

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

January 5, 2021

Virtual Meeting

Chairman Brett A. Simas; Selectman Maureen Dwinnell; Selectman Stephen A. Matellian; Town Manager, Derek S. Brindisi; Executive Assistant, Sandra Hakala

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order concerning imposition on strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, meetings in the Town of Upton are being conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order.

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As a preliminary matter, this is Brett Simas – Chair, Board of Selectmen. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me.

- Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative. *Stephen Matellian, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye,*
- Staff, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative. Derek Brindisi, Town Manager aye, *State each staff members' name.*
- Anticipated Speakers on the Agenda, please respond in the affirmative. *None*

Public Comment

Lyn Haggarty informed the BoS there was a typo on the draft P&S for the Williams Street property.

Michelle Antinarelli stated she had several concerns that she would like to bring to the Board of Selectmen attention:

Economic plan presentation – was not available prior to the meeting.

EDC - Believed during the most recent meeting of the EDC, one of the members of the committee expressed some disparagement of the plan and called to the Selectmen and the Committee's attention that the plan cost between 35-40 thousand dollars. - Inquired what the orientation towards the downtown revitalization is.

Shared parking agreement - Expressed concern that if the VFW surrenders, forfeits, or lose their charter there is no recourse for the Town and therefore would no longer have control over disposition of the land given that in 25 years the use for a VFW with a veteran's contingent may not be needed.

N2N - sited there were no metrics listed and hoped the program is being closely overseen by and requested more information.

Rapid Recovery Planning Application – a typo was noted.

William Street purchase and sale - remarked that at the most recent Town meeting, residents expressed concerns about continuing to make conservation purchases.

Ann O'Brien commented regarding N2N that she was greatly disappointed to see that only 12 people have been helped.

Guest Presentations

Economic Development Plan Presentation

Dave Ross, Chair of the EDC walked viewers through the history, and what the EDC came up with. At a future meeting after the Board and others have had time to digest the full plan, look at it, and come up with feedback, the EDC will come for approval at a future meeting date. The presentation was not shared previously in part of that because of how large the plan was. Mr. Ross did not want to just put it out there and have people waiting through it without really understanding how it was constructed.

Steve Rakitin reviewed he goals on the plan. The first goal, the one that we still have work to do on is, he explained is to implement the Upton Center Revitalization Act and with a town the EDC is hoping that this process can be accomplished this year.

To that end, a needs survey will be created for both businesses and residents about specific things that they think they really need and use that information to help develop a new RFP. The EDC will be supporting the continued development of the Community Center at the May Town meeting because they believe that that is key piece of getting the downtown redeveloped. As well as coordinating with the state on the Route 140 TIP project.

The second goal is to focus some attention on west Upton. Working with the town planner now and evaluate the existing zoning. Formulate some design guidelines as was done for Upton Center could apply to West Upton Center and coordinate with the state on two projects.

The third goal that was identified was to help make it easier for businesses to open and locate in town by streamlining some of our licensing and other related procedures. The EDC will create an economic development page on the Town's website. Creating a small business resource guide that would help provide small businesses with the basic information they need to know about signage about permitting and other basic things to help them get their project, get their business located in Upton. Creating a business review board that would meet periodically to assist small businesses in opening their business was another possibility.

85 The last goal is to leverage our existing resources, cultural and things like public utilities. o for example,
86 we have a lot of open space in town. The EDC would like to come up with ways to leverage that and take
87 advantage of it from an economic development perspective, for example by promoting eco-tourism or
88 expanding walking tours of the historical sites that are in town. The EDC is also interested in helping to
89 address a significant commuting issue by conducting a survey of commuting patterns. Lastly, there
90 certainly are some sites that might be in town that might be suitable for large-scale solar activity and
91 maybe energy battery storage sites, as well as data center sites, which have very low impact. This can
92 potentially produce significant amounts of tax revenue for the town.

93
94 The EDC will request 60-day public comment window, and then the EDC will review and incorporate
95 commentary and then come back to the Board at that time.

96
97 Community Center Building Committee (Shared Parking Agreement)

98 James Brochu, Chair of the Community Center Building Committee presented a draft agreement that
99 would permit the town and the VFW to share parking spaces. The VFW holds legal title to 69 parking
100 spaces on the lot, while the town owns 16 spaces on the same lot.

101
102 The agreement states the town and the VFW agree to use the shared parking area for the mutual
103 benefit of both parties. Part of the agreement also specifies that during certain events, “preferred use”
104 of parking spaces would be utilized, meaning that either the town or the VFW has preferential use of the
105 shared lots. Those events could include VFW Cruise Nights, the VFW 5K Race, and possibly the VFW
106 Carnival. The Carnival is the VFW’s largest fundraiser.

107
108 The Community Center is taking up a large portion of the Milford St. lot making it unlikely to hold the
109 Carnival there. As a result, part of the agreement stipulates that the town will pay the VFW the average
110 cost of what it fundraises from the annual Carnival. “We identified an average of \$6,000 annually from
111 years one through 10 and then a two percent escalator up to 25 years,” Brochu explained. However,
112 there is also a stipulation in the agreement if the VFW does by chance hold a carnival. “If they do host a
113 carnival on the site or off the site, and if it’s below the \$6,000 profit, the town will just basically make up
114 the difference of the \$6,000,” Brochu said. “Subsequently, if the carnival has a profit of over \$6,000 in
115 their carnival fundraising efforts then the town would owe nothing that year.” Selectman Brett Simas
116 noted that \$6,000 a year seemed a reasonable price for acquiring nearly 70 parking spaces from the
117 VFW. “In Boston, some people pay \$150,000 for parking spaces,” he said.

118
119 Selectmen Stephen Matellian and Maureen Dwinnell wanted more clarification on the number of
120 parking spaces needed for the Community Center before moving forward with the agreement.

121
122 **Board Discussion Items**

123 Motion to Renew Annual Licensing

124 Class II – NALA Equipment

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126 Mr. Matellian recused himself from the class II renewal process.

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128 **Motion #1:** Motion made by Selectman Dwinnell to approve Class II renewal application for
129 Nala Equipment.

130
131 Second: Chairman Simas, Majority Action of the Board

Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye

[Motion to Accept Donation to Council on Aging](#)

Motion #2: Motion made by Selectman Matellian to accept the following donations:

An anonymous cash donation of \$150 left on our door in an envelope "For food or whatever is needed most".

Craig and Kimberly Bernero \$250 for Food pantry.

Mission SS. Sergius & Bacchus \$260 for Food Pantry.

WW Contracting Corp. \$500 Food Pantry

Second: Selectman Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chairman Simas

Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

[Discuss Funding Request to N2N](#)

Janice Nowicki updated the BOS on the Neighbor to Neighbor program that has assisted residents with rent or mortgage payments, medical bills, utility bills, provided gift cards for groceries, among other types of other assistance.

The program gets its funding from the Ella Risteen Trust Fund. Since the pandemic began, usage of the food pantry has seen an increase. Ms. Nowicki reported that 12 residents/families have been assisted through the N2N program, utilizing approximately \$19,000 so far. She hopes more reach out, there are people in town who need the assistance but who might believe others need it more and therefore are hesitant to contact her. Ms. Nowicki requested another \$10,000 for the program, which the Board unanimously approved.

Motion #3: Motion made by Selectman Dwinnell to approve the expenditure of \$10,000 from the Ella Risteen Trust Fund to fund the N2N program.

Second: Selectman Matellian, Unanimous, Chairman Simas

Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

[Motion to Approve Rapid Recovery Planning Application](#)

The Goal of the Local Rapid Recovery Planning (LRRP) program is to give every Municipality in Massachusetts the opportunity to develop "Local Rapid Recovery Plans" tailored to the unique economic challenges and immediate COVID-19 impacts that have affected downtowns, town centers and commercial areas throughout Massachusetts.

The program provides technical assistance not direct funding. A consultant will be assigned to the Town to develop the Local Rapid Recovery Plan. The Town will NOT need to procure consultant services themselves. The Town will have a "scope of services" drafted on their behalf, informed in part by this application. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), through the MA Downtown Initiative (MDI) program, will contract directly with consultants who will provide services to the Town.

Motion #4: Motion made by Selectman Dwinnell to approve the application as presented.

Second: Selectman Matellian, Unanimous, Chairman Simas
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Motion to Execute [Williams Street Purchase & Sale](#)

This is a little strip of land along Lake Wildwood, between the train tracks that Conservation Commission is asking to purchase as a way of gaining access to other conservation land.

Motion #5: Motion made by Selectman Dwinnell to accept the Williams Street Purchase & Sale.

Second: Selectman Matellian, Unanimous, Chairman Simas
Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Discuss FY 21 BoS Goals

Mr. Brindisi walked the Board through the current status of each one of the identified priorities.

Town Manager Report/Updates

- Town bills will now be deposited by Century Bank through a Lock Box feature. Over 278 municipalities have already implemented this.
- Sandy and Deb are working together to implement an online tracking system that's going to automate how earned time is tracked for benefit eligible employees.
- Chief Bradley is very busy with his new staff going through policies and procedures to meet accreditation standards.
- We did receive word that because this pandemic as continues to persist, CARE money will be extended. Approximately \$200,000 remains of the original appropriation.
- Derek Brindisi
- First responders will be the first group to be vaccinated the BoH were able to convince state officials that the town will host a regional vaccination clinic.
- Open enrollment for kids at Play has begun

Adjourn Meeting

Motion #6: At 9:24 Selectman Dwinnell made motion to adjourn.

Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye, Steve Matellian, aye

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Hakala, Executive Assistant