

**MINUTES**  
**SHARON SELECT BOARD**  
June 20, 2023

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

**Public comment period**

The Board heard remarks from several residents of the Pine Grove Avenue and Tree Lane neighborhood expressing their concerns over the impact of the location of a water treatment plant.

There being no further comments, Ms. Switekowski moved on with the meeting.

**Introduction: Paul Dumouchel, Sharon Housing Authority Management Agent**

The Board was introduced to Mr. Paul Dumouchel, the Management Agent for the Sharon Housing Authority. It was explained that he is the Executive Director of the Attleboro Housing Authority. The Sharon Housing Authority has retained the services of the Attleboro Housing Authority for a period of two years, after an initial trial period of six months to oversee the operations of the Housing Authority.

A good working relationship has been developed with the Town. For those who may not know, the Sharon Housing Authority provides rental housing for persons of low income with preference for Veterans and residents/those who work in Sharon. The Authority provides eighty-eight one-bedroom apartments for elderly and disabled residents at the Hixson Farm Road developments, six two-bedroom apartments for families at the Pleasant Street developments, AHVP vouchers and a residential facility on Bay Road which is leased on a long-term basis to the May Institute.

Mr. Dumouchel's goals under the current agreement include undertaking infrastructure repairs which are overdue at the facility. Happy to report that public housing in MA achieved an increase of roughly \$10 million in the upcoming budget due to support from the legislative delegation. These funds will help to pay for some of the priority repair and maintenance needs of the Sharon Housing Authority properties.

The Board asked a few questions of Mr. Dumouchel such as whether the involvement of the Attleboro Housing Authority impacts the governance of the Sharon Housing Authority. Mr. Dumouchel advised that Attleboro Housing is overseen by the Sharon Housing Authority Board, a five-member Board made up of elected Sharon residents. Instead of directly overseeing an Executive Director, Mr. Dumouchel oversees Sharon Housing Authority personnel. The Board also asked to hear about prioritization of repairs. It was explained that the siding is in desperate need of repair and replacement. Sharon Housing has received some Community Preservation funding. The Board also asked about translation services. The Housing Board recently adopted a language access plan which lays out how to address communication deficiencies with respect to translation, primarily Mandarin and Russian. Sharon Housing has a good working relationship with an organization in town that has and will continue to translate much of the correspondence needed to get to residents.

The Board thanked Mr. Dumouchel for attending this evening to introduce himself.

**Board/Committee interview: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee**

The Board was introduced to Kim Hokanson, a candidate for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and thanked her for her interest in serving the Sharon Community. In responding to the Board's standard interview questions, Ms. Hokanson explained that she was born in Texas. She is a social worker by training and has worked

in the field of child welfare for 20 years. She is presently a teacher at the Boson University School of Social Work and is the mother of two biracial children. She is disabled due to a brain injury and likes to research women's history.

The Board thanked Ms. Hokanson for her time this evening and advised that it is the Board's policy to make appointments at the meeting following interviews.

### **Discussion on Edge Hill Road LIP development project**

Mr. Matt MacDonald of 237 Edge Hill Road thanked the Board for allowing him to speak on this topic. Mr. MacDonald proceeded with a statement regarding the proposed 40B LIP town house rental development at the Brookmeadow Country Club. He explained that he requests that the current Select Board:

1. take immediate action to rescind the endorsement of this project under the 40B LIP program with the DHCD and,
2. to remove any Town support for this Proposal in any form and,
3. to take any other such actions to end any Town proceedings in regard to this Proposal and to direct the applicant to pursue its development of these parcels under current Zoning Regulations.

He cites several reasons for his request:

- the density of the development being too high,
- the design being incompatible with the surrounding area,
- the development will be rental-only which will have a negative impact on the neighborhood, and
- the development will not provide affordable housing units for the Town.

Mr. MacDonald alleges that the developer has made misleading statements about the project and has donated money to the Town to influence the outcome of the project. Mr. MacDonald concluded by stating that the proposed development is not in the best interest of the Town and should not be approved.

In addition to the points raised by Mr. MacDonald, there are several other concerns that have been raised about the proposed development, including:

- The development will increase traffic congestion on Edge Hill Road.
- The development will strain the town's infrastructure, such as its schools and water system.
- The development will depreciate the value of homes in the surrounding area.

The Select Board also heard similar statements from Georgeann Lewis and Laura Nelson of Edge Hill Road as well as Siobhan Donahue of 443 Walpole Street in Canton.

Mr. Turkington advised that the project is before the Zoning Board of Appeals which is the appropriate forum for addressing several of the concerns raised by the neighbors. With respect to the number of affordable housing units, it was discovered that DHCD made an error in their calculations in stating that four units at 80 percent will be sufficient. DHCD has since calculated that 5 units at 80 percent of the median income or 4 units at 50 percent for the twenty (20) units to count toward the housing inventory. Thus, counsel for the developer indicated they would decide between five units at 80 percent and four units at 50 percent and amend their application to reflect that decision which will address whether the 20 units will count toward inventory.

In 2017, the developer originally proposed a 120-unit apartment building with long corridors which frankly resembled more of a hotel. That plan was rejected. In working with the developer, their goal is a continuity of revenue stream for future generations of their family who own the golf course and these parcels. They also feel that they would have more control of the esthetics and exterior by setting HOA regulations for the property and screening tenants.

Ms. Smith-Lee commented that she believes the only reason for their reconsidering their part in the process, to allow the project to continue through the Zoning approval and permitting processes, would be for directional or big-picture changes of the project. Ms. Pierre-Louis remarked that although she was not involved in any votes on this project, she is an advocate, actually an activist, for affordable housing. While she respects that the scenery and natural surroundings in the community have drawn many to live here, housing sometimes wins out in comparison. She sought clarification on the affordable housing component. Mr. Turkington advised that 5 units at 80% or 4 at 50% would satisfy the subsidized housing inventory requirement. The developer has indicated that they intend to honor the affordability component of the project.

The Board requested that Mr. Turkington reach out to Town Counsel for guidance on the Board's options. They advised that they will revisit this topic and thanked the neighbors for their comments and their time this evening.

#### **Host Community Agreements with Verano/Four Daughter's Compassionate Care**

Mr. Turkington advised that a successor Host Community Agreement has been negotiated with Verano/Four Daughter's Compassionate Care. As the Board will recall, the Commonwealth modified governance of host community agreements so that communities must show specific additional expenses. This agreement is identical except for the flat 3% tax on assumption of negative impact. Mr. Silverman, the representative for Verano/Four Daughters thanked Mr. Turkington for his comprehensive summary and advised he had nothing to add.

**MOTION:** To approve the successor host community agreement with Verano/Four Daughters Compassionate Care.  
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

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

#### **Sharon Governance Study Committee**

Mr. Turkington advised that Mr. Pietal has resigned his position on the committee and Ms. Monahan indicated that she cannot continue due to time constraints. The Board wishes the committee to remain active for a short time to investigate and provide a recommendation on a provision for recall and/or removal as well as codifying the role of the moderator. Staff will reach out to the existing members to see about their availability and will advertise filling the vacant seats. The Board will have an opportunity to conduct interviews at a future meeting.

#### **Easement for Sharon Gallery**

Mr. Turkington advised that this easement reflects negotiations between the Sharon Gallery owner and Conservation Commission. This will allow for maintenance of structures such as bridges and culverts. It provides for funding to treat this as a natural wetland. It has been determined that the property is not commercially viable for cranberry farming. This easement was approved and adopted by Conservation Commission last week.

**MOTION:** To approve the easement for Conservation Commission access to the cranberry bog at the Sharon Gallery.  
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

## Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the open session minutes of June 6, 2023
- II. Vote to approve a seasonal food truck permit for Thankque Catering, Lakeside Concert Series at Veterans' Memorial Park Beach, July 3 and August 9 contingent upon successful fire safety inspection by Sharon Fire Department
- III. Vote to approve the block party request for Hixson Farm Road
- IV. Vote to make the following reappointments:
  - a. Valerie Vigoda to the Sharon Cultural Council through June 30, 2026
  - b. Lajos Kamocsay to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee through June 30, 2026
  - c. Charlotte "CP" Pototsky to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee through June 30, 2024
- V. Vote to appoint Beth Caruso as the Council on Aging Director effective June 26, 2023, and sign employment agreement
- VI. Vote to approve the following employment agreements:
  - a. Executive Assistant to the Select Board
  - b. Assistant DPW Superintendent
  - c. Public Health Nurse Administrator
  - d. Deputy Fire Chiefs (2)
- VII. Vote to award a contract to Fitzgerald Restoration Services, Inc. of Walpole, MA in the amount of \$46,000 for repair of the concrete stairs at the commuter rail station
- VIII. Vote to accept donation in the amount of \$1,250 from Everwood Day Camp for consultant planning, public hearing advertising, and abutter notification costs in connection with a pilot low dose alum application in the south cove of Lake Massapoag to be expended by the Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee
- IX. Vote to approve a Class II Auto Dealer license to Elite East Cars of 210 N. Main Street #8
  - a. Application materials

The Board wished to hold a vote on the Class II Auto Dealer license. They would like Mr. Ogunlade to speak to the request for a name change at the next meeting.

**MOTION:** To approve the consent calendar with the omission of number IX, a class II auto dealer license for Elite East Cars of 210 North Main Street.  
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

## Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington provided the following update.

*Status of Governance Study Committee.* Given the recommendations of the GSC were addressed at the 2023 ATM and others are being handled administratively, you can consider whether to continue the committee for another year. The issue of recall of elected officials and removal of appointed officials required further study.

There were other issues that grew from by-law discussions that could be referred to the GSC for evaluation and recommendation should you wish to amend the charge. If the GSC is continued, we can reconsider the number of members and whether to recruit replacements for vacancies created by resignations.

*Bicycle racks.* I have asked the Transportation Advisory Board to provide information on potential sites for the relocated bicycle rack on MBTA-controlled parcels for DPW to review.

*Gallery cranberry bog easement.* The Conservation is expected to approve on June 15 an easement from Ninety-Five, LLC to allow for the commission and staff to access for inspection and maintenance infrastructure related to the return of the cranberry bogs to a natural bog. Select Board authorization is required.

*Status of vacancies being recruited.* David Abbott, currently the local inspector in Walpole, will start on Monday, June 26 as Building Inspector. Beth Caruso will start as COA director on Monday, June 26 to provide for a week-long transition with retiring director Kathie Medeiros. Four candidates for Communications Specialist were interviewed; we have hired Donna Whitehead, a Plainville resident with significant experience as a reporter with both the *Cape Cod Times* and with the *Wicked Local* weekly news franchise where she covered Mansfield and Easton among other communities. We expect her to start on Wednesday, July 12. She will be introduced to the Board at our meeting on July 11.

The DPW leadership team is holding initial interviews with four candidates for GIS analyst. We are advertising for three administrative support positions – employee benefits specialist in the Treasurer’s office, financial analyst in the Accounting department, and the administrative assistant position at the COA – with closing dates at the end of this week.

*Collective bargaining update.* The initial bargaining session with librarians represented by SEIU will be held on June 20. We will continue negotiations with AFSCME representing DPW/Water laborers and equipment operators on June 21. We will hold an initial meeting with school crossing guards the week of July 10.

*Stop-loss insurance.* Our health insurance consultant, Cook & Company, has recommended retaining Blue Cross/Blue Shield for the stop-loss coverage which provides reinsurance for aggregate claims in a policy year in excess of \$165K at an annual cost of \$808,046. We typically average between 6-9 such claims each year.

*OPEB trust investment options.* On June 21 and 22, Treasurer Diane Wyman and Finance Director Krishan Gupta will join me in meeting with three partners under consideration to provide investment management services for the OPEB fund and other trusts held by the Town. These funds are typically invested similar to a retirement fund given the longevity of need and planned disbursement schedule of assets. There is an opportunity to significantly improve the rate of return with limited risk.

### **Select Board Correspondence/Announcements**

We received / exchanged approximately 64 pieces of correspondence between Friday, June 2 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 15. Topics included:

- Notices and invitations including: invitation for Firefighter Memorial Sunday program and Pride Day celebration on June 11 and COA retirement event on June 29; newsletter from Cultural Council; updated map of potential DIF area; application for Cultural Council (Valerie Vigoda) and EDC (Daniela Field); resignation of Stanley Rosen from LMAC;
- Emails (5) regarding appeal for a parking ticket;
- Emails requesting reconsideration of ban on backyard concerts;
- Emails (4) concerning cleanup of dead fish in Lake Massapoag;
- Email opposing cardboard recycling drop-off areas;
- Email opposing PAYT trash program;
- Emails requesting agenda time to discuss the proposed LIP project at 268-292 Edge Hill Road;
- Emails and responses from DPW Superintendent and Town Administrator regarding the siting of the water treatment facility in Tree Lane / Pine Tree Lane neighborhood;
- Emails asking for Board discussion of traffic issues at Ames and Pond Street intersection;

- Correspondence concerning condition and lack of care of property at 17 Chestnut Street;
- Email supporting the TAB recommendation for siting e-bikes at MBTA commuter rail station;
- Emails concerning solid waste and recycling program and fees; and,
- Email regarding South Main Street bike lane project.

As thinking about future meetings; ESL to review trash policies before get rolling with budget. Rather get going sooner than later.

#### **Topics not reasonably anticipated within 48 hours in advance of the meeting**

None.

#### **Adjourn**

**MOTION:** To adjourn at 8:52.  
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

Switlekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

#### List of Documents

- Email of May 23, 2023
- Application
- Membership lists (3)
- Email correspondence
- Host community agreements (2)
- Committee charge
- Easement
- Minutes
- Food truck application materials
- Block party application materials
- Employment agreement
- Award form
- Agreement
- Memorandum
- Class II Auto Dealer application
- Surety bond
- Town Administrator's report