

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Monday, June 1, 2020

The Select Board participated in this meeting remotely utilizing Zoom in accordance with the Governor's March 12 Order suspending provisions of Open Meeting Law and to promote public health and social distancing.

Board Members present: William Whitmore, Chair; Linda Alexson, Vice Chair; Dr. Tammy Jones; Kerry Mackin; Nishan Mootafian

Also present: Anthony Marino, Town Manager; Eileen Page, Recording Secretary

With a quorum present, Mr. Whitmore called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Welcome/Announcements

COVID-19

Town Hall is open to the public from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Monday through Thursday, and from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Friday. The Utility offices are open to the public at normal operating hours to accept payments and assist residents. The Ipswich Public Library is operating on a takeout-only system.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Police Chief Paul Nikas has issued a statement condemning the actions of four Minneapolis police officers in connection with the murder of George Floyd.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Shellfish Advisory Committee will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, June 2 at 7:00 PM.

GRADUATION

The Board offered their congratulations to the Ipswich High School Class of 2020.

WATER RESTRICTIONS

Mandatory Water Restrictions are now in effect. Watering lawns is permitted by hand only between the hours of 7:00 PM and 6:00 AM.

LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Action EMS sent the Board a letter commending the work of Ipswich Police Officers Brian Reed and David Moore and Sgt. Dan Kmiec, and Ipswich Fire Lt. Brett Emerson and Firefighters Kendall Buhl and Warren Grant in assisting a resident during a medical emergency.

Citizen Queries

None.

Boards and Committees

- a. Hugh McCall – Reappointment – Library Board of Trustees
- b. Nancy Carlisle – Reappointment – Architectural Preservation District Commission
- c. Laura Gresh – Confirmation Reappointment – Historical Commission
- d. Wayne Castonguay – Reappointment – Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee
- e. Andrea Lacroix – Reappointment – Waste Reduction Advisory Committee
- f. Lawrence Pszenny – Reappointment – Audit Committee
- g. Binnie Hackett – Reappointment – Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board
- h. Fred Blum – Appointment – Shade Tree and Beautification
- i. James Kelley – Reappointment – Audit Committee
- j. David Benedix – Reappointment – Waste Reduction Advisory Committee
- k. Sherry Hurley – Resignation – Library Board of Trustees

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to reappoint the members listed to their respective boards. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Mr. Blum has spent his career in forestry. He would like to become involved in the Shade Tree and Beautification Committee.

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to appoint Fred Blum to the Shade Tree and Beautification Committee. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Approval of Minutes

a. May 18, 2020

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the May 18, 2020 minutes. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

PUBLIC HEARING: Alteration of Premises, Ithaki, 25 Hammatt Street

“Residents of the Town of Ipswich, please note that the Select Board will conduct a remote public hearing on Monday, June 1, 2020 at 7:20 PM to hear testimony on the application for an Alteration of Premises for Ithaki Restaurant at Hammatt Street.” – William D. Whitmore, Select Board Chair

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to open the Public Hearing. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

Petros Markopoulos reported that he has been the proprietor of Ithaki for over 20 years. He appeared before the Board seeking permission to extend the seating of Ithaki outside in order to comply with social distancing guidelines when seated dining is reopened. It was noted that Mr. Markopoulos is not seeking to increase seating, but rather just to allow outdoor dining. Four 4-person tables would be situated 4’ apart, and six 2-person tables will be situated 6’ apart. The expansion will eliminate three parking spaces to accommodate tables.

Ms. Alexson asked if the request needed to be heard before the Zoning Board of Appeals or Planning Board. Mr. Marino stated that he doesn’t believe it will, as Ithaki had previously held a permit for outdoor dining expansion but had never used it. It was noted that the Building Inspector has reviewed the seating plan and is comfortable with the safety protocols put in place.

Nicole Levesque (Ithaki) reported that she has spoken with Colleen Fermon (Director of Public Health), and the Health Department felt comfortable with Ithaki’s plan. There will be no equipment for food holding or cooking on the patio.

There were no public comments.

- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*
- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the Alteration of Premises for Ithaki with the condition that it receive necessary approval from any other required Boards. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Argilla Road Project Update

Frank Ventimiglia (Director of Operations, Public Works) reported that the Trustees Coastal Vulnerability Study found that Argilla Road between Castle Hill and Crane Beach entrances have the highest flood risk of local Trustees properties. It is expected that by 2070, significant portions of the current road will be completely underwater during high tide. The DPW will begin construction about 150’ southwest of the entrance to the Crane Estate, and will follow Argilla Road for about 2,400’ to the Crane Beach entrance. By the end of the project, Argilla Road will have been raised about 3’ for a total elevation of 9’ above sea level, use the living shoreline to create a 3:1 slope to stabilize the roadway, replace the box culverts, and add two marsh culverts. The preliminary Grant Request will be about \$210,000, with the Town having responsibility for \$52,500 in in-kind hours and cash match.

Ms. Mackin stated that she would like to see space made for pedestrian and bike access along the road. Mr. Ventimiglia stated that 2' on either side of the road are planning for those purposes.

Mr. Whitmore suggested the project team look into doing a wider 4' path on one side of the road, leading from the Castle to the beach, as parking often overflows from the beach to the Castle parking areas. Ted Wickwire (Consultant Project Team Leader, Woods Hole Group) stated that he would bring it up with the team.

Dr. Jones asked if there were plans for guardrails. Mr. Wickwire said that there were not.

Ms. Alexson asked when the Town could expect grant approval. Mr. Wickwire reported that grants are typically awarded in late summer, with contracts available by October or November.

Request for Letter of Support for Riverbank Restoration Application

Ethan Parsons (Director of Planning and Development) spoke to the Board seeking approval for a CZM grant application that would help restore and protect vegetation along the Ipswich River. If approved, the grant would require a \$10,000 in-kind contribution from the Town.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to sign the letter of support as presented to the Board. Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Update on Town Owned Property at 161 Topsfield Road

Mr. Parsons provided the Board with a memorandum from Graham Associates Inc. outlining the beginnings of a development plan for the Town-owned property at 161 Topsfield Road. Mr. Parsons reminded the Board that the Land Disposition Committee has studied the property extensively, and the possibility of municipal use has been ruled out, however, the Committee would like to conserve the back half of the property, as it is mostly wetland that backs up to Kimball Brook. Mr. Parsons suggested that the Board consider the land for use in their housing production plan.

Discuss and Vote Proffer of Ownership of Land Behind and Southerly of 178 Linebrook Road, Symes Corporation

As Phase 1 of the Symes Corporation housing development on Linebrook Road ends, Symes has offered to transfer a parcel of open space into the care of the Greenbelt Association. Mr. Parsons reported that the Open Space Committee unanimously voted to recommend that the Select Board allow the transfer. Greenbelt has also offered to apply a conservation restriction to the land as an extra layer of protection.

Mr. Parsons also warned the Board of word that Symes has claimed they never agreed to construct a public trail through the property, which is contrary to their agreement with the Planning Board. The issue will be discussed as Phase 2 and 3 of construction begin.

- *Vote: Dr. Jones moved to approve the conveyance of the 31.87-acre open space parcel located at 178 Linebrook Road, which has been created as part of the Open Space Preservation Zoning development at the same address, to the Essex County Greenbelt Association, subject to a Conservation Restriction. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

2020 Annual Town Meeting

Mr. Whitmore reported that the Tri-Board Chairs partook in a conference call with Colleen Fermon (Director of Public Health), Tom Murphy (Town Moderator), Dr. Brian Blake (Superintendent of Schools), and Mr. Marino. It has been decided that Annual Town Meeting will proceed as planned on Saturday, June 27 at 9:00 AM on the football field of Ipswich High School. A tent will be set up with 221 chairs distanced six feet apart, with a stage at the front for the Town Clerk and Town Moderator. Residents who do not wish to enter the tent will be able to participate from the parking lot by tuning to a radio channel and voting electronically. All residents will have an opportunity to submit questions ahead of time to minimize interaction at the microphone. When the meeting adjourns, residents will be dismissed row-by-row to optimize social distancing practices. Masks will be required.

Mr. Murphy stated that ICAM will air an information program reviewing the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Ms. Alexson asked if the Town will be eligible for reimbursement for the tent, chair, and portable restroom rentals through the CARES Act. Mr. Marino confirmed that he plans to apply for reimbursement as a COVID-19 expense.

Ms. Mackin stated that she has concerns that residents will not attend Town Meeting for fear of their health.

Dr. Jones stated that if residents feel comfortable enough to run errands, they should feel comfortable enough to attend a socially-distanced Town Meeting. She believes the plan is very safe given the uncertainties of COVID-19.

Reduced Speed Restrictions or Areas for Vessels on the Ipswich River

The Board has previously discussed imposing speed restrictions on motorized watercraft along the river.

Ms. Mackin stated that she would like to see a speed limit imposed on jet skis. Chief Nikas clarified that speed limits would need to be imposed on all motorized watercraft, and could not specifically target jet skis.

Chief Nikas stated that the Ipswich Police Department is currently monitoring a large group of jet ski riders that meet on the river Thursdays and Fridays, and are actively working to education them about safe practices. He stated that even if a no-wake zone was implemented along the river and Fox Creek, he does not believe this particular group would adhere to it. He stated that the Police Department is working on a plan for this specific jet ski group, and would like it to be reviewed by the Waterways Committee.

Ms. Alexson asked for an update on construction at Town Wharf. Chief Nikas responded that sections of the ramp have been poured, and the project is still on track to be completed by June 15.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to refer the speed issue to the Waterways Committee, and to look into speed restriction signage. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Developing Bike-Friendly Routes Through Ipswich

Mr. Whitmore noted that the Town of Hamilton has the Discover Hamilton Trail that runs in an 8-mile loop for walking and cyclists. He noted that Ipswich has limited space and funds for such a project, but suggested forming a group that could look into identifying designated trails and bike paths.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to create the Cycle Safe Task Force. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Discussion on Limiting Construction Noise

Mr. Marino noted that with more residents home during the day, complaints about construction noise have increased. He has identified a sample noise ordinance with language that could be amended to fit Ipswich.

Ms. Alexson expressed her support for the implementation of a noise ordinance.

Discuss/Vote Temporary Resident Only Parking at Pavilion Beach During COVID-19

Mr. Marino asked the Board to approve resident-only parking at Pavilion Beach, identifiable to police by a Crane Beach or Transfer Station sticker. An exception would be made for non-resident mooring owners.

Ms. Mackin stated that she supports the suggestion, as there are increased traffic and speeding issues on the Neck.

Chief Nikas stated that he has not been in favor of making Pavilion Beach resident-only in the past, but does not see any reasonable way to implement social-distancing this summer without the designation.

- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to implement Ipswich resident-only parking at Pavilion Beach through Labor Day 2020. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Old Business

TOWN WHARF PARKING

Ms. Alexson raised the persistent issue of wrong-way parking on East Street above the Town Wharf. She noted that there is excess parking available at Town Hall on the weekends, and parking above the Wharf creates a dangerous situation for pedestrians and bicyclists and a traffic hazard for motorists leaving the parking lot. She suggested that the area above the Wharf be designated as a no-parking zone.

Chief Nikas noted that a Public Hearing would need to be held, and if approved, signs could be hung implementing the order. He and Mr. Whitmore resolved to schedule the Public Hearings.

Consent Agenda

I. Shellfish Permit Requests

- a. Over 70 Recreational – Jerry Smith, 15 Mile Road
- b. Student Commercial – Jake Sheppard

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve an Over 70 Recreational Shellfish Permit for Jerry Smith. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*
- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve a Student Commercial Shellfish Permit for Jake Sheppard under the condition that he meet all requirements and provide documentation and fees to the Town Clerk by the close of business on June 8, and if not, the permit will be withdrawn and open to another student. Mr. Mootafian seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Town Manager Report

RESTAURANTS

Mr. Marino and Chief Nikas will meet with restaurant owners on June 3 at 11:00 AM to discuss creating an outdoor seating area for the summer season to assist local businesses in complying with reopening regulations. The area next to the EBSCO murals and Riverwalk was identified as a potential site for picnic tables.

WATER RESTRICTIONS

The Town is under mandatory water restrictions. Handheld watering is permitted between 7:00 PM and 6:00 AM. Sprinkler watering is not permitted at any time.

DRIVE-IN MOVIE NIGHT

In partnership with the YMCA, the Police Department will host a drive-in movie night in the parking lot of the high school and screen *Toy Story 4*. Residents are encouraged to get dinner at local restaurants and eat in their cars during the movie. If the event is successful, the Town would like to host more over the summer.

RIVER FLOW

Ms. Mackin stated that the Parker River water levels are currently very low, as a direct result of mismanagement of resources by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and over-sourcing upstream. Ms. Alexson agreed, adding that there is an increase in water usage as residents are home all day. Dr. Jones added that there has not been a snow pack for two years.

New Business

MEMORIAL GARDEN

Ms. Mackin stated that she has heard from residents interested in developing a Memorial Garden to honor the lives of residents who have passed away. The entrance of the South Cemetery had previously been identified as a potential site in 2017. Mr. Whitmore suggested the project be referred to the Shade Tree and Beautification Committee.

EROSION MITIGATION

Ms. Mackin informed the Board that a meeting recently took place between residents of Jutland Way and Rick Clarke (Director of Public Works) and Frank Ventimiglia (Director of Operations) to discuss erosion management on the street.

FY21 BUDGET

Mr. Marino reported that an updated spreadsheet with \$250,000 in FY21 budget cuts was sent to the Select Board for review.

Ms. Alexson asked why Fire and Police had substantial budget cuts, but Open Space did not have any. Mr. Marino stated that Open Space is not funded through the General Fund, and it is easier to make cuts to larger budgets versus smaller budgets to prevent staff layoffs.

- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to support Article 3. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*
- *Vote: Mr. Mootafian moved to support Article 9. Dr. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Miscellaneous and Correspondence

EMPLOYEE CHANGES

New Hires: Cierra O'Brien (Library), Christin Aubin (Planning), Kathryn Lavoie (Treasurer/Collector), Lilly Sundell-Thomas (Library), Mary-Louise Ireland (Assessor), Lisa Craig (Assessor)

Promotions: None.

Retirements: Robin Nolan (Assessor)

Current Vacancies: Council on Aging, Part-time Outreach Worker

Mr. Marino confirmed that all new hires are replacing employees who have left the Town.

- *Dr. Jones moved to adjourn, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

The Select Board adjourned at 9:48 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
06.05.2020*