Town of Dunstable Select Board
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 08, 2024

In attendance: Chair Leah Basbanes, Vice Chair Kieran Meehan, Select Board Member Ron Mikol, Town Administrator Jason Silva, Executive Assistant Sue Fayne; David Tully, Dunstable Rural Land Trust; Jim Tully, Brattle Development

The meeting was called to order at 5 PM by Chair Basbanes.

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public during this part of the meeting, despite the opportunity for public forum discussion.

State Election Warrant

Chair Basbanes noted the state election warrant included five questions, concerning President and Vice-President elections, legislative roles, and local committees. It was emphasized that these questions were put forth by initiative petition and are consistent across households as prepared by the Secretary of State's Office. There was clarification around confusion about whether these questions differed from prior communications to residents, which they did not.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **VOTED to APPROVE** posting the warrant for the 2024 state election at the post office, town hall, police station, and library. **The vote was unanimous.**

Conservation Restriction for Parcel 14 40 0 – Sweet, Pleasant Street

The conservation restriction for Parcel 14 40 0 on Pleasant Street, owned by Ernest G. Sweet, was discussed. This restriction was overseen by the Dunstable Rural Land Trust. Board members talked about the strategic importance of protecting areas like the Pleasant Street parcel as part of ongoing efforts to safeguard natural resources such as the Salmon Brook greenway.

It was highlighted that the protection is not for public access and involves no taxpayer expenditure. Furthermore, it was reiterated that this measure was essential for preserving the town's water improvement through protection of aquifer areas.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **VOTED to APPROVE** the Conservation Restriction from Ernest G. Sweet and Ernest G. Sweet to the Dunstable Rural Land Trust for property located on Pleasant Street, recorded at the Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds in Book 2480, Page 521, in the public interest pursuant to Section 32 of Chapter 184 of the Massachusetts General Laws. **The vote was unanimous.**

41 Lowell St. Land Development Agreement

The land development agreement concerns property development on Lowell Street, involving a

40B project denoted as 55 Plus. This project by Brattle Development will consist of 156 housing units. The primary discussion was around the permissible development of pastureland, including the possibility of livestock-related structures within 3% of the space. Several board members went into detail about potential arrangements.

The property south of the power lines will be conveyed to the Dunstable Rural Land Trust as open space, and adjustments would adhere to a 60-foot buffer zone. Renovation proposals for a town-owned garage included that the garage will be gifted back to the Town, eventually.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **VOTED to APPROVE** the Land Development Agreement between the Town of Dunstable and Brattle Development, LLC for the development of 156 housing units on property located at 41 Lowell Street, as presented, and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Land Development Agreement on behalf of the Board. **The vote was unanimous.**

ARPA Reallocation for Town Hall Boiler

The aging boiler system in the town hall required urgent attention due to deferred maintenance issues and subsequent mechanical failures, resulting in 0 heating or hot water capabilities throughout the building. This was confirmed through internal evaluations, highlighting the necessity of reallocating ARPA funds to cover extensive repairs and a maintenance agreement. It was decided not to allocate unnecessary funds for sealing the tray positioned under the boiler when engineering workarounds appeared feasible.

An explanation of funding sources and potential surpluses was shared with the Board, with mentions of deferred maintenance liabilities equating to delayed solutions and confusion over resource allocations strangling long-term solutions.

On a **motion** by Member Mikol and **seconded** by Vice Chair Meehan, it was **VOTED to APPROVE** the reallocation of ARPA funds from the MS4 stormwater permit allocation and direct $8,000 towards boiler repairs, $2,475 for boiler maintenance, $1,600 for piping relief valve efforts, and explore a 3-year maintenance agreement replacing the need to reseal the drainage pan." **The vote was unanimous.**

The approval passed with mention to discuss further any suggested annually recurring service contracts and leverage additional surpluses for technology upgrades where needed.

TA Report

TA Silva provided a brief overview of his TA report:

Bandstand Railing

The project to replace the railing is close to completion. The railing now needs to be painted. The contractor, Vanguard Construction is planning to complete the work soon – the moisture readings are still slightly higher than what he likes to see but he was out to visit the site last week.

Cell Tower on Water Tank RFP

As you know, the Town has received a response to the RFP issued for a cell tower on the Town water tank. The Board of Water Commissioners reviewed the proposal at their meeting in August, and the respondent attended their meeting last month. The Board voted to approve including an article on the Special Town Meeting Warrant requesting authorization to enter a lease for the placement of a cell tower on the Town Water Tank and also approved the proposal from T-Mobile Northeast with conditions including:

- Obtaining necessary local and state permitting and approvals
- A peer review of the plan submission paid for by the respondent
- The successful negotiation of lease terms
- They also authorized the Town Administrator to work with Town Counsel to negotiate and finalize a lease with T-Mobile Northeast for the Board's consideration. I have been in touch with both T-Mobile and Town Counsel and progress is being made.

Charter Communications Franchise Agreement

As you know, the Town's franchise agreement with Charter Communications expired in 2021. We are advertising the public hearing, as required, to review the draft franchise agreement for the next Select Board meeting on October 22, 2023.

Leaf and Yard Waste Curbside Collection

As a new option for residents, the Town is working with Black Earth Compost to provide curbside collection of yard waste and leaves. Black Earth has agreed to do a trial curbside yard waste/leaf collection program, at a fee to the resident, and at no cost to the Town. The first week they are planning this is the week of November 11. Thanks to Kristina Hooper for her assistance and for making the initial connection with Black Earth.

Community Compact Grant Projects

We are planning to begin both Community Compact projects soon and have been in touch with the Collins Center to begin providing them with information and documents, as requested. We will keep you in the loop as both the compensation and classification and Treasurer Collector regional agreement studies move forward.

Veterans Monument and Memorials at Town Hall

Last week, Hudson Monuments visited Town Hall to clean the monuments and memorials at Town Hall. They look great, just in time to celebrate Veterans Day. Thanks to Sue Fayne for helping to coordinate the cleaning and to Joe Dean for paying the invoice from the Veterans budget.

Library Certification Waiver
Due to the Town not meeting the minimum appropriation requirement set by the Board of Library Commissioners, I am working with the Library Director to prepare the documents needed to petition for a waiver. The deadline to submit these materials is November 8.

FY26 Budget
As you know, budget worksheets have been distributed to departments and are due next week on October 16. As a reminder, there is a joint meeting scheduled of the School Committee and the Towns of Dunstable and Groton Finance/Advisory, and Select Boards on Wednesday, October 23. I am currently preparing a presentation for the meeting that I will distribute to all of you in advance.

Select Board Newsletter
- I am currently working to finalize this quarter's Select Board newsletter. Be on the lookout
- for a draft to review by end of week, hopefully.

New Resident Guide
I have also drafted a New Resident Guide which is close to being finalized. It's meant to provide a place for new residents to go and find important information about the Town – sort of a one-stop-shopping concept for new residents as they move to Town. Once complete, I'll share with you for your review.

0 Hall Street donation
We have the signed deed back from the property owner, Ricky Stanichuk. We now need signatures of the Select Board and Conservation Commission, and then will have the deeds recorded at the registry.

MS4 Stormwater Permit Annual Report
The Town filed its 6-Year MS4 Stormwater Permit Annual Report at the end of September. This is our annual requirement to ensure compliance with our stormwater permit.

Personnel Policies Update
We anticipate having updates to the personnel policies ready for the Select Board's consideration at your next meeting. In advance, we will share with you the updated policies, highlight changes and the process followed.

LAND Grant Award
The Town has been awarded up to $406,870 to support the purchase of the Conservation Restriction at 346 High Street. As a reminder, this issue needs to be re-

voted at Special Town Meeting to comply with the requirements of the LAND grant program. Great job to Carol Rock, and the Con Comm for their work securing this grant.

Simmons Tax Reimbursement
As an update, as a result of the Select Board's vote, the Board of Assessors has approved the tax reimbursement to David Simmons.

Town Hall Air Handling Unit
The Town Hall Air Handling Unit has been replaced and is functioning properly.

Upcoming Employee Trainings
The Town has once again partnered with MIIA to provide trainings for our employees and volunteers: Bringing out the Best in People: Positive Management Techniques on Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at 10:30 AM and Meeting Facilitation Best Practices on Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 11 AM.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

No additional topics required discussions.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:49PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue Fayne
Executive Assistant