

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Monday, July 6, 2021

The Select Board participated in this meeting remotely utilizing Zoom in accordance with the Governor's March 12, 2020 Order suspending provisions of Open Meeting Law and to promote public health and social distancing.

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

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

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

Welcome/Announcements

The next Select Board meeting will be held in-person at Town Hall on Monday, July 19 at 7 PM. A Public Hearing will be held regarding upgrades to Market Street.

The Ipswich Council on Aging (COA) held its annual summer barbecue on June 25. Ms. Alexson thanked the staff for hosting it.

The COVID-19 regional vaccine clinic is open to anyone age 12 and older without an appointment. The clinic is only on Mondays from 1 PM to 4 PM at Our Lady of Hope Church (1 Pineswamp Road).

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (Mass DEP) will hold a virtual hearing on proposed regulatory changes that would impose conservation restrictions on regulated withdrawals.

Board and Committee Appointments

I. Antigon Z. Simmons – Reappointment – Board of Registrars

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to reappoint Ms. Simmons to the Board of Registrars for a three-year term. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Ms. Alexson asked that a discussion regarding formation of a Public Safety Building Reuse Task Force be added to an upcoming agenda. This will be on the July 19 agenda.

Select Board Opens Special Town Meeting Warrant (October 19, 2021)

Warrant articles for Special Town Meeting are due to the Town Manager's Office no later than Friday, August 13. Citizens petitions require 100 signatures to be included at Special Town Meeting.

- *Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to open the Special Town Meeting Warrant. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Select Board Refers Initiated Zoning Articles to Planning Board

Ethan Parsons (Planning Director) asked that three (3) zoning articles be referred back to the Planning Board so that a Public Hearing may be held. In anticipation of the referral, the Planning Board has scheduled Public Hearings for July 26 and August 5.

The first article submitted eliminates footnote 11. The second article submitted reduces the maximum house size allowed from 2,200 sq. ft to 2,100 sq. ft, and increases the payment-in-lieu option to \$50,000. The third article submitted proposes allowing detached accessory dwelling units.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to refer the articles to the Planning Board. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Discuss/Vote Signing 120 County Road (Whittier Motel) Housing Development Regulatory Agreement for Local Initiative Program Application

Mr. Parsons reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) has granted a special permit allowing 120 County Road to convert from a motel to thirty-seven (37) rental units. The units are studio apartments that are available to individuals making less than 60% of the area median income. The Town of Ipswich and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will monitor the affordability. If approved, this agreement will add thirty-seven (37) units to the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI.)

Dr. Jones noted that the agreement states that only ten (10) units would be considered affordable, however thirty-seven (37) would be added to the SHI. Mr. Parsons clarified that for rental units, only 25% of the total project must be designated affordable for the entire project to count towards the SHI threshold. He also noted that while ownership projects require an 80% or less income level, rental units only require 60%.

Ms. Player asked what the median area income is. Mr. Parsons responded that it is calculated based on the median income of the Greater Boston area.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to approve the agreement and authorize Dr. Jones to sign it. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Discuss/Vote Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) Between Ipswich Harbormaster and Essex Harbormaster

Police Chief Paul Nikas presented an inter-municipal agreement that would allow the Essex Harbormaster to call upon the Ipswich Harbormaster for enforcement assistance on the water, and vice versa, as needed. This will be particularly useful for enforcing proper boating on the back side of Crane Beach, where the municipal line is often called into question on the water.

Dr. Jones asked if a similar agreement was in place with Rowley or Newbury. Chief Nikas responded that if this IMA is approved, he will begin pursuing one with Newbury as well.

Ms. Alexson noted that the terms of the IMA state that Ipswich would provide Essex with law enforcement assistance, but Essex would not necessarily be providing Ipswich with the same. Chief Nikas responded that this is because the Essex Harbormaster is not a law enforcement officer.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the intermunicipal agreement between Ipswich and Essex. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Discuss/Vote Parking Lot Agreement with Ascension Church

The parking lot at Ascension Church is regularly used for overflow parking from Town Hall during special events in exchange for snow plowing in the winter.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve a ten (10) year extension of the agreement. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Consent Agenda

- I. One Day Wine and Malt Applications
 - a. Alexis Harwood of Helen's Bottle Shop for Appleton Farm House Suppers on July 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2021

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Mackin seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Ipswich River Waterway Use

Chris Murray (Waterways Advisory Committee, Chair) provided the Board with a Committee update.

JET SKIS

Chief Nikas reported that in response to the ongoing issue of speeding by jet skis on the Ipswich River, signs have been posted at the Wharf and boat ramp to alert jet skiers to the bylaws. Citations are regularly being issued for improper operation.

VESSEL IDENTIFICATION STICKERS

The Waterways Advisory Committee is pursuing a bylaw that would require vessel identification stickers for all paddle crafts such as kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards. Currently, protocol upon finding an unattended vessel is to assume that a boater is in distress and begin search and rescue operations. Requiring stickers with contact information to be placed on the vessel would allow the Harbormaster to attempt to confirm that a vessel is lost before assuming the boater is in distress. The stickers are currently voluntary, and available for free at the Police Department.

SUMMER STREET LAUNCH

Improvements were made to the canoe and kayak launch on Summer Street that widened the access, which had been encroached on by the river.

EDUCATION & ENFORCEMENT

The Board will be prioritizing educating the public on proper boating etiquette. Efforts include encouraging paddle crafts to stay to the edge of the channels whenever conditions permit, and drafting flyers to be handed out at the Wharf with reminders of the rules and regulations of the waterways. The Committee also suggested that Lt. Jon Hubbard and Off. Brian Murphy draft a 10-question quiz that would be taken before the issuance of a mooring permit so as to create a written record of boaters acknowledging the rules and regulations.

A rib craft will be arriving in August, which will allow easier maneuvering along the river to pursue jet skiers and provide education when rules are violated.

Mr. Whitmore noted that education and enforcement would also be needed in areas outside of the Wharf, as boats enter the river from out of town as well. He cited the blind corner at Treadwell's, and a 60' area on the Neck where the marsh is caving in because of boaters as particular areas of concern. Chief Nikas stated that he would pursue installing yellow buoys to warn of reduced speeds due to upcoming blind turns.

HARBOR PLAN

A public presentation will be held on the Harbor Plan, which is expected to be finalized by the end of next week. A hearing will be scheduled to accept public comment.

RIVER DREDGING

The Army Corp of Engineers is currently conducting dredging in the northeast, and completed a study of the Ipswich River last year, pulling soil samples from a dozen different sites. The Board will receive a report regarding the study in the near future, and Chief Nikas speculated that the Town may receive federal funding to either aid in or cover the cost of dredging the river.

Ms. Alexson asked how dredging may impact clam beds. Chief Nikas reported that any impact was unlikely, as dredging would only take place to return to river to depths it previously sat at about 100 years ago.

Cycle Safe Task Force

Brian Hone (Cycle Safe Task Force) provided a report on the Task Force. The Task Force was formed nine (9) months ago in response to a number of cyclist deaths, and was charged with making recommendations in the short and long term to protect both cyclists and pedestrians.

The Task Force made five (5) immediate recommendations:

1. Form a Committee to act on an as-needed bases to make recommendations for pedestrian and cyclist access as roadwork is performed.

2. Define a set of standards for Ipswich roads that provide concrete guidelines for signage and markings.
3. Establish a Downtown Safety Zone connecting the Wharf, Winthrop School, North Main Street, and High School. This could be accomplished through minor infrastructure changes as roadway updates are made.
4. Defining routes that connect outdoor recreation resources such as Willowdale State Park, Appleton Farms, and Bradley Palmer.
5. Develop a Non-Automotive Transport Advisory Board to continue long-term planning.

Ms. Player asked that the group also consider wheelchairs and alternative power transport in their work.

Ms. Mackin noted that Jeffreys Neck Road is expected to be raised in response to flooding issues, which will impact recreational access. Mr. Hone confirmed that the current plan to raise Jeffreys Neck Road will significantly reduce pedestrian and cyclist access.

Ms. Alexson noted that distracted driving is also an ongoing issue in town.

- *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved that the Cycle Safe Task Force continue with both long-term planning and ad hoc projects. Mr. Whitmore seconded.*

Dr. Jones asked the Cycle Safe Task Force to return at the next Select Board meeting with recommendations on how to best move forward.

A vote on the motion was put on hold until further recommendations could be made by the Task Force.

Discuss/Vote on Heart & Soul Café Inc. Use of Parking Spaces for Alteration of Premises

Dr. Mike Riccio (1 North Main Street) expressed concern about the loss of two (2) parking spaces to allow for increased outdoor dining at Heart & Soul Café. He does not believe spaces should be lost to the disadvantage of other businesses for the benefit of another. He stated that as life returns to normal in the wake of the pandemic, more cars are on the road and will need parking downtown. He noted that this could also cause a chain reaction in which other parking spots are lost to outdoor dining for other restaurants.

Dr. Jones acknowledged that downtown parking is an ongoing issue, and asked about the status of parking in the EBSCO lot. Mr. Marino confirmed that parking is currently available in the EBSCO lot as employees continue to work remotely, but will no longer be available on weekdays once employees are back in the office. Under regular circumstances, the lot is only available to the public on weekends.

Mr. Marino stated that downtown business owners have reported benefiting from the increased foot traffic attracted by outdoor dining.

Ms. Alexson encouraged Dr. Riccio to attend the upcoming Public Hearing on Market Street changes on July 19, as both proposed plans would result in a loss of parking.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the use of parking spaces for Heart & Soul Cafe outdoor dining. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Shellfish Subcommittee Membership Update

Ms. Alexson reported that the original *Shellfish Advisory Board* functioned independently of the Select Board, but eventually became dysfunctional and was disbanded in 2007 or 2008. The Select Board at that time created the current Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee made up of nine (9) members - two (2) Selectpersons, three (3) commercial shellfishing permit holders, one (1) recreational shellfishing permit holder, and one (1) biologist. Chief Nikas and the Shellfish Constable are non-voting members. The Subcommittee serves in an advisory capacity to the Shellfish Commissioners.

Currently, Ms. Alexson serves as the Selectperson on the Subcommittee, and with Mr. Mootafian's departure from the Select Board and the Subcommittee, the question has been raised about whether two (2) Select Board representatives are necessary on the Subcommittee. Although the Subcommittee has not formally discussed the matter, Ms. Alexson indicated that she personally feels one (1) representative is sufficient, and the second spot should be opened up to a recreational permit holder to allow for better representation on the Subcommittee. Chief Nikas agreed with Ms. Alexson's suggestion.

- *Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to substitute the second Select Board member seat for a recreational shellfish permit holder. Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

Town Manager Report

Nora Blake has been named the new Library Director. Ms. Blake will assume her role on September 7, with Assistant Director Lilly Sundell-Thomas acting as the interim director in the meantime.

Mr. Marino and Chief Nikas met with producers seeking to use downtown Ipswich in an upcoming movie. In order to shoot at the location, signage would need to be removed and streets shutdown. The cost of doing so would be paid for by the film's production company. The production team hopes to begin filming in the fall.

Select Board: Subcommittee Updates

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE

Dr. Jones and Ms. Alexson serve on the Public Safety Facility Committee. The Committee met in-person at the Fire Department to hear questions and comments from firefighters. Their next meeting will be held on July 13. Ms. Alexson encouraged residents to visit the public safety facility project's website at IpswichPublicSafetyFacility.net.

SHELLFISH ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

Ms. Alexson serves on the Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is currently reviewing wintertime parking concerns at Pavilion Beach and fees for shellfish permits.

EASTERN ESSEX DISTRICT VETERANS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ms. Alexson serves on the Eastern Essex District Veterans Board of Directors as the Ipswich representative. At their last meeting, the Board conducted a performance review of VSO Karen Tyler, who scored a 4.3/5. The Board meets quarterly, and anticipates holding their next meeting in September.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Marino reported that the Finance Committee will meet in person on July 13.

ELECTRIC LIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

Ms. Player serves on the Electric Light Subcommittee. At their most recent meeting, the Subcommittee discussed the Town's power portfolio and investment in various resources.

SHADE TREE BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Whitmore serves on the Shade Tree Beautification Committee. The Committee recently walked the downtown area with an arborist and an employee from the Forestry Department to discuss preservation of native species. In particular, sugar maple trees are struggling in the face of climate change. The Committee discussed the possibility of introducing more drought-tolerant species that are more adaptable to climate changes.

New Business

Mr. Whitmore will not be able to attend the July 19 meeting.

The State 911 system will make a presentation to the Select Board on their dispatch feasibility study at the August 2 meeting.

Chief Nikas reported that the Peatfield Landing non-motorized boat launch has been approved by the Conservation Committee, and will be installed within a month.

Old Business

Ms. Alexson reported having conversations with residents who are disappointed that Town Meeting has returned to a Tuesday night schedule versus Saturday mornings. Residents stated that participation is more feasible when the meeting isn't held after a long day of work, and that they enjoy the social aspect that comes with a Saturday Town Meeting. Ms. Alexson noted that even under pandemic restrictions, recent Saturday morning Town Meetings attracted a larger attendance than the average Tuesday night meeting, and stated that she hopes it won't be ruled out in the future.

➤ *Vote: Ms. Mackin moved to adjourn. Ms. Player seconded. The motion carried unanimously via roll call.*

The Select Board adjourned at 9:34 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
07.07.2021*