

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.

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

43
44 N2N - sited there were no metrics listed and hoped the program is being closely overseen by
45 and requested more information.

46
47 Rapid Recovery Planning Application – a typo was noted.

48
49 William Street purchase and sale - remarked that at the most recent Town meeting, residents
50 expressed concerns about continuing to make conservation purchases.

51
52 Ann O'Brien commented regarding N2N that she was greatly disappointed to see that only 12
53 people have been helped.

54
55 **Guest Presentations**

56 *Economic Development Plan Presentation*

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

62
63 Steve Rakitin reviewed he goals on the plan. The first goal, the one that we still have work to do on is, he
64 explained is to implement the Upton Center Revitalization Act and with a town the EDC is hoping that
65 this process can be accomplished this year.

66
67 To that end, a needs survey will be created for both businesses and residents about specific things that
68 they think they really need and use that information to help develop a new RFP. The EDC will be
69 supporting the continued development of the Community Center at the May Town meeting because
70 they believe that that is key piece of getting the downtown redeveloped. As well as coordinating with
71 the state on the Route 140 TIP project.

72
73 The second goal is to focus some attention on west Upton. Working with the town planner now and
74 evaluate the existing zoning. Formulate some design guidelines as was done for Upton Center could
75 apply to West Upton Center and coordinate with the state on two projects.

76
77 The third goal that was identified was to help make it easier for businesses to open and locate in town
78 by streamlining some of our licensing and other related procedures. The EDC will create an economic
79 development page on the Town's website. Creating a small business resource guide that would help
80 provide small businesses with the basic information they need to know about signage about permitting
81 and other basic things to help them get their project, get their business located in Upton. Creating a
82 business review board that would meet periodically to assist small businesses in opening their business
83 was another possibility.

84

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

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

127
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

132 Brett Simas, aye, Maureen Dwinnell, aye

133

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

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

136

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

139 Craig and Kimberly Bernero \$250 for Food pantry.

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

141 WW Contracting Corp. \$500 Food Pantry

142

143 Second: Selectman Dwinnell, Unanimous, Chairman Simas

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

145

146 [Discuss Funding Request to N2N](#)

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

150

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

157

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

160

161 Second: Selectman Matellian, Unanimous, Chairman Simas

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

163

164

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

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

170

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

177

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

179

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

182

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

184

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

187

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

189

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

192

193 [Discuss FY 21 BoS Goals](#)

194

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

196

197 **Town Manager Report/Updates**

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

210

211 **Adjourn Meeting**

212

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

214

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

216

217 Respectfully submitted,
218 Sandra Hakala, Executive Assistant