

MINUTES
SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
August 5, 2014

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Sharon Town Hall at 7:20pm with Chairman William A. Heitin, Clerk John J. McGrath and Selectman Walter B. Roach.

Lake Massapoag Management Discussion

Chairman Heitin noted that the Board called this meeting to discuss a lack of communication about Lake Massapoag and said that the primary reason the lake level has been low is because of work being commissioned by the Conservation Commission. There have been 3 separate chemical treatments of the lake to drive away the invasive species and that is why the lake level is low. The Board was never advised of the extent of the lowering, the timing of it and when it is going to come back up. There is an Order of Conditions placed on the lake, likely in the 2000s, as well as the Board's lack level policy. Those documents require a presentation and recommendation by the Lake Management Study Committee, but that has never happened. The Board has never been advised.

Cliff Towner, Chair of the Lake Management Study Committee, was invited to speak. He said that the Lake Management Study Committee reports to Town Meeting. He said that there are stories in the newspaper about the matter and they communicate to the Conservation Commission. He noted that the lake is down 23 inches and explained that the water leaves the lake in three ways – through the flume house, the west side of the lake underground and through evaporation. He believes that there have been more studies of the lake than any other lake in the state. Chairman Heitin said that in the twelve years he has been on the Board, he has never seen a study. Mr. Towner said that he reports everything to the Conservation Commission. Chairman Heitin noted that advisory boards all come before the Board at some point. Chairman Heitin noted that the Town of Sharon does not have a drinking water problem.

Selectman McGrath had hoped that the built up animosity wouldn't come out and doesn't believe it is constructive. He wants to look at past studies and get a new study, if possible, and we need to be respectful of each other. We need to move forward and fix the communication – he wants to hear the facts.

Mr. Towner wants to know where the water in the lake has gone. He listed the 15 studies that have been performed and then ignored. He then read excerpts from several studies. He believes that in 2015, the lake will be lower than this year if we have a similar winter. He believes that the wells and the lake are competing for the same water from the Cedar Swamp. He believes that our drinking water will deteriorate. He calls himself a whistleblower. He will respond to anyone at any time. He thanked the Board for his time.

Chairman Heitin explained that we have a Water Management Advisory Committee and wants the Committee Chairman David Crosby and Public Works Superintendent Eric Hooper to talk about some of the things Mr. Towner discussed in his speech.

Conservation Administrator Greg Meister said that he will provide whatever reports the Board would like to see. Mr. Meister read a 1997 letter. He believes we have a recharge problem. Mr. Hooper noted

that the United States Geological Survey did not set the withdrawal amounts – it's the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

David Crosby, Chairman of the Water Management Advisory Committee, explains that they meet the third Thursday of every month and at those meetings, Mr. Hooper reports on the monitoring wells. They look at groundwater elevations and look at where the water levels are in town. He said that since 1995, the water usage levels have significantly dropped. He commended for everyone doing their part and using less water and added that daily pumping is going down. Our monitoring wells are not dropping. There is nothing in the data to indicate that our water levels are dropping. He is not here to dispute what Mr. Towner said but Mr. Crosby has the data.

A resident asked why Mr. Crosby thinks the water in the lake level is down. Mr. Crosby said that he doesn't see the data about the lake level. Mr. Hooper said that the minimum discharge in the Order of Conditions is too high – the releases are higher than the median release. Essentially, the Conservation Commission is letting out too much water from the lake.

Mr. Klayman questioned why so much water was let out at the beginning of the summer. His boat is landlocked and people are at risk. Chairman Heitin said that the treatment had to happen when the plants were growing – there have been three treatments.

Ms. Randy O'Brien lives in Fletcher's Cove and said that the lake smells and is lower than last year.

Another resident questioned if there is a health hazard about people swimming in the lake because of the chemicals put in the lake. Mr. Meister tried to advertise as best they could and the chemicals are safe for drinking water. Chairman Heitin suggested that lake property owners be notified before chemicals are to be placed in the lake. Conservation Commission Chair Peg Arguimbau said that there was a public hearing on the invasive species and about 40-50 people attended and agrees that better communication be done in the future.

Mr. Klayman asked if non-drastic measures were taken to get rid of the invasive species. Chairman Heitin asked Mr. Meister to reply. Mr. Meister replied that there weren't other more effective methods. A resident noted that there are species growing on the beach because of the water being lowered. Mr. Meister said that the treatment has been effective.

Mrs. Klayman asked why we can't let out less now. Mr. Meister said that there isn't enough coming in from any source and that it is going to take some precipitation and cooler weather.

A resident noted that she has lived on the lake for 40 years and has never seen it this low. She is concerned that the water is too low for the triathlon. Chairman Heitin said that they are going to mark it off tomorrow. A resident asked if the phosphate levels could be monitored.

David Goldstein thanked the Board for putting this meeting together and believes another meeting should occur. He believes there should be a lake owner's association to advocate for the lake.

Mr. Meister said that it is a fact that the basins that feed the wells have a recharge deficit. Chairman Heitin said that we need to get the facts on the table.

Recreation Advisory Committee Chair Gary Bluestein reminded residents and property owners that the invasive species have existed for some time and we don't want this problem to continue.

A resident asked if the lake is any less safe this year and Chairman Heitin noted that the lake is tested each week and that the boat launch area was closed twice due to a high bacteria count.

A resident asked if there are any concerns about any other invasive species and Ms. Arguimbau said that the Asian clams seemed to have died off due to the cold weather.

Adam Carne, 76 Massapoag Avenue, asked if the chemicals dissipate. Mr. Meister said that the concentration will dissipate over the next two weeks. Mr. Carne noted that his daughter has had itchy eyes and is probably linked to the chemicals.

Chairman Heitin said that we will hold another meeting in the future and thanked everyone for attending. Better communication needs to take place between town boards and committee, town departments and the public. Chairman Heitin invited the Lake Management Study Committee to come in one or two time per year.

The Board took a brief recess at 8:14pm.

The Board returned to open session at 8:22pm.

Civil Defense Proposed Relocation Discussion

This item will be held for a future meeting.

Student Parking at Memorial Beach

Eric Hooper, Superintendent of Public Works, was present for the discussion. He noted that there lots of issues last year and steps were made to try to address where to put the kids. Options include: no student parking at Memorial Park Beach, parking allowed only with a beach access sticker and parking allowed only with a paid parking fee. He added that the DPW will not be plowing the lot during the winter, so the likely end of allowable parking for the fall semester will be November 1, and the likely opening for the spring semester will be April 1.

Chairman Heitin said that this is a broader issue – we need to know what the need is and what the availability of parking. Chairman Heitin noted that some students park behind Young Israel but a lot of students park up at the beach and the Young Israel is empty, which the Town maintains. Chairman Heitin said that the school principal needs to get involved to determine the need, what we have for spots and a solution. Mr. Hooper said that parking at the beach is mostly a convenience. Selectman Roach added that when last year's winter came, the students parked all over at the boat launch.

Selectman McGrath said that the reality is that there they are too many students wanting to park and not enough spaces. They will have to carpool or take the bus or walk. Selectman McGrath doesn't believe it's the Town's responsibility to provide a parking space to all of the students at Sharon High School.

Recreation Director Amanda Levasseur noted that in the spring, it is more of an issue because it affects the repair of the parking lot – DPW can't get in early enough to repair because of the cars in the lot.

Recreation Advisory Committee Gary Bluestein noted that the lot takes a beating and is not meant for constant parking.

Selectman McGrath will work with Eric, Amanda, the new TA and the school principal and Officer Hocking as part of a working group.

Approval of Minutes – July 22, 2014

MOTION: To accept the regular and executive session meeting minutes of July 22, 2014
(Roach – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

2014 Fall Town Meeting Warrant

MOTION: To open the 2014 Fall Town Meeting warrant
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

The Board asked Lauren to reach out to the Finance Committee Chair, Bill Brack, about feedback.

Out-of-State Travel Request – Town Administrator Fred Turkington

The new Town Administrator, Fred Turkington, is requesting permission to attend the ICMA 100th Annual Conference in Charlotte, NC from September 13-17, 2014

MOTION: To approve the travel request
(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Certifying Vote from May 5, 2014 Annual Town Meeting

MOTION: To approve and authorize the vote as printed
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Recreation Department Operations Update – Recreation Director Amanda Levasseur

Ms. Levasseur apologized for not being present at their last meeting. She provided some background information and a list of benefits from the continued learning opportunity by attending the conference. She added that she and Ms. Kasparian would never leave the office unattended and Maura Palm would be there during this time. Selectman Roach said that there isn't another department in the town that sends two people from the same department. Ms. Levasseur noted that they were able to take advantage of discounts that make it financially feasible and with two people attending, they were able to take advantage of twice as many seminars.

Selectman McGrath said that it is not in the secretary's job description to assume additional responsibilities and not being paid to be acting director. He believes Ms. Palm is fully capable. Ms. Levasseur said that Ms. Palm did not ask for differential pay for that time because she is not asked to be the Director. Mr. McGrath believes that if you take on more responsibility, if for even a short period of time, you should be compensated.

Ms. Levasseur noted that some departments close for vacations but that this department would be open. The Board asked which departments closed and Ms. Levasseur replied that it was the Health Department and the Conservation Department.

Ms. Levasseur reminded the Board and the audience at the presentation of the award of Citizen of the Year is tomorrow at the bandstand. The triathlon will take place on Sunday and the Halloween Parade has been scheduled for Sunday, October 26.

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

Chairman Heitin reminded residents that this Thursday, August 7, is the Annual Square Jam.

Executive Session – 8:50pm

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, pending litigation and to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, and at the end, adjourn for the evening. Discussion of any of these in open session would be detrimental to the Town.

(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye

McGrath: Aye

Roach: Aye

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:40pm

(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye

McGrath: Aye

Roach: Aye