

Board of Selectmen – December 14, 2009

Present: Searle, Babson, Mills, Dugan, Tsagaris

Also present: Larsen, Ketchen, Connolly (Attorney Robinson was absent)

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Warrants approved: None.

Citizen speak: None

Minutes approved: December 7, 2009

Business:

A. Executive Directors Update:

- Mr. Larsen noted parking and other problems with the conduct of the recent election for two precincts at the Fiske elementary school.
- Mr. Larsen noted that common victualler license renewals would be signed in the next week, absent feedback to the contrary from the Board.
- The Board voted to appoint Susan Troy to the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation for a term to expire June 30, 2011.
- The Board voted to approve the requests made by Blue Ginger located at 583 Washington Street and Falls Grille doing business as “Bobby’s” located at 11 Washington Street for the extension of liquor service for one hour, from 12:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., on January 1, 2010.

B. Police Lieutenant Appointment:

Chief Cunningham, Deputy Chief Brooks and Sergeant Marie Cleary joined the Board and Chief Cunningham summarized the Police Department’s promotion process for a new Lieutenant. The Board voted to appoint Marie Cleary as a Lieutenant in the Wellesley Police Department.

C. Senior Center Parking TDRT:

Linda Cohen and Gail Thieme, representing the Council on Aging joined the Board and Ms. Tsagaris summarized the work done by a working group to study the parking situation at the proposed Senior Center at the former American Legion site. The working group had been formed at the suggestion of the Permanent Building Committee, to assess the significance of potential parking challenges at the site. Members of the working group included Terri Tsagaris and Hans Larsen (representing the Selectmen), Gail Thieme (COA), Meghan Jop and Don McCauley (Planning Board), Lenore Mahoney (ZBA), Ethan Parsons (DRB), Kathy Mullaney (PBC), Lee Keller (Project Mgr.) and Bill Sterling (Project Architect). Ms. Tsagaris reviewed the information from the Committee’s review of the parking and transportation arrangements at a number of other senior centers, and the performance of the Wellesley COA’s transportation program. She also noted potential measures that could be taken to reduce the parking needs at the site and complement on-site parking with additional off-site capacity. The working group ultimately concluded the availability and merits of the American Legion site and the needs of the senior community outweigh the challenges associated with what the group consider would be periodic parking challenges at the site. Therefore, the group recommends the

planning for the senior center project proceed and that the planning for related transportation measures proceed concurrently.

The ensuing Board discussion focused on the need for appropriate transportation measures to buttress the proposed senior center project. Following this discussion, the Board endorsed the findings of the working group and expressed support for moving forward on the project.

D. FY11 Selectmen Operating Budget:

Mr. Larsen noted the results of the Board's Saturday, December 12th budget review session and summarized the status of the Selectmen's draft budget. He noted those elements of the budget that are not in compliance with the 1% year-over-year budget increase guideline, i.e., health insurance, pension contribution and facilities maintenance. Messrs. Larsen and Ketchen summarized a proposal to fund additional facilities maintenance using reduced inside-the-levy debt service capacity. In total, exclusive of shared costs, the draft Selectmen's budget reflects a .4% increase.

The Board deferred further action until December 21.

E. Tax Classification Hearing:

Representatives of the Board of Assessors including Deborah Carpenter, Steve Mahoney and Donna McCabe joined the Board and Ms. Searle reopened the hearing. As the Selectmen's liaison to the Board of Assessors, Ms. Babson conducted the meeting. Ms. McCabe provided further information regarding tax rates in neighboring communities. Ms. Babson invited public comment and there was none. She noted two letters received expressing support for a single tax rate. She further noted that, while the Town recently adopted a local option meals tax, the fact the Town has maintained a single rate for many years, unlike other communities with a similar residential vs. commercial makeup refutes prior statements that the Town is not "business friendly". It was noted that maintaining a single tax rate for FY2010 would require the Selectmen to adopt a residential factor of 1.0, and such a rate would be \$10.48 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Following further discussion, the Board voted to adopt a residential factor of 1.0 for the purposes of determining the fiscal 2010 tax rate.

F. Old Business/New Business:

Wellesley High School – No update.

27 Washington Street – No update.

Senior Center – See above.

DCR Bridge – No update.

Advisory Committee Update – No update.

Ms. Babson noted that almost 500 electric ratepayers have signed up for the Municipal Light Plant's voluntary energy program.

G. CVS PSI Traffic Study:

Appearing before the Board were Messrs. Brian Levey, representing CVS Pharmacy; A.J. Barbato, representing Gershman Brown Crowley, Inc.; Patrick Dunford of VHB, Inc.; Kien Ho of BETA Group; and Police Chief Terrance Cunningham.

- Mr. Dunford summarized additional data and analysis provided by VHB subsequent to his prior report to the Board, and responded to questions from the Board. In particular, he focused on the implications of the use of a 25% passby traffic assumption (per MassHighway) vs. 49% (per ITE).
- In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Ho reviewed the characteristics of the non-passby traffic, i.e., the other 75%. He described the various methodologies used by traffic engineers to model traffic volume and their relevance to this traffic study. In Beta's opinion, the existing traffic pattern is the best methodology for use in this study, and therefore, he concurs with VHB's use of same.
- Mr. Ho summarized Beta's further conclusions forthcoming from their peer review. He discussed Level of Service impact, coordination with the Oak Street intersection and neighborhood impact of the passby traffic assumption. Beta remains concerned regarding traffic conflicts at the site driveway as a result of the site circulation and parking plan. He discussed various alternatives suggested by Beta.
- The Board queried the applicant on various site plan alternatives. Messrs. Levey and Dunford responded to these queries.

Mr. Larsen reviewed a draft of the Selectmen's report to the Planning Board on the results of the Selectmen's review of the traffic study. He specifically detailed the recommended mitigation measures, the Selectmen's ongoing concerns regarding the site circulation and parking plan, and the Selectmen's intention to embark on a formal traffic calming process for the Beechwood/Manor/Overbrook neighborhood. The Board queried how benchmarks would be established to determine whether the CVS project has a greater impact on the neighborhood than projected in the traffic study.

Ms. Searle invited public comment.

- Andrew Schneider, 20 Beechwood, suggested the rumored Dunkin Donuts at 978 Worcester Turnpike would exacerbate traffic flow through the neighborhood. Ms. Searle confirmed a Common Victualler license application from Dunkin Donuts is pending. Mr. Schneider questioned the validity of certain aspects of the traffic study, in particular the use of existing traffic volume as a basis for projections, the adequacy of parking in light of the need for snow storage and truck access. He questioned how much the Oak Street improvements and coordination of the signals will help. As part of his response, Mr. Dunford noted that MassHighway effectively provides independent oversight with regard to the coordination of all traffic improvements on the Route 9 corridor, including the Mathworks improvements, Oak Street reconfiguration and the various improvements planned (978 Worcester) or proposed (CVS) for Overbrook Drive.

- Richard Broberg, 5 High Ledge Avenue, suggested there needs to be further capacity analysis of the traffic capacity of the neighborhood streets (e.g., Cedarbrook) in order to properly set the proposed traffic impact benchmarks. He also suggested more consideration needs to be given to the scope of traffic mitigation work that might result from the benchmarks being exceeded.
- Suzanne Palacino, 21 Beechwood, expressed concern that people will park at CVS in order to go to the proposed Dunkin Donuts.
- Avram Silverman, 69 Edgemoor Avenue, would like a permanent barrier or signage to preclude motorists from exiting CVS and proceeding onto Overbrook.
- Lisa Brown, 98 Beechwood, questioned the analysis of the neighborhood impact. Mr. Dunford provided further clarification.
- Jorie Fallon, 14 Beechwood, questioned traffic movements under the proposed phasing of the Route 9/Overbrook intersection. Mr. Dunford and Mr. Ho provided further clarification. Ms. Fallon suggested a second entrance lane be added to the site driveway.
- Andrew Schneider, 20 Beechwood, suggested the traffic study is incomplete and flawed, principally due to the extent of reliance on existing traffic volume as a key data point in projecting traffic impact. Mr. Ho restated his credentials and the basis for Beta's peer review conclusions.
- Suzanne Palacino, 21 Beechwood, questioned whether the applicant would proceed with the project without signalization of the intersection as proposed. Mr. Dunford noted that full access to their site is required, and supported by MassHighway. He also noted that the added capability to make a left turn onto Rte. 9 westbound is intended to reduce pressure on the Weston Road interchange.
- Shari Schneider, 20 Beechwood, questioned the direction distribution of traffic exiting the proposed CVS. Mr. Dunford provided further clarification. Ms. Schneider further questioned the impact to Beechwood.

The Board voted to approve the 980 Worcester Turnpike traffic study as being professionally prepared and that it adequately addresses traffic and pedestrian safety impacts, and further to accept the recommended conditions as set forth by the Executive Director in his letter to the Planning Board dated December 14, 2009, as amended, and to authorize the Executive Director to forward said letter on behalf of the Selectmen.

The meeting adjourned at 10:28 pm.