

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
June 6, 2023

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chair Hanna R. Switekowski remotely via 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 recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comment period

Ms. Switekowski stated that this public comment period would be reserved for remarks other than those for the public hearings scheduled later in the meeting.

A resident made a public apology for incorrect data provided at a prior meeting. An apology was also emailed to the Board.

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

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the minutes of:
 - a. May 9, 2023 open session,
 - b. May 23, 2023 open session
 - c. May 23, 2023 Executive session
- II. Vote to approve Potters Place holiday sale banner – November 27 to December 3 in 2nd position
- III. Vote to approve the Verizon utility easement for Sharon High School
- IV. Vote to approve the collective bargaining agreement with the Management Professionals

MOTION:

(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington provided the following update.

E-bike site discussion. We will continue discussion of the ecotourism grant program funding e-bikes adjacent to the railroad station and the Community Center on June 6 at the request of the Transportation Advisory Board. TAB met on May 10 and May 17 to brainstorm different siting options and hear an update from staff regarding grant deadlines and status of the implementation plan.

Update on multi-family housing requirement near MBTA stations. The Board will join the Planning Board on Thursday, June 8 to hear an update from J.M. Goldson Consultants who are working with staff and Rob Maidman and Pat Pannone from the Planning Board to draft a zoning by-law for spring 2024 ATM to implement the requirements of the state law allowing multi-family housing by right within overlay districts adjacent to

MBTA stations. We will also view a presentation on district finance improvement district being studied through a grant to help economic development.

Status of vacancies being recruited. Two finalists for COA director will be interviewed by the Board on June 8 beginning at 6:00 p.m.; we hope to move forward with the selected candidate to provide a transition with retiring COA director Kathie Medeiros during the week of June 26. Once hired, the COA director will participate in the screening process for the administrative assistant position.

We have begun an initial review of applications and writing samples for the Communications Specialist position. DPW Superintendent Eric Hooper and I will interview a finalist for the Building Inspector position on June 6. April Forsman resigned as GIS coordinator after 20 years of service. Amita Khismatrao has accepted the employee benefits position with the school department. Alicia Cirino has resigned from the accounting office to work for the water department in her hometown of Easton. We have begun recruitment to identify replacements for each of these three positions.

Collective bargaining update. We will continue negotiations with AFSCME representing DPW/Water laborers and equipment operators on June 21. We await confirmation of initial bargaining sessions sometime in the next few weeks with librarians represented by SEIU.

Stop-loss insurance. Our health insurance consultant, Cook & Company, has circulated specifications for our annual stop-loss coverage. We purchase reinsurance for aggregate claims in a policy year in excess of \$165K. We typically have 6-9 such claims each year. Bids are due June 7.

We received / exchanged approximately 11 pieces of correspondence between Friday, May 19 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 1. Topics included:

- Notices and invitations including: application for Cultural Council (Vigoda); MMA legislative update on Senate budget vote;
- Email concerning the commitment to restoration of the cranberry bogs on South Main Street adjacent to Old Post Road;
- Email suggesting use of goats to address spread of poison ivy plants at public parks and road sides;
- Memorandum from DEIC recommending that the Town consider hiring a director of diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Emails from Edge Hill Road resident, sharing public comments made to the Select Board and ZBA regarding the proposed LIP project at 268-292 Edge Hill Road;
- Email from Sustainable Sharon Coalition member requesting agenda time to express perspective on solid waste and recycling program;
- Email from Sustainable Sharon Coalition member reporting on the status of the Eversource Sharon Gate Station to Brockton Gate Station service reliability project; and,
- Email summary of ZBA hearing on proposed LIP project at 268-292 Edge Hill Road prepared by Town Engineer Peter O'Cain.

Board reorganization

The Board had a brief discussion at their last meeting on reorganization. At that time, Ms. Smith-Lee announced that this would be her last term on the Board. She mentioned that since this year will be a hybrid where the Chair will remain in that role for an additional six months with the expectation that Ms. Pierre-Louis would assume the duties of Chair in the fall, Ms. Smith-Lee questioned whether it was prudent for Ms. Pierre-Louis to move into the Clerk position in the interim. After a brief discussion the following organization was decided.

MOTION: To appoint Hanna Switekowski as Chair through August 31, 2023.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

MOTION: To appoint Kiana Pierre-Louis as Chair beginning September 1, 2023.
(Switekowski – Smith-Lee)

MOTION: To appoint Kiana Pierre-Louis as Clerk through August 31, 2023.
MOTION: To appoint Kiana Pierre-Louis and Hanna Switekowski to Priorities Committee and Capital Outlay Committees through June 30, 2024.
MOTION: To appoint Emily Smith-Lee as alternate member of Priorities and Capital Outlay Committees through June 30, 2024.
MOTION: To appoint Emily Smith-Lee to Audit Committee through June 30, 2024.
(Switekowski – Pierre-Louis)

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

Public Hearing – Traffic Rules and Orders

There was a brief discussion about opening the hearing early for Traffic Rules and orders or taking comments from the public in the period before opening the hearing.

MOTION: To open the public hearing on Traffic Rules and Orders for Lakeview Street speed tables and reduction, one-way travel on Ridge Road, and the South Main Street bicycle lane at 6:52 pm.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

Lakeview Street

Ms. Judy Crosby of 6 Condor Road remarked that since it is not 7pm as people are being asked to comment without having Mr. O’Cain walk through the information provided online, she would argue against opening the hearing and taking public comment before 7pm without clarity about the proposal. She felt this was ineffective and meeting the legal obligation. With respect to the topic, she would like to know whether a traffic study has been carried out. Mr. O’Cain replied that a study has been completed.

Suzanne Howard of 30 Livingston Road stated that she supports this and appreciates the town moving this forward.

Phillip King of 18 Ashcroft asked whether police and fire have been consulted. There is potential for snowplow operations to tear these up over time. Can someone speak about life expectancy? How do chemicals from installation impact waterways. In response, it was explained that snow removal is not expected to be an issue. Other communities use these devices as speed calming measures without issue. Although Mr. O’Cain cannot comment on life expectancy he can attest that they have held up fine in Providence where he lives. This has been vetted by Police and fire.

Randy O’Brien of 31 Livingston expressed her gratitude to Peter, Eric, and others at DPW. They have done a great job listening and hearing needs. She remarked that this has been in the process for 30 years now. Lakeview Street has become a cut-through and she described many near-miss accidents.

Ben Feinberg of 1863 Bay Road asked about the width of the bumps. Is the expectation that cyclists/pedestrians will travel over these pillows? It appears that there is one right next an Everwood driveway? Will this be an issue for camps? Buses have issues with the turn in and out of the driveway presently. Mr. O’Cain remarked that final locations will be worked out with the abutters.

Patricia Bluestein of 3 Livingston Road expressed her thanks for the detailed information and drawings. As a frequent walker, she remarked that fellow walkers don't know which side of the road is lawful for walking and mentioned that perhaps some education could be developed as reminder. Mr. O'Cain expressed his appreciation for the comments.

Stuart Scharf of 38 Clark Street asked how the speed pillows affect snow plowing. Mr. O'Cain responded that they are tapered so snow plowing operations will not be affected.

Ridge Road

Mr. O'Cain opened the discussion by explaining that a petition was sent to Public Works and the Select Board requesting a change in travel to a one-way on Ridge Road from Walnut to Valley Road, in that direction. This area has a line-of-sight issue around a significant sharp corner. It was explained that the request for parking restrictions came from the Police and Fire Departments. Mr. O'Cain is treating these as two separate issues as the residents have expressed their desire to retain parking ability in front of their homes.

Will Shain of 5 Ridge Road thanked the Board for addressing this issue. He was told about the petition for one way which he supports. He stated however that residents wish to retain the ability to park and would like to work with Police and Fire on their concerns. The issue expressed by the Fire Department concerns the house with the green door, number 5 Ridge Road. If the road were to be one-way, the ladder truck would not be able to make the corner at all as typically, there are 3 or 4 cars parked there. The residents would rather keep two-way with flexible parking but would like to have further discussion before finalized. Lieutenant Fitzhenry of Sharon Police Department remarked that the police prefer to restrict any parking on road due to the bend. Regardless of the direction of travel, the parking issue is more of a concern. It was explained that during family events, arrangements could be made for resident guest parking. There is a longer line of sight on the valley side of the road.

Barbara Offringa of 16 Valley Road explained that she initiated this, and that parking was not a part of the request. She has resided at this location for 35 years and has never seen any emergency vehicle attempt to come down the road. She feels that the odds of one of the houses needing emergency assistance are slim. Removing the ability to park is burdensome for some of the residents. If you have a short drive or away from entrance to home, it is burdensome. Doesn't impact one way or another. She further mentioned that she supports the change to one-way travel and common-sense parking. This is a narrow street where kids cannot play as line of sight is obstructed at the corner in either direction. The proposed direction made sense for trash collection among other considerations. The street does not lend itself to sidewalks. There has been only one objection from a neighbor, but it would be a shame not to have this converted to a one-way street.

Ken Olum of 156 Massapoag Avenue remarked that he cycles in the area and has never seen much traffic, there are not many cars that travel in the area. If the Board does elect to change travel to one-way, he hopes that they will except bicycles.

Paul Vitali of 8 Valley Road explained he is Barbara's neighbor facing ridge road. Although he does not use the road, he supports the request for one-way traffic. He feels that the direction works and provides better line of sight than the other direction. He feels that this does solve the possibility of head-on collision. To his knowledge, there has been one close call. Valley Road at Edgewood gets quite a bit of use.

Mr. O'Cain stated that there is a utility pole in the area and perhaps the installation of a mirror on the pole may help to solve some of the issues on the road.

Mr. Shain thought the mirror to be a great idea. It is rare for cars to come down the road, but when they do, they are generally travelling very fast. Direction of one way would cut down on speeding as well as traffic volume.

South Main Street

Mr. Peter O'Cain, Town Engineer, began by explaining the background on this project which come about through input on the Imagine Sharon masterplan which was completed in 2019. He shared a brief slideshow during the May 9 Select Board meeting and explained that the masterplan identified a need to provide interconnectivity of

bike routes in Sharon. As South Main Street is the main arterial road in town with adequate width to do so, it made sense to begin there with the design of a bike lane. Bike lanes are designed to be 5' in width when possible. The master plan also identifies the need for opportunities for physical activity for the public. This will provide residents along this two-and-a-half-mile stretch of roadway, on both sides of the street, safe bicycle access to the railroad station. It was explained that the steel reflectors in the centerline of the road would be retained. Two 11-foot travel lanes would be maintained, and a five-to-six-foot bicycle lane would be added to the right shoulder area of the road. Mr. O'Cain advised that the Metropolitan Area Planning Council bicycle experts have reviewed the design plans as have the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization and some very knowledgeable residents such as Michael Littman.

He commented that delivery vehicles such as for oil, by UPS or Amazon, and furniture or appliance delivery would be required have to either park in a driveway or on the nearest side street as parking is prohibited in bicycle lane. This plan has been reviewed by MAPC transportation division and Boston planning agencies.

Mr. Lapin of 166 South Main Street expressed concern about how this would affect the 150 or so families on South Main Street. He can appreciate the value of a dedicated bike lane for cyclists. Not all delivery vehicles can pull into driveways on South Main Street. Not all residents have space to accommodate vehicles in their driveways. He does not agree necessarily with providing a bicycle lane despite his being a cyclist. There are ways to provide a bike lane while allowing residents to park in the street. Resident needs should be recognized and addressed. Although he has several other points, this is his main point. It is estimated that the \$68,000 striping could also be used to expand the fog line into more of a "breakdown lane" as opposed to a dedicated bike lane.

MOTION: To close the public hearing on Traffic Rules and Orders for Lakeview Street speed tables and reduction, one-way travel on Ridge Road, and the South Main Street bicycle lane at 7:50 pm.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Public Hearing – Solid Waste and Recycling Collection rates

Judy Crosby of 6 Condor Road presented her concerns related to the hearing notice, particularly surrounding the option for pay-as-you-throw. She feels that a pay-as-you-throw model represents a \$375 increase for a family presenting using a 96-gallon container.

Eve Carey commented as the recycling coordinator. She proposes a delegation of stakeholders be assembled to discuss solutions. She proposed a dumpster for collection of cardboard be located at the community center. She indicated it would not need to be manned. Slot for compressed cardboard. Return to e/o/w recycling.

Kathi Mirza commented about options for composting and suggested there be a fourth payment tier for those who compost. Composting reduces trash by some 500 pounds per year. Due to her experience, helped at least a dozen communities implement a pay-as-you-throw program which is the best performing programs for waste reduction. This is a responsible policy decision that reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Laura Nelson of Edge Hill Road remarked that she will not drive 8.8 miles from her home to the Community Center to recycle cardboard.

Georgann Lewis of Edge Hill Road commented that back yard composting increases the likelihood of wildlife interference.

Debbi Tatro expressed that an important opportunity to educate residents about waste is being missed. Trash is incinerated and society is collectively wasteful. Recycling is not the answer as it also mostly incinerated. The proposed cost structure provides no incentive for reducing production.

Mr. Turkington remarked in context to money, there are a few principles to keep in mind. Trash revolving fund costs related to disposal, tipping fee, household hazardous waste day, collection. Collection is 70-75 percent. Averages 2/3 dep on size, total cost of program equitably among residents. The disposal fee allows DEP estimate pounds for type of container in both situations. Continued program or pay-as-you-throw option. He further remarked that the problem with a cardboard dumpster is whether manned or not, there exists the potential for contamination. China, the largest historical importer of recycled materials, is no longer accepting recyclable materials which has driven up the cost of disposal by nearly double.

Phillip King of 18 Ashcroft stated that his family elected the 96-gallon container, and the argument can be made that he pays for the option to dispose of that amount.

Don Brichta of 55 Mansfield Street has two questions. How much does this really cost? Pay-as-you-throw is a tax. Anything other than a nominal increase should not be considered.

Ira Miller of 6 Horizons Road expressed that although he doesn't want to be repetitive, he also thought that pay-as-you-throw was not going to be a consideration.

Arlene Mathes Scharf of 38 Clark Street asked whether the pay-as-you-throw option would eliminate the use of trash containers.

MOTION: To close the public hearing on Solid Waste and Recycling Collection.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

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

Vote to amend traffic rules regarding Lakeview Street, Ridge Road, and South Main Street

Ms. Smith-Lee remarked it is fair to say that Lakeview Street safety has been on the table for quite a long time. This started with a sidewalk request. She is comfortable with the idea of the speed pillows but curious about a mph safety zone. The Board has heard remarks before about constraints in lowering the speed limit. She feels that the speed pillows will act to lower speed. With respect to Ridge Road, she is worried that a change to one-way creates more problems than solves. On the South Main Street parking, she doesn't know whether bike lanes are important improvement. She is inclined to support the measure, but this is the first time she has heard concerns about deliveries.

Ms. Pierre-Louis agreed that Mr. O'Cain deserves kudos for talking to residents, listening to concerns, and implementing a viable solution. She is good with speed pillows. On Ridge Road, she supports the trial of placing a mirror to see how well it works and revisiting if continued problems are occurring. Regarding the bike lane, Mr. Lapin's comments gave more to think about. She prefers no parking but believes delivery trucks will park regardless.

MOTION: To approve the installation of speed pillows on Lakeview Street as proposed.
(Smith-Lee - Pierre-Louis)

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

MOTION: To approve the installation of mirror on the Ridge Road utility pole as recommended by Town Engineer, Peter O'Cain, and defer a decision on a change to one-way traffic to a later date if necessary.
(Smith-Lee - Pierre-Louis)

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

MOTION: To approve the demarcation of a dedicated bicycle lane on South Main Street with a parking ban between Laurel Road and Chestnut Street as discussed.
(Pierre-Louis - Smith-Lee)

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

Vote to set the quarterly solid waste and recycling collection rates effective July 1, 2023
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Ms. Switekowski remarked that there needs to be more education in the community around trash and recycling. Ms. Carey has been doing a very good job posting on social media which she feels should continue. She also feels that resident trash habits can be improved. Her concerns involve those who are on fixed incomes, or seniors with cost of bags and accessibility. She can see the community implementing PAY-AS-YOU-THROW in the future but not at this time. She is also still open to the idea of every -other-week recycling collection if it were to make a difference. She also wishes to consider the potential impact on roadside litter. Dr. Schnitzer made a fair point that the Board had this conversation two years ago and has continued to revisit from time to time.

Ms. Smith-Lee opposes the suggestion that there is anything surprising about the pay-as-you-throw option. The question has been raised all along, what are the levers we can pull to reduce trash use. We are running out of places to put it. This is not Sharon problem and not an income problem; it's an Earth problem. Pay-as-you-throw is the simplest and most elegant solution from a policy perspective. The cost can no longer be externalized. She feels very strongly pay-as-you-throw must be on the table and the Town cannot wait five years to address it

Ms. Pierre-Louis agrees there is not a surprise here. Personally, she does not take kindly to comments that if Board members vote one way or another, they do not deserve their seat. She understands the passionate and strong-minded position but seeks respectful discussion. She further remarked that the Board is mindful of how the hearing was posted. She hears the confusion as well but is on the fence about pay-as-you-throw. She largely agrees about the need for education. She also agrees with Emily that pay-as-you-throw is coming as the options for disposal are becoming increasingly limited. There needs to be more conversation before implementation such as how it will affect the underserved.

The challenge with pay-as-you-throw is mixing weight with the quarterly fee. Trash bags and carts are volume not weight.

Ms. Smith-Lee wants to have research completed on a pay-as-you-throw program and a discussion on its implementation this calendar year. This has been going on for a couple of years. She stated that she may not vote for the rates but wishes to use whatever means necessary to get pay-as-you-throw on the table this year.

MOTION: To set the quarterly trash fee as discussed and presented effective July 1, 2023.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Smith-Lee: NO
Pierre-Louis: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

The Board thanked residents and others who attended for the robust discussion this evening.

Discussion with Transportation Advisory Board on placement of bicycle pad

Ms. Switekowski, being cognizant of late hour, stated that the Transportation Advisory Board provided report ahead of this meeting for the Board to review thus they have seen the options that TAB is recommending.

Ms. Smith-Lee stated that she is fine with using existing parking spaces but asked why this was put so far away. Her reason for asking is that this is a pilot program, and it seems as though we are hiding it. Are there other parts of the lot to take over without cutting trees? It was explained that there were more options if the ebikes were separated out.

MOTION: To approve the upper right corner of the Providence, south bound side of the train station parking area closest to the ramp for the location of the ebike pad with discussion to follow for location of the pad for commuter bicycles on the inbound side of the parking area.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

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

None.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:51 pm
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

List of Documents

- Minutes
- Banner request
- Certified vote
- Utility easement
- Agreement
- Report
- Hearing notice
- Solid waste and recycling budget
- Transportation Advisory Board report