

## Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: February 12, 2019**

**Place: Town Hall**

In attendance: Committee Members Donna Smallwood, Victor Baltera, Bob Curley, Tom Belyea, Dave Anderson, Libby Claypoole, Eryn Kelley, Julie Strehle, George Danis, Evan Sheehan, Andy McElaney, Davalene Cooper, Ed Gaydos, Nancy MacDonald and Town Accountant Sue Nickerson

Absent: Eric Haskell

Chairman Smallwood called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

*Questions from the Public on Items not on the Agenda - None*

*Approval of Minutes*

Minutes of the Meeting held on 2/5/19 were approved by a vote of 9-0.

*Warrant Article Hearings and Votes*

- V – Comprehensive Master Plan – Eryn Kelley introduced this Article and Gordon Carr, Chair of the Planning Board and Mary Savage-Dunham, Director of Community Planning provided an overview. This Article would provide funding for the preparation of an updated Comprehensive Master Plan by an independent consultant. The last such plan was done 18 years ago and an update is overdue. Such a plan provides direction for future planning activities within the Town. Ms. Kelley provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation. The vote to approve the recommendation was 13-0-0.
- QQ – Master Plan Committee – Eryn Kelley introduced this Article and Mr. Carr and Ms. Savage-Dunham provided an overview. This Article would establish a Master Plan Committee comprised of members of the Town Boards most involved in planning or their designees as well as three citizens to be appointed by the Moderator. Ms. Kelley provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation which was revised to add the membership language. The vote on the recommendation as revised was 13-0-0.

- T – South Shore Park Chapter 43D Priority Development Site – The hearing was postponed.
- HH – Acquisition of Canterbury Street Cemetery – Tom Belyea introduced this Article and Andrea Young, Administrator of the Historical Commission provided an overview. This cemetery is an abandoned family cemetery of the Barnes and Stoddard families containing 14 known burial sites. The known heirs do not maintain the property and are willing to release their interests and gift them to the Town. The Town would probably pursue a friendly taking by eminent domain to eliminate any lingering title problem. This would become the only cemetery owned by the Town. In connection with discussion of the costs for restoration and ongoing maintenance of the cemetery, the idea of a subsequent transfer of the cemetery by the Town to one of the Town’s existing cemetery associations was suggested. Mr. Belyea provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation. The vote to approve the recommendation was 12-1-0. Mr. McElaney was recorded in opposition.
- II – Home Rule Petition: Establish a Hingham Means-Tested Property Tax Exemption - Davalene Cooper introduced this Article and Town Treasurer Jean Montgomery provided an overview. This Article would seek special legislation to allow the Town to provide a real property tax exemption to Hingham residents 65 years of age or older who have had a home in Hingham for at least ten consecutive years. Similar to by-laws and ordinances adopted in other communities, seniors would need to have qualified for and taken the Commonwealth’s Circuit Breaker Tax Credit on their Massachusetts income tax returns and have no other significant assets. The cap on tax reduction by all available exemptions would be 50%. Ms. Cooper provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation which was revised to add language authorizing the Board of Assessors to establish regulations for the determination of whether an applicant had excessive assets. The vote in favor of the recommendation as revised was 13-0-0.
- DD – Home Rule Petition: Simplified Street Acceptance Process – Andy McElaney provided an overview of this Article which would seek special legislation to eliminate the time and expense in having the Town conduct a

full title examination in order to accept roads in a subdivision which had been approved by the Planning Board. Instead the Article would allow the Town to rely on assessors' records to determine property ownership. Mr. McElaney provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation. The vote in favor of the recommendation was 12-1-0. Ms. Claypoole was recorded in opposition

### *Warrant Article Hearing*

- N – Community Preservation Committee (CPC) – Mr. Anderson provided an introduction of the Article. Carol Pyles, CPC Chair and Larry Lindner, Vice-Chair provided requested information as the projects proposed in this Article had previously been presented to the Advisory Committee in joint session with the Selectmen.
  1. Project 7 –Contingency Funding for Bathhouse/Concession Stand – Julie Strehle introduced this portion of the Article which will provide funds to address contingencies which may arise in the process of completing the Bathhouse/Concession Stand. Town Engineer Roger Fernandes assisted in responding to AdCom member's questions. Ms. Strehle provided a Comment and recommended approval of the CPC recommendation of \$120,000.
  2. Project 1 – CPC Administrative Fund – Nancy MacDonald introduced this portion of the Article which funds the administrative expenses of the CPC. Ms. MacDonald provided a Comment and recommended approval of the CPC recommendation of \$50,000.
  3. Project 2- Opportunity Funding for Hingham Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) – Tom Belyea introduced this portion of the Article which will provide funds to the HAHT to take advantage of opportunities to acquire affordable housing units. Mr. Belyea provided a Comment and recommended approval of the CPC recommendation of \$300,000.

4. Project 3- Liberty Plain Cemetery – Mr. Belyea introduced this portion of the Article which will provide continued funding for restoration of historical gravestones and markers at the Liberty Plain Cemetery. Mr. Belyea provided a Comment and recommended approval of the CPC recommendation of \$19,528.
5. Project 4 – Restoration of Memorial Bell Tower Bells – Julie Strehle introduced this portion of the Article which will provide funding for the completion of the restoration of the bells and bell ropes at the Memorial Bell Tower. Ms. Strehle provided a Comment and recommended approval of the CPC recommended amount of \$121,651.
6. Project 5 – Old Ordinary – Nancy MacDonald introduced this portion of the Article which will provide funds to the Hingham Historical Society for the stabilization of foundations at the Old Ordinary and its annex. Ms. MacDonald provided a Comment and recommended approval of the CPC recommended amount of \$29,921. Dave Anderson recused himself.
7. Project 6 – Fields Study – Mr. Belyea introduced this portion of the Article which will provide funds to the Hingham Recreation Commission for a comprehensive consultant’s study of all Hingham athletic fields, basketball and tennis courts to plan for their best management, maintenance and use. Mr. Belyea provided a Comment and recommended approval of the CPC recommended amount of \$60,000.
8. Project 8 – Plymouth River School Playground – Julie Strehle introduced this portion of the Article which will provide funding for a small portion of the work to make the playground at the Plymouth River School compliant with standards of the Architectural Access Board. There was discussion concerning an award of funds to a Town body which has access to funding through Town capital improvement funds. In this situation the playground serves as both a neighborhood and school

playground and the funds will enhance the ability of the School Committee to provide adaptive playground equipment at the school. Ms. Strehle provided a Comment and recommended approval of the CPC recommended amount of \$24,445.

### *Five Year Forecast Update*

Town Accountant Sue Nickerson provided an overview of the most recent five year forecast. At this time the difference between forecasted revenues and the municipal and school budgets as presently submitted is \$1,180,751. On the revenue side, there were increases in expected revenues for new growth, State aid, and local receipts. In addition, State assessments went up. State aid for the schools was higher than expected and the increase in the cost of health insurance was lower than expected.

### *Liaison Updates*

- Capital Outlay – Libby Claypoole reported that the target for capital expenditures remains \$2.4 million and that the Capital Outlay Committee’s preliminary determinations at this point stood at \$2,407,751.
- Water Company Acquisition Subcommittee – Victor Baltera reported that the Subcommittee held a public hearing last night to address engineering and transition issues concerning the potential acquisition.

### *Advisory Committee Housekeeping Items*

Chair Smallwood provided a preview of upcoming agendas and meeting dates.

*Matters not anticipated within 48 hours:* None

Adjourn – 10:19

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Curley, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed at this Meeting:

Agenda

Minutes of Meeting of 2/5/19

Warrant Articles DD, HH, II, V, QQ and N

Community Preservation PowerPoint

Five Year Forecast

AdCom approved on 2/20/201