

**MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD**

June 21, 2022

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Select Board Chair, Hanna Switekowski virtually by Zoom. Select Board members Emily Smith-Lee and Kiana Pierre-Louis were in attendance as was Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr. and Assistant Town Administrator, Lauren Barnes. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comment period

The Board has set aside a few minutes at the beginning of their meeting to address resident concerns or questions. There being no public comments, Ms. Switekowski moved on with meeting.

Board/Committee Interviews – Governance Study Committee

Ms. Switekowski explained that there is one vacancy available for the Governance Study Committee. There are three candidates scheduled to be interviewed this evening, Mr. David Blaszkowsky, Mr. Kurt Buermann, and Ms. Joanne Michalek.

Ms. Joanne Michalek introduced herself. She advised that she has lived in Sharon for 28 years. She is a retired nurse and explained that she has experience in research and grant writing which she felt may be helpful considering the work of the committee. She has always had an interest in politics. In retirement, she has been involved with the Sharon Democratic Committee, Sharon Interfaith Action and other groups but has never served on a Board or Committee. Ms. Michalek had an opportunity to respond to the several questions by the Board including her position on open versus representative Town Meeting and how she may navigate differences of opinion in working with a committee. The Board thanked Ms. Michalek for her time this evening and her interest. It was explained that the Board would deliberate and make an appointment at a future meeting.

The Board agreed that they would move on with the next agenda topic to allow time for Mr. Blaszkowsky and Mr. Buermann to log in. Otherwise, interviews would be rescheduled for the next meeting on July 12.

Select Board communication strategy

The Select Board indicated interest at a previous meeting in undertaking an effort to improve upon communication. Mr. Turkington has researched and provided information from other communities such as a local newspaper in Hopkinton and newsletters/email messages that are pushed out via distribution lists. He explained that he worked with Jeff Rose in IT to obtain the number of email addresses collected through subscription to the website, approximately 7,860 discreet email addresses at this time. Mr. Rose also provided some background on how to go about subscribing. There are nearly 40 different choices to select from. Perhaps it could be investigated whether those choices could be streamlined or grouped to facilitate ease in registering for selected information.

Mr. Turkington explained that a few years ago when the Town went through the changes in solid waste collection services and residents needed to select collection barrel sizes, staff collaborated in pulling together email addresses associated with water bills, recreation registrations, trash bills from Republic, and the website email addresses and came up with only about 4,000 email addresses. He explained that the scope of the effort was intensive to obtain a baseline email distribution list which may now be out of date.

With respect to the Hopkinton publication, Mr. Turkington has discussed with the owners of the newspaper, and they have expressed an interest in doing a similar publication in Sharon as well as another few communities with similar demographics. They stated that the key to success would be finding someone locally to serve as a journalist. He has reached out to a few residents who have worked in journalism and certainly if anyone listening

has this type of background and has 10-15 hours a week for this kind of work, they are encouraged to contact Town Hall.

The Board expressed their fascination and interest in an independent periodical and concerns for its success. Ms. Pierre-Louis mentioned that there should be thought about other avenues such as a community calendar or perhaps engaging with students or Adult Center volunteers in publishing a monthly newsletter or collaborating with the Council on Aging with their newsletter.

The Board also prefers the idea of a bi-weekly publication as time sensitive information might be missed with a monthly issue. Ms. Smith-Lee reiterated her preference for independence and transparency which may be called into question with a paid position with the Town.

The Board discussed what might be done now until something more robust can be vetted and off the ground. They agreed to put a message out to the community to see whether there may be interest in volunteer work or perhaps a possible part-time staff person or intern for communication.

Economic Development initiative overview

Ms. Maria de la Fuente shared a presentation about the work that the Department of Public Works has been doing in gaining grant funding for economic development initiatives. She elaborated on two current ongoing initiatives, an ecotourism marketing program funded by MOTT's travel and tourism recovery grant of \$20,000 and a bike sharing program funded by the Safe Streets and Spaces Grant of \$73,340.

The ecotourism program is a goal of the 2019 Imagine Sharon masterplan goals. This program entails social media posts on Instagram and Facebook as well as Google ads promoting open spaces and businesses in Sharon. The goal is to use Sharon's beautiful and varied recreational opportunities to attract people to visit. Once here, they can check out the selection of family-owned restaurants and shops. This campaign will start in July and end in September 2022.

The bike-share program is also a goal of the Imagine Sharon masterplan. This program would fund 40 non-electric bicycles the locations of which would be divided between the Commuter Rail station and the Community Center. Sharon will own and maintain the bicycles and set fees to keep the system affordable to residents and visitors and self-funding ongoing maintenance. This project will be bid soon, and it is hoped that the program will be up and running by Spring 2023.

Ms. De la Fuente also explained that applications have been submitted for two grants, a Downtown DIF real estate services grant of \$50,000 and a Small Business Technical Assistance grant of \$100,000. The Board thanked Ms. De la Fuente and the Economic Development Committee for their presentation. They expressed their appreciation for all of their hard work and research.

Mr. Maidman remarked that the Economic Development Committee will be meeting next week to finalize reports that they have been working on regarding major business zones and hopes that the Select Board will reserve time on their next agenda for an overview.

Consent Calendar

Review and approve the consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the following minutes
 - a. May 24, 2022 open session
 - b. June 7, 2022 open session
- II. Vote to approve the following banner request/requests:

- a. Friends of the Fourth Independence Day festivities – June 27 to July 4, 2022 in 1st position and waive fee
- III. Vote to approve the following one-day liquor licenses:
 - a. Anna Pietal private event on June 25, 2022 at the Sharon Community Center from 5:00 pm to 10:30 pm
- IV. Vote to approve the Flag Day proclamation
 - a. Proclamation
- V. Vote to reappoint Toben Asklar to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for a term expiring June 30, 2025
 - a. Membership list
 - b. Email correspondence

MOTION: To approve the consent calendar.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Pierre-Louis: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
Switlekowski: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Town Administrator's report

Mr. Turkington provided the following update.

We are closing on the property at 94 South Main Street this week. Closing costs are approximately \$11K. I reached out to the Historic Commission regarding a demolition permit required because of the age of the structure. They agreed to waive the permit application and hearing based on the condition of the property provided we work to secure elements of the building that have significance prior to demolition and removal (a few window shutters, front porch columns, corbels, balustrades, and two onion lights hanging on the porch are in decent condition). DPW staff will proceed with securing a testing firm and demolition contractor.

Kai Yu has resigned as a member of the Planning Board. As required by MGL Chapter 41, Section 11, notice of the vacancy must be posted within 30 days and the Select Board and the remaining members of the Planning Board will meet to interview candidates and appoint someone to fill the vacancy to the next Town election on May 16, 2023 when term expires. We are tentatively planning to hold the joint meeting on July 12.

We received / exchanged approximately 34 pieces of correspondence between 9:00 a.m. on Friday, June 3 and 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 16. Topics included:

- Email from School Committee announcing leadership vote, committee assignments and sub-committee appointments;
- Email distributing MMA diversity, equity and inclusion guide;
- A series of emails (10) between Library Board of Trustees and town counsel regarding appointment of legal representation;
- Two public records request and response regarding mobile telecommunications towers, equipment installed (4G and 5G), ownership and lease terms;
- Email from Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee chair Laura Russell asking that a Select Board member be assigned as liaison to the LMAC and response from Town Administrator;
- Six emails supporting a tractor trailer truck ban on South Walpole Street and adjacent neighborhoods;
- Email from suggesting the police department purchase additional motorcycles and train officers for speed enforcement given current spike in cost of gasoline;

- Email from a resident on Pilgrim Drive questioning the need, notification, and restrictions on residents related to the paving project and response from DPW; and,
- Notices and invitations: firefighter remembrance program on June 12; Sharon Pride celebration on June 12; MMA newly-elected Select Board training on July 23; Flag Day observance on June 14; Governance Study Committee open forum on June 14; and, Sharon Rotary Club 80th anniversary dinner on July 18.

Future meeting agenda topics and tentative dates for discussion

- Marijuana delivery license HCA review at 5 Merchant Street (July 12 or August 2)
- Consideration of lease and power purchasing agreement for landfill and HS roof project (July 12)
- Discussion on strategy for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (July 12)
- Comcast franchise license renewal (summer or fall)
- Development of zoning changes to implement master plan for action at 2023 ATM (July 12 or August 23)
- Interview and appoint member of Planning Board (July 12 or August 2)
- Discussion of request from Library Trustees for appointment of special counsel (August 2)
- Update on litigation appealing library project special permit (August 2)
- Discussion on lake management issues with Recreation Advisory Committee, Board of Health and Lake Management Committee (August 2)
- South Walpole Street tractor trailer truck ban (summer date TBD)
- Design and construction of water treatment facility; funding process; oversight role for SSBC and WMAC (August 23)

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting

- Consider and vote to approve a utility easement license agreement with Verizon New England for the new Sharon High School
 - Agreement
- Consider and vote to approve increased outdoor water use restrictions which limit restrictions to handheld watering only effectively immediately
 - Request by Water Management Advisory Committee
 - Correspondence from DPW Superintendent, Eric Hooper

Mr. Hooper provided an explanation for the request for more stringent water use restrictions. He explained that Massachusetts continues to experience dry conditions. As such, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Beth Card on Thursday of last week declared a Level 2-Significant Drought in both the Northeast and Southeast Regions of the Commonwealth, i.e., all of the eastern Massachusetts/Boston metropolitan area.

For those living and working within a Level 2 – Significant Drought region, which includes Sharon, the following actions are encouraged but not required according to the permit for water withdrawals that is currently in place:

Residents and Businesses:

- Limit outdoor watering to hand-held hoses or watering cans, to be used only after 5:00PM or before 9:00AM one day a week.

Immediate Steps for Communities:

- Limit or prohibit installation of new sod, seeding, and/or landscaping; washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; operation of non-recirculating fountains; filling of swimming pools, hot tubs, and backyard informal rinks.

While Sharon municipal wells are not experiencing any extreme drawdowns that could impact operations and groundwater elevations at observation wells throughout Town are not abnormally low, following the recommendation of the regulatory authority for environmental affairs is recommended.

The Board expressed their appreciation for Mr. Hooper's elaboration. Ms. Switekowski asked that staff take steps to get the word out as quickly as possible. Mr. Hooper agreed that DPW will roll out communication about the restrictions and assured the Board that no fines will be imposed initially.

MOTION: To approve the supplemental agenda with the considered changes to the utility easement agreement language.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Pierre-Louis: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

The Board made the following announcements.

Ms. Pierre-Louis mentioned that on July 5 there will be a reading of the Frederick Douglass' speech, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" with the Sharon Historical Society at 6pm at the Veterans' Memorial Beach. Ms. Smith-Lee remarked that she felt the event held last year was powerful.

Thursday evening at the Lake, Chuck Fazio and Sharon Education Foundation will hold a benefit concert at Lake Massapoag. Abbey Road is the name of the duo who will perform.

July 3rd Independence Day Committee has been working hard on the upcoming celebration. As a reminder, fireworks are returning to this year's celebration.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:37 pm
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Heitin: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- Board/Committee applications (3)
- Board/Committee membership lists
- Interview questions
- Committee Charge
- Presentation
- Correspondence
- Minutes
- Banner request form
- One-day liquor license application
- Proclamation
- Membership list
- Email correspondence
- Town Administrator's report