

Monday, March 17, 2008

This regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held this evening in the Juliani Meeting Room, Town Hall. In attendance were: Owen H. Dugan, Chair, Gregory B. Mills, Vice Chair, Katherine L. Babson, Jr., Secretary and Barbara D. Searle. Also in attendance were Hans Larsen, Executive Director, Terrance J. Connolly, Deputy Director and Albert S. Robinson, Town Counsel. Harriet S. Warshaw was absent. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

The following warrant was executed: #38 in the amount of \$4,970,820.65.

1. Citizen Speak

None.

2. Executive Director's Update

Babson moved, Mills seconded and the Board voted (4-0) to approve the minutes of the March 3 and March 10, 2008 meetings.

Mr. Larsen reviewed further specifics regarding the proposed revocable license agreement concerning motor vehicle access to the parking area at the rear of 254 Washington Street.

Babson moved, Mills seconded and the Board voted (4-0) to authorize Owen Dugan to enter into a revocable license agreement between the Town and the owners of 254 Washington Street.

Regarding the ongoing preparations for the Boston Marathon. Mr. Larsen noted that he and Chief Cunningham had agreed with their counterparts in Natick, Framingham and Ashland to write a joint letter to the Boston Athletic Association expressing dissatisfaction with the level of financial support provided to the towns by the BAA.

Regarding the discontinuance of Bethel Road, Mr. Larsen noted that steps were being taken to finalize the draft agreements between Temple Beth Elohim and the Selectmen and School Committee.

Mr. Larsen noted he is scheduling a meeting with Caroline Connor, Executive Director of the 128 Business Council, to explore the possibility of working with that organization to study the Town's public transportation needs and opportunities.

Mr. Larsen noted the pending State Legislation regarding potential penalties related to Open Meeting law violations, and committed to circulate a draft of the proposed legislation to the Board. Mr. Robinson opined that it would be appropriate to oppose the legislation, should the Board see fit to do so.

Hugh Johnston, 3 Boulder Road, joined the Board and provided an update on the train whistle issue. He noted his efforts to communicate with CSX and Representative Barney Frank's similar effort.

The Board asked a number of questions regarding CSX's operational requirements to blow the whistle, and lack of a "Quiet Zone" exception process, despite the lack of a grade crossing. Mr. Mills questioned whether there is some benefit of collaborating with other towns on this issue, and whether there are additional measures the town could undertake to lessen the safety risks. Mr. Johnston responded that he believes CSX may be reluctant to relax their rules in Wellesley's circumstances, given that it could be viewed as a precedent in many other communities.

The Board asked Mr. Larsen to collaborate with Mr. Johnston on a further letter from the Town to CSXt

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3. 2008 Annual Town Meeting Preparations

Mr. Dugan reviewed the Annual Town Meeting Article assignments for each Board member.

The Board discussed a number of the draft motions, and Mr. Larsen committed to provide an updated draft of the motions by the end of the week.

Old/New Business

Ms. Babson provided an update on the activities of the School Building Committee. She noted the Committee is continuing to evaluate four alternatives, but intends to reduce this to two in advance of Town Meeting. She noted that two community forums have been held, the third is planned for Wednesday night and the fourth for next Tuesday morning. The comments received at the forums have been excellent, and she encouraged people to come to these sessions. She also noted the cable broadcast times for Cynthia Westerman's show "If These Walls Could Talk".

Mr. Mills provided an update on the activities of the Sprague Fields Task Force. Private fundraising has been underway for several weeks. By the time of Town Meeting, the Task Force hopes to report that the fundraising is complete, with the exception of the funds for the concession building. The total cost of the project is now up to approximately \$4.0 million.

Mr. Mills also noted that fundraising efforts are underway with respect to efforts to preserve the Country Club Clubhouse – Original Town Hall. A tour of the building for Town Meeting members is scheduled for Saturday March 29th at 9:00 am.

Mr. Larsen provided an update on the proposed development at 27 Washington Street. He noted that the matter of Traffic & Pedestrian Safety is on the Board's agenda for Monday night, March 24th, and it is intended that the Selectmen will submit their report on this PSI matter to the Planning Board in advance of the Planning Board's scheduled hearing on April 10th.

Mr. Dugan noted the dates for the upcoming Precinct Meetings hosted by the League of Women Voters.

At 9:00 the Board was polled all aye to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy for collective bargaining and litigation.