



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Select Board

Date: 2023-08-22

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Jackie McCarthy, Mark Dockser, Karen Herrick, Chris Haley

Members - Not Present:

Carlo Bacci

Others Present:

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Executive Assistant Caitlin Nocella, Angela Binda, Nancy Ziemplak, Marilyn Shapleigh, Anne Mark, Linda Snow Dockser, HR Director Sean Donahue, Donna Brewer, Andrew Upton, Nilesh Patel, Stephen Cool, Conservation Administrator Chuck Tirone, Elder Human Services Administrator Chris Kowalski

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Executive Assistant Caitlin Nocella

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting was held in person and remote via Zoom.

Chair McCarthy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Public Comment

Nancy Ziemplak noted her concerns with the RFQ for the Senior Center.

Anne Mark, member of the Reading Compost group, noted there are great things happening with food compost here in town.

Linda Snow Dockser thanked Sudeshna Chatterjee for all her work and time here in town.

Liaison Reports

Dockser noted that the Council on Aging met and discussed the RFQ for the senior center and complaints about an odor at the Pleasant Street Center.

Haley noted the School Committee met and changed Dr. Milaschewski's review schedule and made some policy changes. The dunk tank is coming back to the Fall Street Faire.

Herrick attended the Library Board of Trustees meeting about a book for reconsideration. She also attended the Climate Advisory Meeting who is prepping for the hazard mitigation public forum. The Killam School Building committee is moving forward.

McCarthy noted the Coalition is holding Mindfulness Monday walks. Next week, August 31st, they will be hosting an overdose awareness event on the common. They will be hosting some Narcan training as well. Board of Health met last week and discussed rodent control. They are also waiting on a home rule petition to increase their board to five members. New Resident open house will be October 3rd at the library.

Town Manager Report

Maltez noted the water tank is complete and described upcoming activities on the site including lease negotiations with wireless carriers.

Personnel Policy Changes – Military Leave

Human Resources Director Sean Donahue and Donna Brewer from Miyares and Harrington were present to answer any questions.

It was noted that there is an employee being deployed for a year which prompted HR to look at the Military Leave Policy and update it. With help from Town Counsel, they looked at other towns' policies and they were all a bit different. Town Manager Maltez and HR Director Donahue had sat individually with the board members prior to this meeting to explain the details of the proposed changes.

Will Valliere, Veteran's Agent for the Town, noted this would be a wise policy to put into place.

The board will vote on the policy during a hearing at their next meeting on September 12th.

Public Hearing - Baystate Liquors License Transfer

Attorney Andrew Upton and new owner Nilesh Patel were present to answer questions.

Herrick read the hearing notice opening the public hearing on the license transfer.

It was noted the store would be changing hands but the operation, hours and floor plan would be the same. They plan to upgrade the décor, inventory and signs. They will also be increasing the security and all employees will be TIPS/TAMS certified. The new owner, Nilesh, owns multiple other stores in and around Boston. It will be a family run business and the new name will be City Spirits and Smoke Shop.

Herrick asked about the tobacco license and it was noted the store currently has a tobacco license and the new owner will be going before the Board of Health to transfer that license as well.

Dockser welcomed Mr. Patel to Reading and noted the board takes alcohol compliance very seriously.

A resident made a comment about alcohol delivery services and compliance. It was noted that alcohol delivery services are regulated by the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission (ABCC) at the state level.

Herrick motioned to close the hearing regarding the liquor license transfer. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Herrick moved to approve the Annual All Alcohol Package Store Liquor License Transfer Application from HT Reading Liquors LLC d/b/a Baystate Liquors to Nilkant 350 Inc. d/b/a City Wine Spirits & Smoke Shop at 345 Main Street as presented. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Food Pantry Request

Sean from the Reading Food Pantry thanked the board for the ARPA money they received and is asking if there is any more money they could have. He gave a presentation on where the money went and how much more they need. They are requesting \$28K more of funding.

It was noted that all the ARPA funds have been allocated. It is not known if all the money has actually been spent yet but there is still time for those that received the money to use it.

The board brainstormed ways to help the food pantry get more donations.

Special Committee for Charter Review

The board needs to appoint a Select Board representative for this committee. Haley noted he was interested.

Dog Park

Maltez gave the board an update noting there was a public forum that discussed a lot of properties in town. There were a lot of concerns about Oakland Road, Symonds Way and Hunt Park locations.

Steven Cool noted himself and Chuck Tirone went out and walked four properties. Two at Symonds Way, a Beverly Road property, and a piece of private property.

A direct abutter to Hunt Park commented that Hunt Park is already very busy with little league. Dogs and little kids playing baseball wouldn't be a good mix. He also mentioned there is no real parking; just street parking.

Chuck Tirone, Conservation Administrator, noted that Symonds Way is not a real possibility until the land is cleared more and we know exactly what the dog park needs are.

Angela Binda, SWEC member, noted they haven't seen any plans of how a dog park could fit on Symonds Way or how much space they would need. The charge of SWEC is to come up with numerous plans/possibilities for SWEC, not to come up with an exact plan.

Director of Equity and Social Justice

Maltez noted they are in the middle of the hiring process to fill the position and he is optimistic about the progress. It was noted the position will be moved to directly report to the Town Manager now and the person would sit in the Police Department with the new space that was just built for the Coalition. He noted there is no space for the person to sit in Town Hall.

Linda Snow Dockser expressed her concerns about moving the position to the Police Department. She feels that may not be the most inviting location for people who wish to visit the DESJ. She would prefer if the position cannot be located in Town Hall that it stay in the Library and still report to the Town Manager.

Town Meeting Warrant

Maltez first went through the trash barrel presentation with the board. He hopes it answers all the questions residents had the last time.

He then went through the Town Meeting warrant as it stands today. The board had some questions about some articles that Maltez will get answers for their next meeting.

RFQ for Senior Center

Dockser noted that Maltez and staff have been working on this. They want vendors to be clear that this could be a community center with designated senior space or a senior center. The design will also depend a lot on the location and the amount of space we have.

Chris Kowaleski, Elder Human Services Administrator, noted he is appreciative of the initiative and likes the wording of a community center/senior center to give us more options.

Nancy Ziemplak feels it is important for the board and the Town to understand the space need for a community center would be a lot more than if we just found space for a senior center.

Future Agendas

The board discussed future agenda items.

Minutes

The board edited previous meeting minutes.

Herrick moved to approve the meeting minutes from July 18th as amended. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 4-0 vote.

Herrick moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:57 PM. The motion was seconded by Dockser and approved with a 4-0 vote.