

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
May 10, 2022

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Select Board Chair, William Heitin in the second-floor meeting room at Sharon Town Hall. Select Board members Hanna Switekowski and Emily Smith-Lee 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.

Firefighter pinning ceremony

Chief James Wright introduced the candidates for pinning in two groups, the first group being Benjamin Roskamp, Lucas DeAndrade, and Stephen Powers. He explained that they have recently graduated from the ten-week basic career firefighting academy and are certified firefighter paramedics. It is a tradition in Fire Service that the candidates select someone special to complete the pinning. Each candidate introduced the individual they had selected and were subsequently pinned. Chief Wright thanked the candidates and welcomed them to this honorable profession.

The next two firefighter paramedics come to Sharon with experience from other area departments, Jonathan Villa and Wayne Paul. Chief Wright explained that they would be pinned by Derick Sorafine and John McLean.

Chief Wright thanked the Board for holding the pinning ceremony this evening and the Board congratulated the candidates.

Wear Orange Day – Gun Violence Awareness

The Board has annually supported the wear orange for gun violence awareness initiative. This is the third year doing so. Ms. Switekowski mentioned that there will likely be another brief event in support of this initiative at Town Hall on June 3 and details will be provided once confirmed.

MOTION: To support Wear Orange Day for awareness of gun violence.
(Switekowski – Smith-Lee)

3-0-0 **PASSES**

Ms. Switekowski read the following Proclamation.

WHEREAS, every day, more than 110 Americans are killed by gun violence alongside more than 200 who are shot and wounded, and on average there are more than 16,000 gun homicides every year; and

WHEREAS, communities across the nation, including Sharon, are working to end the senseless violence with evidence-based solutions. Protecting public safety in the communities they serve is a Select Board member's highest responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the Select Board, Town Administrator, and public safety officials are familiar with local criminal activity and are best positioned to understand how to keep their citizens safe; and

WHEREAS, by wearing orange on June 3, 2022, Americans will raise awareness about gun violence and honor the lives of gun violence victims and survivors; and;

WHEREAS, we renew our commitment to reduce gun violence and pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the wrong hands, and encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our children safe.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED, that the Select Board of the Town of Sharon declares Friday, June 3, 2022 to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day. They encourage all citizens to support efforts to prevent the tragic effects of gun violence and to honor and value human lives.

May 10, 2022

Mr. Jacoby thanked the Board and mentioned his appreciation for their support for this cause.

Local initiative housing project – Edge Hill Road

Mr. Heitin explained that this project has been in the works with the owners of the property on Edge Hill Road for a number of years. The project initially consisted of 120 units approved by the Commonwealth of MA. As a result of negotiations, the project is now comprised of 20 units which abut the Brookmeadow Country Club on the Sharon/Canton line

Mr. Michael Khoury of Madoff and Khoury went on to provide additional details of this 20-unit rental townhouse project on six lots located at 268-292 Edge Hill Road. At this time, the proponent is seeking preliminary approval to proceed with the permitting process with the Department of Housing and Community Development. This is a modest residential development consisting of ten two-unit buildings which fits well within the neighborhood and provides value both to the Town and the owners.

It was mentioned that the proponent still must go through the permitting process with Conservation, Planning, Board of Health, and Zoning. It is felt that this is a responsible use of the land which also increases affordable housing stock. Ms. Switekowski encouraged Mr. Khoury to maintain open communication with residents in the neighborhood.

MOTION: To support the local initiative housing project located on Edge Hill Road as presented.
(Switekowski – Smith-Lee)

3-0-0 **PASSES**

Consent Calendar

Review and approve the consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the following minutes:
 - a. April 27, 2022 open session
- II. Vote to approve the following one-day liquor license request:
 - a. Jason Perry Kaplan, Bat-Mitzvah event, May 21, 2022 at 174 Lakeview Street from 5:00 pm to 11:00 pm
- III. Vote to approve FY2023 budget implementation as outlined in the memo from Fred Turkington of May 5, 2022
- IV. Vote to release executive session minutes of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 per the attached list of meeting dates

Ms. Smith-Lee asked about whether Town Counsel had reviewed the Executive Session minutes or offered an opinion about release since some were before her time. Mr. Turkington advised that all matters for which Executive Session was necessary have been concluded. He also mentioned that those minutes including matters not yet concluded have been appropriately redacted.

MOTION: To approve the consent calendar.

Town Administrator's report

Mr. Turkington advised that his report would be brief but bittersweet. He'd like to start by expressing his gratitude to Mr. Heitin for all he has accomplished during his tenure with the Select Board. He remarked that his experience in working with someone on a governing board with the passion, leadership skills, the ability to know the community and see things through or deliver on things like Bill has is limited. He went on to say that it has been a pleasure to work with him.

Honoring Bill Heitin, retiring member of the Select Board

Mr. Turkington opened the floor to Eric Hooper, DPW Superintendent; Linda Berger, Recreation Director; Chief Wright; Deputy Chief Madden; Chief Coffey; Donald Hillegass, IT Director; and Dick Gellerman, Town Counsel who all expressed their gratitude for Mr. Heitin's years of unwavering support and congratulated him for all he has accomplished.

Representative Phillips and Senators Feeney and Timilty commended Mr. Heitin for setting himself apart with humility, talent, common touch, and ability to get things done. They remarked that his passion, love, and dogged advocacy for Sharon is clear and conveyed their well wishes in honor of Mr. Heitin's retirement from the Select Board.

Mr. Keevin Geller of the Conservation Commission and Governance Study Committee also spoke. He credited Bill for his involvement with the Conservation Commission and expressed his thanks and well wishes.

Ms. Smith Lee wished, in addition to everyone else's comments this evening, to express her appreciation for Bill as a colleague on this Board. She stated that they have agreed on many things, but not everything. But she never doubted that he had the best of Sharon at heart. He has been a great example, role model, and colleague. She hopes to be able to continue to seek his advice.

Ms. Switekowski remarked that Bill Heitin is what makes Sharon, Sharon. Listening to the comments this evening, many have called him friend, mentor, neighbor, but most importantly, resident. She feels he has embodied all that Sharon is and wished him the best of luck.

Mr. Heitin prepared a speech and delivered the following message.

"Wow. Thank you for being here this evening and thank you for the recognition at the Annual Town Meeting. I am touched and honored to have been able to serve the Town of Sharon and its residents.

Unfortunately, COVID has hit again and close to home. My wife Suzanne is on the tail end of having COVID but is watching from home this evening. I do have two other members of my immediate family here, my two daughters Marni and Julia. I also have my parents, Abe and Cheryl Heitin, and my in-laws Dick and Elyse Alper here tonight.

As most of you know both Suzanne and I grew up in this wonderful town. Yes, we are townies. We have raised our two adult children Marni and Julia here. Both of our parents still live in Sharon. When I decided to get involved my goal was to ensure Sharon was the same if not better for our kids as it was for both Suzanne and I growing up here. I stand before you tonight and can say I have accomplished that goal.

During my tenure, which started in starting in 2004, the Town of Sharon was named the best small community to live in the United States by Money Magazine. But we already knew that. Working together. Compromising.

Not always agreeing but always coming to a mutual conclusion on things moved Sharon forward. That is what we have always done in Sharon.

I thought I would list out a few of our collective accomplishments during my tenure. This is not in any order:

- At my first Board meeting the topic of a cell town at Sharon Country Club was on the agenda. We worked our way through that one and others. Each cell towers have brought us in tens of thousands of dollars of revenue.
- Acquisition of Horizon's for Youth property or known as Kiddy Camp by some and a long-term lease to Camp Everwood and the Montessori School to guarantee we controlled the property and ensure its preservation on Lake Massapoag.
- Preservation of Wilber School whose committee was chaired by my good friend Jim Goldsmith may he rest in peace. The long-term lease allows the Town to decide in another 50 plus years what they want to do with the property. This was a great example of brining the neighborhood together and making a collective decision.
- Rattlesnake Hill. Nothing else needs to be said. A career long battle for the preservation of over 300 acres in Town. Thank you, Peg Arguimbau, for your confidence in me to get it done.
- A substantial reduction of water uses over the years, even when the town's population has been growing. Sharon has great water.
- During my time we addressed and solved our affordable housing issue (at least affordable by state standards) from 3% to 11.5%. We have a few more projects in motion which will bring this number to above 13%. We will no longer need to deal with 40b. Thank you, Eli Hauser, Rob Maidman and others, for working on our housing production plan.
- The Town and School buildings. We systematically put a plan together to upgrade and/or replace town and school facilities: Public Safety, Town Hall, Community Center (who remembers the Plane Crash) and the Town's first Adult Center, 5 School buildings including the current High School and someday maybe the library. Now let's have a maintenance plan.
- Billboards sited on Rt 1 and Rt 95 has brought in millions of dollars of revenue to our community. All with no impact to residential areas. This is the out of the box thinking Sharon needs to be able to find other sources of revenue.
- Solar sites (fully implemented will bring in more than \$2.0M in new revenue to the town). Again, out of the box thinking bringing nontraditional opportunities to Town and green energy.
- Sharon Gallery (fully implemented will bring in more than \$3.0M in new revenue to the town). Let's get through the lawsuit in July and finally bring Costco to Sharon.
- The Cannabis retail and growth facility on Rt 1 has begun to bring in millions of dollars of new revenue to Sharon.

- We are currently working on increasing the density of buildings allowed on Rt 1. Many communities have allowed 5 or 6 story buildings in areas just like our Rt 1 commercial zone. Planning Board let's get this one done.
- We have shifted our annual Capital purchase program from all debt to both debt and cash, lowering the amount of interest paid by millions of dollars.
- We currently have the best bond rating in the Town's history. The agency rate on our debt has also resulted in lower interest rates the Town's history. Last debt offering was at 1.87% for 30 years.

There are many, many more things I could add to this list. Like I stated at the beginning we did them together. I have a saying that most of you know. "This is what makes Sharon, Sharon." All these combined accomplishments are really what makes Sharon, Sharon.

I leave the following three things for my fellow and future board members to think about:

- 1) As former Selectman Norman Katz once said to me, always treat our town employees like family. Let them know when you need their help and let them know when they have done something good or great for our community. They are part of the backbone. I thank all our Town and School employees. I have the utmost respect for you and the role you play here in our community.
- 2) Know that we will not always agree but we will be respectful of disagreement. Know that you will need to make decisions that are not always welcomed by all. You were elected to this position to look after the best interest of the community as a whole and that might mean that not everyone will be happy with all decisions you make. To move our town forward you need to make hard decisions and you will not please everyone.
- 3) Continue to seek out economic development and third-party sources of revenue. Our residents, especially our seniors, depend on it and depend on you to make it happen. We have spent the last 20 years managing the Town's operating budget within our means. There were no Proposition 2 ½ overrides for operating needs. We have been and need to continue to be creative. It has worked and you can make it work in the future.

In closing there are just too many people to thank. If I started with that list, we would be here another hour or more.

Thank you, Melissa and Lauren. You keep the Select Board office moving and me on my toes. Fred, you have done a wonderful job, the Town of Sharon is very lucky to have you as our Town Administrator and I am honored to call you and Cindy friends. To my two colleagues, Hanna and Emily, and the others I have served with for many years, Joe Roach, Rich Powell, David Grasfield, and John McGrath, thank you. I have learned from each of you, and we have made this Town a better place.

To my friends thank you for your continued support all these years. You have kept me motivated to do what was needed to be done. It is looking like I will have some extra time on my hands so we can now go to that game or play that round of golf.

I want to thank the most important people in my life, my family. To Abe, Cheryl, Dick, and Elyse. Thank you for your guidance over the years and thank you for all the campaign sign holding, you are pros. Marni and Julia, you were not even around when I first took a position on the Finance Committee. You have grown up

knowing, as my good friend David Clifton always tells me “Service Above Self”, that you need to be active in your community to make it just that a community. I am sure you have learned a few things along the way. You too are pros at holding signs. Thank you. You are great daughters and I love you.

Finally, Suzanne, you and the other spouses of current and former Select Board members are the ones who really sacrificed. I thank you for always, let me repeat that, always being supportive and helping me in many ways like thinking through solutions to Town related problems and although rare even answering and sometime taking a phone call from a constituent. I thank you for allowing me to serve our hometown and our community for more than 20 years. I love you very much.

Thank you very much.”

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting

None

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 7:50 pm
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- List of pinning candidates
- Proclamation
- Project eligibility notification
- LIP application
- Site plan
- Minutes
- One day liquor license applications
- Memo
- List of meeting dates for release of minutes
- Minutes