2
- Vote to approve the Sharon Lions Club's request to hold their Spring White Cane Day fundraising event on Saturday, May 9 from 8:45am-12:00pm in Sharon Center
- Vote to approve Chapter 90 reimbursement request for two trailer-mounted variable message signs, totaling \$31,920

MOTION: To approve the February 17, 2015 consent calendar with the exception of #2
(McGrath – Roach) 3-O **PASSES**

Mr. Turkington explained the responsibilities of the third professional in the Recreation Department. It would be funded half by town funds and the other by revolving funds. Selectman Roach doesn't feel the case has been made to add in a third professional in this department and Selectman McGrath agreed. Mr. Turkington noted that we can document what is done by part-time/contract people over the next year and provide a cost of that to compare to hiring a third individual.

MOTION: To approve Fiscal Year 2016 consolidated proposed budget for Selectmen's sector budgets in the amount of \$13,112,732
(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Town Administrator's Report

The Town Administrator reported the following:

- He coordinated a meeting with NSTAR and the neighbors on Canton Street for mid-March to discuss the potential switching station.
- Met with Civil Defense, Police, Fire and DPW to discuss the transition of Civil Defense out of their existing building. April 30 is the deadline for Civil Defense to move out of their existing site into locations at the existing Fire Station and the basement of Town Hall
- The Capital Outlay Committee was productive
- The School Committee proposed a 3.4% budget
- He is meeting with the Finance Committee this Wednesday and the following Monday
- The regional MMA Annual Breakfast is March 10 in Canton and encouraged the Board members to attend

Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting

Chairman Heitin asked residents to continue to dig out fire hydrants.

Executive Session – 8:26pm

MOTION: To enter into executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, and at the end, to adjourn for the evening. 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

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:55pm
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye
McGrath: Aye
Roach: Aye