

TOWN OF IPSWICH
Select Board Meeting
April 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM
Ipswich Town Hall, Meeting Room A
25 Green St. Ipswich, MA

Pursuant to Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, a written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Select Board was held on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at Town Hall, 25 Green Street.

Select Board members present: William Whitmore (Chair) (Zoom), Linda Alexson, Kerry Mackin

Select Board Members not present: Sarah Player

Also Present: Stephen Crane (Town Manager), Sarah Johnson (Finance Director), Chief Nikas

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Welcome/Announcements – W. Whitmore

- There is a celebration for John Updike on April 28th along with a plaque unveiling at 6PM at the Caldwell Building.
- The Veterans District Board is meeting tomorrow night at the Veterans District Office at 6:30.

a. Swearing in of Call Fire Fighters

Paul Parisi, Fire Chief, introduced five new call firefighters who were recently appointed to the Ipswich Fire Department. They all went through a rigorous training and graduated last month. The firefighters were sworn in by Assistant Town Clerk Andrea Pappalimberis.

b. Council on Aging Donation Acceptance

Sheila Taylor, Council on Aging, introduced a gift given by Roland Poirier. Roland lived in Ipswich and came to the Senior Center every day until the pandemic hit. Once the pandemic hit he became isolated and two of his cousins took him in to live with them in New Hampshire. Roland passed away in December and left the Council on Aging a donation of \$90k with the stipulation of using it on a new van with comfortable seats. The cost of the new van with the upgraded seats is approximately \$120k. The Council on Aging currently has two vans and the town mechanic recommends we keep the older van and trade in the newer van, which has an estimated value of \$15k. Sheila is requesting an additional \$20k to purchase the new van, the additional funds would come from the COA van gift account as well as funds from the Friends of Ipswich Elderly.

- Motion to approve the donation from Mr. Poirier made by Linda, seconded by Kerry
- Linda asked Sheila if we have the family's address to write a thank you note.

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 3-0*

3. Citizen Queries – W. Whitmore

- none

4. Boards and Committees – W. Whitmore

- a. Denise Cooper, New Associate Appointment Zoning Board of Appeals

Denise said she has lived in town for a few years and would like to be more involved. William thanked Denise for volunteering. Linda said she spoke with the ZBA Chair because we have appointed a lot of different members over the past few years, and Linda found out there is a lot involved with the ZBA. Linda said she wants to make sure Denise understands what's involved and that she has the bandwidth for this.

- Motion to appoint Denise Cooper as an Associate member to the Zoning Board of Appeals made by Linda, seconded by Kerry

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 3-0*

b. Confirm Town Manager Reappointment on Historical Commission, Laura Gresh

- Motion to confirm the Town Manager's reappointment of Laura Gresh to the Historical Commission made by Linda, seconded by Kerry

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 3-0*

5. Change of Manager Application from Off Premise Wine and Malt Liquor License Holder Cumberland Farms, 66 Turnpike Road – W. Whitmore

- Courtney Gibbons, Assistant Manager at Cumberland Farms and Nila Mullins, General Manager at Cumberland Farms were present
- Motion to approve the change contingent on the applicant having no outstanding debt and that all statutory inspections and insurance requirements are adequate made by Linda, seconded by Kerry

→ *Motion passed 3-0*

6. Harvard Student Presentation – W. Whitmore

Chase Delano, with the Ipswich Partnership, introduced the final report of the Ipswich Field study created by the Harvard Graduate School of Design regarding downtown Ipswich development. Chase said the Ipswich Partnership takes no position on the ideas presented but is excited about the collaboration with the next generation of community planners. Students Alex Cordelle, Jack Chan, Katia Kortova Andrew Mikula, and Christian Schmidt gave a presentation on ideas for four downtown development sites; Hammatt Street parking lot, the Police Station, the Fire Station and the MBTA Transit Station. They included design plans in the presentation and look forward to seeing how these ideas are received.

For the Police Station Proposal A, the team envisions removing the current police station and building a three story residential structure with parking and a community center, as well as a path to a proposed rotary pavilion. This would be a cultural and recreational heart of the community, as well as bring in in 70 residential units. For Proposal B, they propose to preserve the old Police Station and create housing as well as connect a walking path to open space to the river.

For Proposal A for the Fire Station, the group suggests to retain the fire station but convert it to a commercial space such as shopping, a restaurant or gastro pub. The lawn could be used to develop a 4-story residential structure for 60 units. This would also require a new path for the school entrance and would connect the path to the river walk. For proposal B, they focused on getting as much housing as possible. They would redevelop the fire station as 9 apartments and then also build a similar building to the north which would provide additional housing. They would also add 28 townhomes around a green and a community garden.

The MBTA Transit Station Proposal A includes a residential structure with 80 unites and its own parking podium as well as a welcome park for people getting off the train. Proposal B includes a train station café/ event venue, as well as 40 for sale condos and 35 for rent apartments.

The Hammatt Street Lot Proposal A includes breaking Hammatt Street in half to create two blocks, which will draw people in and create a pedestrian only street that would serve as the heart of Ipswich. Both blocks will incorporate ground floor retail and three stories of residential units above. It also includes a parking garage with over 500 spaces to support the residents and the users of this space. The garage would not be seen from the outside because its wrapped by the buildings and can also incorporate a green roof. At the bottom of the lot would also be a 60-room hotel. Proposal B includes the creation of 100 apartments, 28 condos, 5,000 sq. ft. of green space, and 275 parking spaces. This option could be built incrementally over time as opposed to all at once like Proposal A.

The group also looked at the Riverwalk. Proposal A creates a walking path to link together all of the historical Ipswich locations and the transit lot. Proposal B connects the current Riverwalk to bring together the existing paths, includes installation of a low-cost board walk, and creates more of a sidewalk on the Choate bridge.

William thanked the students for their hard work and said they have never received anything like this as far as the level of work or the detail. Linda said she is looking forward to looking into the reports deeper and thanked the students for their work. Kerry said she is glad they focused so heavily on the Ipswich River and the historical aspects of the town, and that she is very impressed. Stephen said he started off his career in planning and community development and he has seen many master plans prepared by professionals, and this was very well done and the concepts were very innovative.

Bonnie Berkowitz, on behalf of Senator Tarr, asked about water and gas infrastructure. One of the students said part of the idea behind the Riverwalk is to create a streetscape and be able to implement basic infrastructure utilities. A lot of this is discovery so they did not do a full-scale analysis.

Keri MacRae, 31 Heartbreak Rd., commended the students for their imaginative proposals. She asked if they have elderly housing, would there be plans to build elevators in the structures and would that reduce the number of units. She also asked if this plays into the 3A MBTA plan and would it alleviate more potential building. The students said they were careful to ensure every structure would be handicap accessible with ramps and elevators. Stephen asked if they looked at infrastructure constraints in the planning, they did.

Helen Weatherall said she noticed they used the word “city” and she asked if we are a city, and if we want to be a city. She also said there was not much conversation on sustainability. In regards to the housing crisis, we need to make affordability at the forefront of the conversation. We also need to think about traffic flow and the added density in regards to the old bridges.

John Crosby, 5 Cottage St., said he loves to see the way they are thinking about the Hammatt Street lot. He asked the group if they looked at long term finances in regards to higher density housing.

Steve Miles, 18 Poplar Street, said he likes the suggestion of the hotel but said some of the challenges Ipswich has faced in the past are that they are not a large enough town to attract businesses.

Brian Hone, 29 Upper River Road and Chairmen of the Pedestrian Cycling Board, asked if they looked at how kids would walk to school when looking at the properties. The students said they looked at the connectivity from a historical perspective. The path itself begins at the northwest corner of the elementary school.

7. Discuss/Vote Update of Electric Department’s Collections & Past Due Account Policy – D. Lewellyn

Dylan Lewellyn, Business Manager at the Ipswich Utilities Department, gave an update to the ELD past due accounts policy. The two notable changes in the updated policy are that they will send a third mailed notice and will stop doing door tags. Linda said in the first paragraph, the last sentence is new. She asked if there is a move to eliminate the discount period, Dylan said there has been some discussion about that but no action taken to move that forward. Linda also said under the fees section it adds that service will be terminated for nonpayment, and she asked why not add “or work out an acceptable payment plan”. Dylan said they require the full balance be paid because it is a risk to the department that they may not receive the balance be paid. Linda said she would suggest taking out the portion about eliminating the discount policy.

- Motion to approve the ELD’s Collections and Past Due Account Policy with the removal of the last sentence of the first paragraph made by Linda, seconded by Kerry.
- Keri MacRae, 31 Heartbreak Rd, said with the mail delays we are experiencing, a 10-day notice may need to be extended. She also said she finds the ELD is not very accommodating with payment plans. Dylan said they did think about the mail delays which is part of the reason they extend the window, however, there are three notices being sent out before services are turned off so there is plenty of warning.

→ *Motion passed unanimously 3-0*

- William added that there was a discussion at the subcommittee meeting about the discount because it is costing the ELD about \$500k per year. The subcommittee plans to look into this further over the next few months.

8. Discuss/Vote Animal Control Officer Inter Municipal Agreement – W. Whitmore

Stephen explained that nearby towns are running into problems with animal control and we are fortunate to have a very good Animal Control Officer who also provides mutual aid to other towns. Because of this, they started discussing mutual aid for animal control, animal inspection, and shelter services. Ipswich would be the host and other towns would pay us. This is a 3-year term and the other towns’ boards have already approved it. The effective date is July 1, 2023.

Linda asked why the salary was higher for the assistant, Chief Nikas said to try to get someone to fill the position and also because it will be a much higher call volume. Linda also asked about the printed forms and license line for \$6,000. It is an annual fee from the service provider that the town currently uses based on the number of licenses we sell. Linda asked why it’s not for a longer term, Stephen said that it would require a vote. Linda also said currently the Animal Control Office abides by the Ipswich town bylaws and asked if those would apply to the other towns, Chief Nikas said those towns’ bylaws would apply to them.

Keri MacRae said she understands there will be 24-hour coverage unless the Animal Control Officer is out of town. Chief Nikas said we will always have coverage 24 hours per day but not patrolling 24 hours per day. This will increase our patrolling availability. Keri also asked when Megan is doing lengthy inspections, are we getting a fee back from the other towns for those inspections. Stephen said generally those costs are meant to be covered by the assessment the towns pay for the services from Ipswich.

- Motion to approve the Animal Control Officer Intermunicipal Agreement made by Linda, seconded by Kerry

→ *Motion passed unanimously 3-0*

9. Discuss/Vote Pavilion Beach Rules & Regulations Related to Non-Resident Parking Restrictions – W. Whitmore

- Linda said the Shellfish Subcommittee met the other night and a Georgetown resident came to ask about non-resident daily permits. The state requires that we provide a recreational only walk out bed, one of those flats is Richard’s Ground. When people go there in the summer, they can’t park at Pavilion Beach on the weekends. Linda also asked what the fine is for non-residents who violate the summer parking. Chief Nikas said it’s \$30 per day.
- Motion to approve the Pavilion Beach Rules and Regulations Related to Non-Resident Parking Restrictions for 2024 made by Linda, seconded by Kerry.

→ *Motion passed unanimously 3-0*

- Select Board Subcommittee Update: Linda said the Shellfish Subcommittee met the other night and Police Officer Matt Bodwell was introduced as the new Shellfish Constable. He has taken all of the required coursework

and is fully certified. Green crab trapping will begin on May 15th which is later than we like to start because of the Right Whale Protection Act. One of the trappers petitioned the Department of Marine Fisheries to get a waiver because we are only trapping in 3-4 feet of water and there are no whales there. Because there is a lot of litigation going on, they are not willing to carve out any exceptions right now. They also discussed developing a formal Shellfish Management Plan. The next meeting is in June. Chief Nikas said the shellfish rules and regulations are what the DMF views as our Shellfish Management Plan but this will give it more strength because the current plan is mostly geared toward the river.

10. Select Board Warrant Article Speaking Assignments – W. Whitmore

Article 1: Linda
Article 2: William
Article 3: Sarah
Article 4: Kerry
Article 6: William
Article 7: Linda
Article 9: Kerry
Article 10: Linda
Article 11: William
Article 12: Sarah
Article 13: Kerry
Article 14: Kerry
Article 15: Linda
Article 16: William
Articles 17, 18, 19: Sarah
Articles 20: Kerry
Article 21: Linda
Article 22: William
Article 23: Sarah
Article 24: Kerry
Article 25: Linda

11. Consent Agenda – W. Whitmore

a. One Day All Alcohol License Application from Andrew Skillman, Ipswich Masonic Temple for a Celebration of Life on May 20, 2023.

- Motion to approve made by Linda seconded by Kerry

→ *Motion passed unanimously 3-0*

12. Select Board Sub Committee Updates – W. Whitmore

- William said they had an ELD meeting where they talked about the budget and the policies presented tonight. Jon will be here on May 1st to present the budget. They are also going to look into the discount to figure out the cost and benefits to the ELD and the town.

13. New Business

- William said there is a town cleanup on Earth Day on April 22nd form 9AM-11AM

14. Old Business

- Stephen said on the Town Election Ballot there was a question about the amounts not being on the ballot questions. Sarah Johnson confirmed that for ballot questions that are tax funded, the amount does not go on. The questions that are Bamford bylaw funded do include the numbers because they are funded by rates. Questions one and two do not have amounts and questions 3 and 4 do.
- There will be a Memorial Day ceremony this year at the war memorial, Monday May 29th at 10:30 AM but no parade.
- The annual poppy drive will be May 19th-21st.
- Motion to approve the ballot made by Linda, seconded by Kerry

→ *Motion passed unanimously 3-0*

15. Miscellaneous and Correspondence – W. Whitmore

- Stephen said he has finished interviews for the Rec Committee so he will be putting that together in the next few weeks. He has had a number of positive interviews.
- Motion to adjourn the Select Board made by Kerry, seconded by Linda

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 3-0*

Respectfully Submitted By
Alyson von der Esch
4-19-20