

Tuesday, January 19, 2021
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mark Elfman, Chair*
Ed O’Leary, Vice Chair*
Stephanie McGowan, Clerk*
Leah Gibson*
Chris Mitchell*

Also Present:
William Keegan Jr., Town Manager*
Mike Johns, Assistant Town Manager*
Christina Metcalf, Community Info. Specialist*
**Participated remotely*

1. 7:00pm - Citizen's Input - None

2. 7:10pm COVID-19 Informational update from William Keegan

We currently have about 240 cases in Foxborough, the highest we have had in Foxborough since Covid began. We have no current hospitalizations and have had a total of 812 cases in Foxborough. Vaccinations at Gillette Stadium for first responders by appointment only. There is a limited number of staff currently but should increase staff and number of vaccines being offered as well.

ME – With the increase in positive cases, we decided to go fully remote until the numbers go down and it is safer for us to do so. The Gillette Stadium mass vaccination site has a website you can register and it will let you know if you are eligible to get a vaccination at this time.

CM – Chief Kelleher was talking about getting vaccinations for first responders and with Gillette now operational does he have a plan to get residents of Foxborough vaccinated?

BK – It is all through Gillette for now, if that changes we will let you know.

ME – Was SEMRECC included in that?

BK – Originally they weren’t on the list but we spoke to the State and they got moved to be included with the first responders group.

3. 7:15pm - Common Victualler and 7 Day Entertainment License for Achilitos

- Introduction of owner/manager Margaret Pimentel of Achilitos, new restaurant at Patriot Place

MP - I live in Hyde Park and currently own an Achilitos in Jamaica Plain and are bringing it to Patriot Place. Our goal is to serve fresh quality food at Patriot Place. Our hours Monday through Sunday, 11-8pm, most days with Friday and Saturday until 9:00pm. We have dine-in and takeout service.

EO – Do you anticipate serving alcohol?

MP – It is part of our contract that we will not be serving alcohol.

LG – Welcome and good luck.

MP – People are very friendly and we love being here.

Motion to approve the 2021 Common Victualler and 7 Day Entertainment license for Sol Taquerias Inc. d/b/a Achilitos Taqueria by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.

Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.

4. 7:25pm DPW & Planning - Common Pedestrian & Traffic Improvements

DPW Director Chris Gallagher, Planning Director Paige Duncan and Town Engineer Lance DelPriore

Chris Gallagher – Back her to discuss the pedestrian and common traffic improvements. There is a grant opportunity for the Shared Streets Program through the state and how to use that funding to get some crossing signals like those near the Library. Paige attended a webinar regarding the grant and was put it touch with Kittelson

& Associates, Inc., who has expertise in roundabouts and rotary's. They gave us a good overview of the Shared Streets program and they are very interested in the Foxborough rotary and the traffic patterns around the common. What started out as a grant opportunity turned into some interesting and innovative concepts from Kittelson. We are not looking for approval tonight but looking at what our next steps are and is it pedestrian safety or traffic and where the Board would like us to go next. We sat down with police and fire and they feel a little bit drastic for Foxborough and that you would usually see in cities. We would like guidance and feedback on what you have seen. PD – After looking at these plans, a question that came up is do we want to have a sidewalk around the common or is the one just on the inside make sense? With the common rotary seeing 14,000-15,000 vehicles and it being the heart of the community where people want to gather. In order to balance the desire for more pedestrian safety we will have to make some concessions with traffic. As you look at these they can seem drastic but if you break them down one by one, some of the logic make sense and if we had guidance from the Board on what's important so we can then figure out the best way to work towards both pedestrian and traffic safety.

ME – Can we go through some of these options so we have a better idea?

CG – The concept behind Shared Streets is that you are accommodating vehicles that are traveling as well as the pedestrians and cyclists and use the roadway and sidewalk to accommodate all those uses. The goals that Kittelson came up with by talking with myself, Paige and Lance are 1) Create continuous pedestrian facility around the Common, 2) Improve pedestrian safety and 3) Encourage bicyclist to visit Uptown. Shared Streets is different than where we are now. For example Cocasset and South Street could be adjust to have back-in parking or parallel parking along with a bicycle lane and taking down the travel lanes from two to one lane. We do understand that there are 3 streets merging into one lane is drastic. We don't have a bike lane anywhere else in town, most of the road in town don't have the 5 feet plus a buffer that is needed for the

BK – We could also move the sidewalk inside the fence, change the angle parking and be able to keep the two lanes.

CG – In speaking with Public Safety about that idea, having the sidewalk on the outside will provide better safety than the current situation which is people walking on a small curb in front of the cars or walking behind the cars that may be trying to back out.

ME – What did public safety say about one lane around the rotary?

CG – It's shocking to see that and from their point of view the back in parking would be a difficult change for people to make. In their opinion the pull in easier especially if you are unfamiliar with the Common. They were definitely concerned about going down to one lane. Kittelson used the numbers from March of 2019. We are under the threshold but we didn't project for the next 15, 20 or 30 years.

EO – The most recent traffic study in terms of flow was in 2019? Have you seen a reduced flow because of Covid?

CG – Yes, and from the police chief we are seeing more vehicles on that road because of the change to Main Street.

SM – Do you have examples of towns that use this angled, backed in parking?

CG – The police department had this same concern, with people pull in front first instead of backing in. If these changes are done, we'll do them in phases and have public education.

LG – People might see the spaces and thing that traffic flows the other way. Also, we made some great progress with Pare Corp and did Kittelson talk to Pare so that it's not undoing the great progress we have

CG – With Pare Corp., we did have our Phase 2 in concept with them. We were looking to with them to solve one problem, how do we keep people on the inside lane from going down Central Street. Kittelson has not talked to Pare Corp. We told them what we have been through and did show them the phase 2 concepts. They took it to a whole new level to look at pedestrian safety.

LG – Would this change cause a backup on Central Street so that what Pare did won't undo what we just did?

CG – The grant had 3 or 4 engineering firms on it and but are sending it to Pare instead of use Kittelson will cost money that the grant will not fund. So what are our next steps and what should we be focusing on? We are looking for guidance.

LG – The Common is really wide already and this makes it wider. I'm most concerned with pedestrian safety but I'm not sure taking a lane away for pedestrians and a bike lane is enough of a win.

CM – I saw this and don't think going to one lane is the right thing to do. On the School Street side, would that be two lanes?

CG – The bike lane would go from Cocasset to Rockhill and get to South Street via Rockhill.

CM – On the South Street side, sidewalk the extra would be on the business side.

CG – On South Street you would keep the parallel parking, go to one lane, expanded pedestrian zone with buffered bike lane and the parallel parking.

CM – This will be a tough sell. You said you see this more in the city and in visiting Cambridge, it looks identical.

SM – I'm not sure we need a bike lane here. I would hate to go through all this and it not being used.

ME – Paige, could you tell us a bit more about the grant.

PD – This is the Mass DOT, they have a lot of funding for temporary spaces, like winter outdoor dining. This funding is more permanent. This is hope to draw people outside and want to get more people into our Uptown area. We are learning by doing this and getting paired up with a consultant. We wanted to use this as kick off and we will try for the signals but we might not be eligible for it depending on what we have.

ME – Has this company done a rotary like Foxborough's before and is there another town with a rotary like this?

CG – I would have to get that information, they do have expertise in roundabouts. Foxborough is unique.

BK – Thanks to Chris, Paige and Lance for this work. We need to take an educated guess and get the public input to see what we should do. With several new businesses in the downtown

EO – Can we take a month?

PD – There are funding rounds but we should take the time to do it right. We're not going to rush anything through and we will continue to explore opportunities for what we're trying to do which is fund some flashing lights. With everything getting back to normal with kids in school and farmers market, etc., we are going to see more people and going to hear more conflicts. We are focusing because we are hearing that pedestrian safety is a big concern.

ME – Should we get a sub-committee going?

CG - That makes sense, if we have two members of the board giving us feedback.

LG – We should involve the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative.

BK – Is it ready for that at this point?

ME – Ed you would be great for that.

EO – I would volunteer.

SM – I would volunteer as well.

ME – That's a great plan and you can meet and come back in a month or so.

5. 7:35pm Planning Dept. - Use of EDC Funds -Discussion and possible vote to approve the use of up to \$2,500 in EDC funds for a 21E Assessment of 17 Centennial Street.

Paige Duncan – Last town meeting we approved land swap for 15-17 Market Street and the Town had 17 Centennial. I have been going through the checklist to get this swap in place. In order for the FHA to accept they need a clear title (we have that) and a clear 21E which this is for. The State wants to make sure we don't have anything in poor condition. It is important to get it done. Once swapped, the town will own the land and as required the structure at 15-17 Market Street will be demolished and build at 14 space public parking lot. It ties into economic development because once it transfers it will be town property and tied to the EDC sponsored fire

station project. The funds while labeled EDC, they are collected by the BOS and they have control over how they are dispersed.

CM- This covers the cost of the assessment done and nothing else?

PD – Yes, just the assessment. If they find something then it will be another thing, we anticipate getting a clear 21E.

LG – I’m fully in support of both projects, but I don’t think we should be using the EDC money for it. This should be part of parcel in project not coming out of EDC funds.

BK – We are just trying not to get hung up on this swap, maybe we can take it from this the fire station project on the backend.

LG – There wasn’t supposed to be a cost to the town. I think that could work.

SM – Going back to look at this at the article at last town meeting, it says at no cost to the town.

ME – It’s a great way to get this swap going in the early phases and get the funds back later.

BK – Yes, we can update the motion to have the proceeds returned to the fund once the sale of the property is final.

Motion to approve the use of up to \$2,500 of Economic Development Funds for the 21E Assessment of 17 Centennial Street with the provision that the monies will be returned to that fund once the sale of the property is final by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.

Discussion: LG- We should get a policy in place how we disperse these funds.

BK – It is the Board’s role to disperse these funds and it would be good to get a policy in place.

Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.

6. 7:45pm Dept. Head Update - Veterans Services - Veteran Services Director and VSO Ally Rodriguez

AR - We hired Keri McKenzie to replace Lisa Plante after she left last year and Keri is wonderful. She was previously at Bridgewater State University as the certifying official for veterans

Objectives – We take care of Veterans by educating them on benefits, Chapter 115 Veterans Relief Program, VA Disability claims, accessing VA medical facilities, liaison with educational, employment and medical professionals to name a few of the many benefits and information we provide to and for veterans. If you are a war time Veteran please come in in because I have some money for you. We have veteran meet up groups and provide events in coordination with the Veteran Services Advisory Committee. We take care of veterans.

Covid changed the amount of time it would take to perform tasks that would take two hours now can take up to two weeks. We are operating on appointment only with a few walk ins. We are disinfecting after everyone visits. We saw an increase in Chapter 115 applications.

Our Veteran Services Advisory Committee (VSAC) they are a sounding board, they help plan Memorial and Veterans’ Day celebrations. They are my eyes and ears in the community.

In 2020, I had completed 60 service connected disability compensation claims, 7 out of state claims, 17 VA burial claims, 10 VA education claims, 12 Welcome Home bonuses and 6 annuity applications.

Chapter 115 benefits is a needs based programs. We have 34 active recipients and distributed \$173,658.45 in 2020. The Department of Veteran Services reimburses the town for 75% of that total distributed.

One word to sum up is giving, there was a lot of giving this year, including American flags, winter coats and groceries to veterans.

The World War II Memorial Corner Dedication Ceremony was the highlight of the year. I was on the “Ask Your Veterans Agent” radio show hosted by the Raynham VSO. I was on the Pulse for Good podcast which is a client satisfaction tracking company talking about all the good things I just mentioned.

I go to meet Ralph Bennet this year. He owns the largest private collection of Vietnam War memorabilia.

SM – I love your passion for your job.

ME – You have been doing wonderful job, and we have been lucky to have young dynamic people in leadership roles.

AR – I received a sweatshirt gift from the Korean Consulate General as well as all the VSO who had a hand in handing out the Korean Peace Medal.

7. 8:10pm Assistant Town Manager's Update

- We have a few jobs posted, no new ones to report on.

- For Annual Town Meeting we have 3 contracts that we would like to bring them. We will also have 2 MOAs for the Steelworkers Unit A & B and Police Department.

8. 8:20pm Town Manager's Update

- We just received our pension assessment and looks lower than we anticipated.

- The budget will be available tomorrow and talk with you on how you like to review the budget and start their process but want to afford you the opportunity to look at it. Think about meeting next week to do the budget. Or we could do it in two weeks and the AdComm would be starting. I'm pleased where the budget is coming in right now. There is one area in public safety for the fire department which had pushed up their number, it will be built into the budget going forward.

- Budget books will be available tomorrow after noon.

-Vaccinations at Gillette and will get people vaccinated as soon as possible and get that information out.

- We have a new president that will be sworn in tomorrow.

- The MMA annual meeting Thursday and Friday of this week, if you would like to attend please let us know.

- Town Meeting Warrant has a deadline if of January 15th for our Town Departments with a final deadline is February. We are doing a Special Town Meeting because we have the 2 MOAs that need to be funded for this fiscal year. The warrant is open and we have place holders for the 20 articles. We will give a preliminary report on February 2nd and you will vote on the final warrant.

- Reading of all the donations: Total of \$815.00 donated to Veterans' in memory of Dave Gaffey, \$35.00 Lockbox donation to the Council on Aging and a \$25.00 donation to Boyden Library.

9. 8:30pm - Selectmen's Update

9.1 New Business – I wanted to recognize the passing of Patty Noonan who is the sister of 3 town employees, Deb Giardino, Rich Noonan and Ed Noonan.

9.2 Old Business

10. Action Items

10.1 **Motion to accept a \$480.00 donation from Friends of Foxboro Seniors for Tai Chi for October & November by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.**

Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.

10.2 **Motion to approve Tuition Reimbursement for Det. Mark Bohnenberger for \$1,326.00 by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.**

Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.

10.3 **Motion to approve Tuition Reimbursement for Ofc. Charles Gallagher for \$2,550.00**

Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.

- 10.4 **Motion to accept a \$150.00 donation from Francis and Marilyn Lyons in memory of David Gaffey by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.**
Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.
- 10.5 **Motion to accept \$200.00 donation from Nils & Patricia Bolgen in memory of David Gaffey by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.**
Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.
- 10.6 **Motion to accept \$200.00 donation from Walpole Outdoors LLC in memory of David Gaffey by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.**
Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.
- 10.7 **Motion to accept \$150.00 donation from Russell Clark in memory of David Gaffey by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.**
Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.
- 10.8 **Motion to approve the December 15, 2020 Minutes by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.**
Discussion CM – change sentence to make sense during Inter Municipal Agreement discussion
Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell.

Roll Call: CM – Yes, SM – Yes, ME – Yes, EO – Yes, LG – Yes. Approved, 5-0.