

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
August 1, 2023

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Hanna R. 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. and Assistant Town Administrator, Lauren Barnes. The meeting commenced with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comment period

A question was asked about the agenda topic involving the solid waste and recycling working group, particularly what level of involvement members of the public may have. It was explained that the working group, made up of staff, would be established this evening. The working group will engage with the public as they progress in their work.

A resident made a statement regarding the site of the proposed water treatment facility in the Pine Grove, Tree Lane neighborhood.

Clarification was requested regarding the public comment period and whether public comment would be allowed after Board deliberation on agenda topics. It was explained that the public comment period offered residents or other interested parties an opportunity to approach the Board on matters unrelated to topics on the agenda. It was further requested that this be made known at the beginning of each meeting. In addition, it was requested that the Select Board reconsider this position.

A suggestion was made that with respect to the Solid Waste and Recycling working group, the charge be amended to include researching whether pay-as-you-throw will reduce the trash stream.

Two other comments were made in support of the Select Board reconsidering its position on public input on agenda topics.

A comment was also made regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion training for Board and Committee members on how to appropriately handle hurtful comments by either participants or other Board or Committee members at meetings.

Public Hearing – South Walpole Street truck ban

MOTION: To open the public hearing at 7:11 pm.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Peter O’Cain, Town Engineer, explained that large commercial trucks have posed a problem on South Walpole Street for quite some time. South Walpole Street is a winding, very narrow, tree-lined roadway. The process for approval was explained including that MassDOT must approve the restriction and alternate traffic route. Sharon and Walpole in this case must also approve. The new proposed truck route would be Walpole Street to Route 1 and vice versa. A map was shown indicating where signs will be placed. Deliveries to homes in this area, and non-commercial trucks are not excluded from travel. Vehicles owned by residents which exceed 2.5 tons also will not be excluded.

Karin J. of 162 Pine Street in Walpole stated that this has been an ongoing issue for a long time. She moved to Pine Street 32 years ago. She has biked, hiked, and walked to Wards Berry Farm during that time and has seen changes in traffic over the years. Trucks take up most of the road when traveling through and noted that this area has become a raceway to Route 1.

Bonnie Gamerman of 10 Montaup Road asked for proposed timing on approvals and where Walpole stands on the issue. Regardless of status, can police enforce regulations regarding staying in your lane?

Mr. O'Cain indicated that this matter is contingent on the action taken by Walpole. The Walpole Select Board will consider the matter later in August. If approved by Walpole, both communities will then submit to Mass DOT. Approval by the state will take time but all steps will be taken to expedite the matter.

Phillip King of 18 Ashcroft Road stated that while he understands the need, he is concerned about traffic in front of the elementary school. There is an adequate turning lane at the Walpole Street intersection as well as signalization. This makes the designated alternative route the safest possible route which is why it was selected.

Ms. Smith-Lee asked if the reasons for directing traffic to Walpole Street could be explained. Mr. O'Cain advised that Walpole Street is a much wider roadway than South Walpole Street. It also has appropriate vertical and horizontal changes. In every way, Walpole Street is a more appropriate route for heavy commercial trucks. Although this will not likely be popular with residents, it is certainly better for the community.

MOTION: To close the public hearing at 7:31 pm.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

MOTION: To approve a heavy commercial truck exclusion on South Walpole Street, Pine Street, and Old Post Road as discussed.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

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

Board and Committee interviews

Due to the quantity of candidates scheduled to interview this evening, each candidate was asked to provide a brief response to the Board's standard interview questions of:

Please tell us about your personal background, education, employment, things you like to do for fun, etc. and how/if it relates to the committee for which you seek appointment.

Why are you interested in appointment to the particular committee? What goals do you have for your service?

We often have more interested citizens who step forward to serve. If not chosen for the particular committee to which you have applied, would you consider a different assignment?

How can we ensure the work of your committee reflects the breadth of thought that reflects Sharon's diverse community?

Candidates for Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee

Suzie Peck Lived in Sharon for 35 years now. Lives near the lake on the Rotary. On the Health Board for years. Worked very hard to comply septic as much as possible to ensure safety. Env. Health Management Masters Degree. Worked for EPA. Lots of work on evaluating septic systems/design, ground water, etc. Not groundwater management expert but years as a consultant has given knowledge and background to ask right questions. Worked to evaluate septic systems along the lake. Loves lake and feels can help. Work of the committee has been outstanding.

Eman Lasheen has been a Sharon resident for eight or nine years now and has two children in middle school. She stated that Lake Massapoag is the main reason for her moving to Sharon. Her background is in environmental governance. She graduated from MIT with a degree in international development and urban planning. Her work now centers around natural resource management. Her interest in the Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee is due to the amazing work already completed by the committee in a short period of time.

Candidates for Governance Study Committee

Michael Illuzi has lived in Sharon since 2011. He has two children who are high school and elementary school age. He expressed his interest in issues of governance and democracy. Mr. Illuzi has a PhD in Poly Sci from Georgetown University and has 15 years of teaching experience in American Politics. He has had an interest in local governance and community engagement since most the committee's recent inception.

Daniela Field has lived in Sharon for nearly two years and is new to getting involved. She looks forward to making this community her home. Daniela graduated from MIT with a degree in math/computer science and a minor in political science. She is interested in the governance study committee and seeks to review the Town's current bylaws and recommend best practices. She loves to learn and help others as best she can.

Candidates for Library Reuse Advisory Committee

Gail Ader expressed her gratitude at being considered for the Library Reuse Advisory Committee. She is impressed by the candidates for other boards. Ms. Ader explained that she is the Executive Director of the Sharon Cooperative Nature School which has been in existence since around 1976. The school is located in the First Congregational Church. She feels that her grant writing skills and knowledge of the Community Preservation process would be her strengths for the work of this committee.

Matthew Baldassari has lived in Sharon for 28 years and his background is in Construction and Facilities Management. He helped to spearhead the Town's facilities program. He is also a member of the Sharon Standing Building Committee which is experience that he feels will help with the work of this committee. He understands what has been done over time to the current library building and what maintenance and repairs would be needed. He is also familiar with the historical nature of the building and has experience working with the Historical Commission.

Judy Crosby extended her thanks to the Board for their consideration. She has lived in town since 2000. She has 27 years of experience in her role as a tax attorney specializing in housing and the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. She is one of a small number of attorneys that do this type of work which is the reason for her applying to be part of this committee. She hopes to find a way to get to a positive reuse for the building. Judy has been a strong supporter of the new library and as such feels a sense of responsibility to help ensure that the existing library building is appropriately repurposed.

Aaron Glick is the current chair of Sharon cultural council. He feels that there is an opportunity with this space to enhance the cultural vitality of the town. There are so many interesting groups in Sharon and the existing Library building could house a space for a cultural center.

Emunah Liberman Homa lived in Sharon at different times in her life. She was a student here and has returned here with her family. She feels that she can provide a unique perspective to the work of this committee

and comes from a place of curiosity. She explained that she was involved in the expansion and renovation of a synagogue in Town. Emunah explained also that she has an appreciation for the historic nature of the Town.

Christopher Leidl lives in town with his family. They moved to the center of town two years ago, looking to put roots down in a place with tremendous natural and human resources. He explained that this Committee seems like an excellent opportunity to help steward an important physical asset right in our backyard. Chris feels that this role is best served by offering a forum for various stakeholders to present and debate ideas, before ultimately weighing tradeoffs to make the best decision moving forward.

Jon Mael has a long history of creativity and outside the box thinking that he thinks would be a great addition to the committee as it undertakes the important task of deciding on a future for this historic building. He is a history and english teacher and respects the historical nature of the site, having been personally impacted by it for years.

Dianne Needle is an active Realtor in town and a longtime resident who has raised five children in Sharon. She feels she has a good perspective on the wants and desires of the people that call Sharon their home and hopes to being part of this conversation and planning of the best use of the old Sharon Library building.

Mridula Satyamurti has lived in Sharon for the past twenty plus years. She has a PhD in Chemistry and teaches at UMass Boston. She is a sculptor in her spare time and feels that Sharon could benefit from an art and craft center like that of LexArt in Lexington. She appreciates being considered.

The Board thanked all candidates for their desire to support the community and for their time this evening. The Select Board will make appointments to the Library Reuse Committee at the next meeting.

MOTION: To appoint Michael Illuzi and Daniela Field to the Governance Study Community through February 28, 2024.
(Switlekowski – Smith-Lee)

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

The Board consulted with Debbie Tatro of the Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee who offered her opinion, stating that she feels both candidates would be helpful.

MOTION: To appoint to Eman Lasheen to the Lake Management Advisory Committee.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

Amended and restated Intermunicipal Agreement with Foxborough for municipal sewer

Town Counsel, Dick Gellerman provided a background and explained the need for this agreement which would provide the means for the Sharon Gallery to tie-in to Foxborough's multi-town intermunicipal agreement for sewer service.

MOTION: To approve the amended and restated Intermunicipal Agreement with Foxborough for municipal sewer service.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion professional and Board/Committee DEI training

The presentation commenced with expressions of gratitude to Kiana, Hannah, Emily, and Fred for creating a platform for the introduction of the advisement by the Sharon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee. Acknowledgments were extended to Wendy Alexis-Janvier for her initial presentation. Notably, the presentation highlighted that on April 30, the DEI committee unanimously voted in favor of recommending that the Select Board consider hiring a full-time Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Town of Sharon. The central premise behind this recommendation was to complement the existing DEI Committee with a dedicated professional capable of proactively addressing the Town's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging objectives.

A full-time DEI Director would be well-equipped to navigate the multifaceted landscape of diversity, equity, and inclusion, focusing on managing issues within town departments and committees. This professional would play a pivotal role in policy design, promoting diversity in the workplace, mitigating harassment, and safeguarding minority groups. Notably, the DEI Director would also serve as a bridge between the DEI Committee and other town Boards and Committees that lack representation in this area.

In the presentation, Toben Asklar and Bill Kondrath delved into the role of a Municipal DEI Director, drawing insights from various job descriptions provided by different municipalities. These roles encompassed diverse responsibilities, including developing training programs, implementing metrics for diversity initiatives, participating in town meetings and public events, and advising town officials on compliance with state and federal regulations related to diversity and disabilities. Additionally, the presentation questioned the readiness of the town to embrace a DEI Director, raising essential considerations about the position's involvement in decision-making, job interviews, and access to employee information.

The presentation concluded with three key takeaways: the need for Sharon to initiate the process of hiring a full-time DEI Director, the pivotal role this Director would play in shaping policies and training oversight, and the immediate relevance of having a full-time DEI Director in the town of Sharon.

Toben and Bill welcomed questions and highlighted valuable resources, including references to job descriptions from other municipalities and the Massachusetts Municipal DEI Coalition, to support a deeper understanding of the role and its implications.

Solid Waste and Recycling working group

MOTION: To create a working group made up of Town staff, co-chaired by Deputy Superintendent of Operations Kevin Weber and Recycling Coordinator Eve Carey to review the following aspects of the solid waste and recycling program and to report findings to the Town Administrator by December 12, 2023: 1) Review and evaluate issues, feasibility, and efficacy related to implementation of a pay-as-you-throw program including supply, distribution, and pricing of PAYT bags, enforcement of proper use of PAYT bags within the three-cart system by Republic Services, and adjustment to quarterly fee. 2) Explore feasibility of offering a cardboard drop-off facility, including location, staffing, operating hours, and impact on weekly curbside recycling collection. 3) Explore options for encouraging residential food composting, including publicizing availability of compost bins and Black Earth collection option, and seeking funding to initiate school cafeteria food composting.

(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

MOTION: To appoint Deputy Superintendent of Operations Kevin Weber and Recycling Coordinator Eve Carey as co-chairs of the solid waste and recycling working group.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

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

Update on plans for Citizens Academy, Fall 2023

Establishing an annual Citizens Academy in Sharon has been an effort that has been in progress for some time. Such a program is valuable to local governments, like Sharon, in which so much of the governing body is reliant on resident volunteers. Thus, by educating residents about the responsibility, function, and funding of each department, we can drive interest in government participation amongst unengaged citizens as well as increase public sentiment towards local government. All this, while also providing residents with information on the myriad of services that the town offers. Donna Whitehead and the Management Analyst Intern have been entrusted with the responsibility of organizing this endeavor.

In respects to the project, staff have produced a rough draft schedule of the event based on work sourced from the two previous interns and our own research of other Academies in Massachusetts. It seems that, under this plan, the course would be a 7-week program with one 2-hour class every week from 6:30-8:30. Although the exact dates have not been chosen as of now, we have decided on every Thursday between September 25th and November 12th as a tentative place holder. These dates were specifically chosen as there is a lack of holidays which would prevent the course from running weekly.

Moreover, we have established a basic itinerary for the program in order to solidify the grouping of the departments and to have a placeholder on when they would present. However, this is subject to change based on the availability of the presenters. The itinerary is accompanied by some guidance for each department in regard to content.

Although we are only in the first stages of organizing this event, we plan on meeting once a week to ideate in respect to the content and logistics of the course as well as coordinate our efforts. After our first meeting on Monday, Donna and I split responsibilities amongst meeting with the various departments to both notify them of the tentative schedule for the event and better understand how we can aid the respective departments. Though many departments – more specifically their directors – are confident in their ability to construct a presentation based on previous experience doing so, we expect some to not have the technological skills or confidence necessary to construct an enticing presentation. Thus, we will have differing involvement in the crafting of presentations depending on the various department's needs. Nonetheless, we expect to be involved in every presentation as we would like to stimulate audience participation and interest throughout the program. As of now, we have met with the Recreation Department, the Town Clerk's office, and the Conservation Department.

Our goal is to have departments done with their presentation by the end of August to begin editing presentations. This would also provide us with time to ensure that the presentations mesh well to form a seamless program which is both informative and engaging.

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the following minutes
 - a. June 20, 2023 – open session
- II. Vote to approve the following banner request/requests:
 - a. Sharon Soccer Association registration – August 7-14, 2023 in 1st position
 - b. Sharon Travel Basketball tryouts – September 4-11, 2023 in 1st position

- c. Sharon Travel Basketball tryouts – September 18-25, 2023 in 2nd position
- III. Vote to approve the following block party:
 - a. Robin Road from Ames Street to Woodland on August 13, 2023 from 4 to 9pm with a rain date of August 20, 2023
- IV. Vote to amend the language of the home rule petition regarding the Select Board size at the recommendation of the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government as follows: replace “effective date of this act in the Town of Sharon” with “acceptance of this act by the voters of the Town of Sharon pursuant to section 2.”
- V. Vote to approve successor collective bargaining agreement with school crossing guards
- VI. Vote to accept \$50 donation from for the benefit of Beech Tree Park
- VII. Vote to approve the Rodman Ride for Kids event on September 23, 2023 contingent upon approval by the Police and Fire Departments
- VIII. Vote to approve an ice cream vendor permit for Mark Parrish of Crescent Ridge Dairy Bar
- IX. Vote to approve a one-day liquor license for a private event at the Sharon Community Center on August 19, 2023 from 4 – 8 pm
- X. Vote to make the following appointments:
 - a. Bill Heitin as Capital Outlay Committee Chair through June 30, 2024
 - b. Jennifer Cooperman to Council on Aging Advisory Board as full member through December 31, 2024
 - c. Chandu Krishnan to DEIC through June 30, 2026
 - d. Jill Dougherty to Sharon Cultural Council through June 30, 2024
- XI. Vote to close Town Offices on Friday, October 20, 2023 for employee development and training

MOTION: To approve the consent calendar.
(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:

Library project. The SSBC has executed a construction contract with O'Connor Contracting in the amount of \$19,137,000 for the library project. Work preparing One School Street for final demolition has begun. The projected substantial completion date for the new building is January 15, 2025.

Interest in 174 Lakeview Street. A Somerville-based charity that owns a 20-acre parcel at 174 Lakeview Street is entertaining offers for the property. It is zoned so that 8 or 9 single-family homes could be constructed. The lots have the highest land values in Sharon due to proximity to the lake. I have had discussions with a developer of senior housing looking for more information about potential options using the overlay district for senior housing. More information to come as the situation develops.

Human Resources Matters

Status of vacancies being recruited. We have re-advertised the vacant employee benefits administrator position in the Treasurer's office at the OC-2a salary level following approval of an updated job description by the Personnel Board on July 20. The COA outreach/social worker has resigned to take a similar position in Rehoboth. The application deadline is Monday, August 7. We are recruiting someone to conduct parking enforcement activities on a weekday part-time basis in the RR station lot and HS parking lots now that the crossing guards have given up those duties.

Collective bargaining update. We reached a tentative agreement in negotiations with AFSCME representing DPW/Water laborers and equipment operators on July 25. Local ratification vote will occur by August 16; Board approval will be requested on August 22.

Select Board Correspondence/Announcements

We received / exchanged approximately 25 pieces of correspondence between Friday, July 7 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 27. Topics included:

- Notices and invitations including: MassDEP post-closure permit for former Sharon Landfill and notice of construction on Mansfield Street in Foxborough at the town line; notice of Planning Board officers and Capital Outlay Committee members and alternate; announcement of visit by U.S. Rep. Jake Auchincloss on Friday, July 21, Norfolk County Sheriff Summer Safety Fest at Crescent Ridge Dairy on Saturday, August 12, and plans for PorchFest on Sunday, September 10; applications for appointment to committees from Michael Illuzzi (Governance Study Committee), Needle (GSC and Library Reuse), Homa, Satyamurti, Ader, Liedl, Lasheen, Crosby, Glick and Baldassari (Library Reuse);
- Email requesting further investigation and public discussion of source of PFAS contamination;
- Email and response requesting recent Select Board minutes;
- Email and response from Water Dept. regarding estimated bills at 6 Old Bridge;
- Email from Walpole Preservation Alliance to Norfolk County Commissioners concerning land in Walpole; and,
- Email expressing concern about the number and expense of change orders approved by the SSBC for the HS project.

Future meeting agenda topics and tentative dates for discussion

- Consider revisions to building, electrical and plumbing permit fees to align with peer towns to be effective October 1, 2023 – public hearing and Select Board vote (August 22)
- Update from Transportation Advisory Committee on RR parking structure and fees, amend committee charge (August 22)
- Discussion on police leadership structure and update on accreditation (August 22)
- Discussion on proposed investment strategy for trust funds including OPEB (August 22)
- Appoint members of Library Reuse temporary advisory committee (August 22)
- Vote to appoint Select Board Clerk effective September 1 (August 22)
- Approval of successor collective bargaining agreement with AFSCME (August 22)

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

None

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:55 pm.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
Switekowski: AYE

List of Documents

- Hearing notice
- Map
- Board/Committee applications (13)
- Intermunicipal agreement
- Request letter (2)
- Training proposal
- Email of July 25, 2023
- Memo of July 27, 2023
- Membership lists (3)
- Minutes
- Banner request forms (3)
- Block party request form
- Memo of July 17, 2023
- Draft collective bargaining agreement
- Memo of July 26, 2023
- Application materials
- Town Administrator's report