

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
January 13, 2020

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Vice Chairman Alicia Cannon at 7:00 PM, Northbridge Town Hall, 7 Main Street, Whitinsville, MA. Board Members Present: Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan. Chairman James Athanas was absent, and it is duly noted. Town Manager Adam D. Gaudette was also absent and it is duly noted.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 1) **November 4, 2019.** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Nolan to approve the November 4, 2019 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan. 2) **November 18, 2019.** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Melia to approve the November 18, 2019 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Melia and Nolan. **Abstain:** Cannon. 3) **December 2, 2019.** A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Nolan to approve the December 2, 2019 minutes as presented with the readings omitted. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan.

PUBLIC HEARING: 7:05 PM – Massachusetts Electric Company dba National Grid and Verizon New England/Petition #28915393 (East Street) to relocate pole 19 to the West-Southwest Approx. 7' per request of customer. Vice Chairman Cannon announced that the public hearing would be delayed since it was not yet 7:05 PM.

Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 5, 2020]/1) Vote to open the warrant this date. 2) Vote to close the warrant on Friday, March 6, 2020 at Noon. A motion/Mr. Ampagoomian, seconded/Mr. Nolan to open the Spring Annual Town Meeting warrant and to close the warrant on Friday, March 6, 2020 at Noon. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan.

Linda Usher/Request to hold the 32nd Annual Whitin Five Mile Road Race, Thursday, November 26, 2020 subject to the safety requirements of the Northbridge Police Department. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve Ms. Usher's request to hold the 32nd Annual Whitin Five Mile Road Race, Thursday, November 26, 2020, subject to the safety requirements of the Northbridge Police Department. Vote Yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan.

Pine Grove Cemetery Deeds/1) Frances Trottier [1 Full grave - Lot No. 40B, Elm Ave North]. A motion/Mr. Melia seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the sale of Lot No. 40B, Elm Ave, North to Frances Trottier. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan. 2) **Barbara VanderKlay [2 full graves - Lot No. 32, Walnut Ave North].** A motion/Mr. Melia seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the sale of Lot No. 32, Walnut Ave, North to Barbara VanderKlay. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan. 3) **R. Paul Johnson [1 full grave - Lot No. 31B, Walnut Ave, North].** A motion/Mr. Melia seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the sale of Lot No. 31B, Walnut Ave, North to R. Paul Johnson. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan.

Riverdale Cemetery Deed/Nancy and Thomas Faber [Single grave - Lot no. 28, Maple Ave, North]. A motion/Mr. Nolan, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve the sale of the Lot No. 28, Maple Ave., North to Nancy and Thomas Faber. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan.

PUBLIC HEARING: 7:05 PM – Massachusetts Electric Company dba National Grid and Verizon New England/Petition #28915393 (East Street) to relocate pole 19 to the West-Southwest Approx. 7' per request of customer/Present: Michael Parent. Vice Chairman Cannon read aloud the public hearing notice. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to open the public hearing. Roll call vote: Mr.

Ampagoomian/Yes, Mr. Melia/Yes, Mr. Nolan/Yes and Mrs. Cannon/Yes. Mr. Parent, Senior Designer for the Hopedale Office stated the petition is to move a pole from the center of the customer's driveway to a small piece of land and added that the pole needs to be replaced anyway. Mrs. Cannon asked if there were any abutters present that would like to speak. There being no abutters present, a motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to close the public hearing. Roll call vote: Mr. Ampagoomian/Yes, Mr. Melia/Yes, Mr. Nolan/Yes and Mrs. Cannon/Yes. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to approve petition #28915393 (East Street) to relocate pole 19 to the West-Southwest Approx. 7' per request of customer. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan.

APPOINTMENTS: By the Board of Selectmen: Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee [Member at Large]: Joel Vande Werken. Mr. Vande Werken stated that he saw there was an opportunity to serve the town and it sparked his interest. Selectman Melia asked if there was any particular reason, he chose this Committee. Mr. Vande Werken stated that he is interested in the committee and use of space in Towns. A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Ampagoomian to appoint Mr. Joel Vande Werken to the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee as a Member at Large. Vote yes/Ampagoomian, Cannon, Melia and Nolan.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT/None.

Forest Legacy Program/Present: David Pickart, Northbridge Conservation Commission. Mr. Pickart advised that the Department of Conservation and Recreation is expanding their geographical area of what is covered under the Forest Legacy Program. He explained that the Program is voluntary and is for private landowners who have forests and wish to keep the land as forest use. In order for the owner to apply, the Town needs to be designated as a member of the Forest Legacy Program through the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission reviewed this program and discussed it at a public meeting and has decided to support the program. Mr. Pickart stated that with all the forest cutting that has been done in the recent past, the Conservation Commission wanted the Board of Selectmen to be aware of this program. He pointed out that for residents of Towns that are a part of the program, they can apply for funds through the state to undertake projects that conserve and improve the ecological integrity of forested lands, some of which includes cutting that promotes growth. Selectman Ampagoomian asked if this would need to go through Town Meeting for approval. Mr. Pickart replied that it only needs to go through the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen-no need to vote. Selectman Ampagoomian further asked if there were any landowners present at the public hearing. Mr. Pickart responded there were not and further explained that once the Town informs the State the Town would like to be a part of this program, the State would then reach out to landowners to inform them that this program is available to them. Selectman Nolan asked if there is a minimum requirement to the number of acres a landowner must have in order to participate. Mr. Pickart answered that he believes it is five or more acres of forested land. Selectman Nolan then asked what the owner would receive. Mr. Pickart explained that if the owner wanted to trigger new growth, they could apply for funding to remove and dispose of material, but they would still need approval from the Conservation Commission. Selectman Ampagoomian asked if the Conservation Commission reviews the applications and performs site visits. Mr. Pickart stated that the Conservation Commission reviews any applications to clear land. Selectman Melia asked if the Conservation Commission has signed up for this already. Mr. Pickart stated that they have not yet signed up for it, as they wanted this conversation to take place first. Selectman Melia replied that he would like to do his own research before deciding on this. Selectman Melia asked if the Conservation Commission is recommending this to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Pickart stated that they are. Selectman Nolan sought clarification on the Board voting, and if they were looking more so for the Selectmen's support, since it does not need approval from the Selectmen. Switching subjects, Mr. Pickart stated that the next topic he was present to discuss is lakes and ponds and more specifically, to focus on two issues here in Northbridge, what causes them, remedies to fix the problems, funding options and suggestions on moving forward. Mr. Pickart stressed that this is not unique to Northbridge and is something surrounding towns are dealing with as well. The first

topic he brought up is Algal Blooms, which is a rapid increase of algae in an aquatic system due to the presence of excessive amounts of nutrients (phosphorous) from sources such as agricultural runoff, road/parking lot runoff, lawn fertilizer and failing septic systems that seeps into the surrounding watershed. The telltale sign is the green scum that appears on ponds/lakes every year. He noted these blooms are becoming more prolonged and widespread, occurring on most all of Northbridge's bodies of water and can cause massive fish kills (Northbridge has experienced one in Arcade Pond) due to the presence of Cyanobacteria, which is harmful to humans and dogs. In addition, aquatic plant outbreaks are somewhat interrelated and if there is a lot of decaying plant matter in the water it becomes a food source for the algae and thus can contribute to algal blooms. The second issue is aquatic plant infestations, which are causing a lot of problems. These are extremely invasive, non-native plants (bearing thousands of seeds) and if left unchecked, the overgrowth causes the ponds to become more shallow causing acceleration of the natural aging process of lakes/ponds, which results in severely limited recreational uses of the affected lakes/ponds. Continuing, Mr. Pickart reviewed some trends and observations saying these events occur naturally but are being accelerated drastically because of climate change. Recent research suggests algal blooms and aquatic plant infestations will become more prevalent in the Northeast U.S. due to climate change; these outbreaks are occurring in almost all of Northbridge's bodies of water; Infestations appear to be spreading and blooms more prolonged and widespread; this year Carpenter Reservoir had a small bloom and Riley Pond is now closed to human and pet use due to cyanobacteria. He explained that blooms and infestations are seasonal; sometimes they go away on their own, but it depends on several factors: type of summer and/or fall we have. Mr. Pickart advised there are a variety of remedies for algal blooms and infestations but said they are expensive, and most are not one-shot deals. They require multiple attempts either yearly, every other year or every five years and they still won't completely eradicate the problem. He said it is imperative that you treat all watersheds in your town because if you do one and not another, the problem will not go away. He also said if you treat all your watershed areas, but a town upstream doesn't, the same thing can happen. Mr. Pickart stated the first and one of the most popular and least costly method/remedy is Weed Harvesting, which can be done by hand or mechanically. Volunteers usually do the hand removal method. To have any noticeable effect and to control outbreaks of aquatic plants, this must be done on a yearly basis. Another method is using Herbicides/Algaecides. It is fairly effective, doesn't need to be done as often as weed harvesting and it's not nearly as costly as other methods with the exception of harvesting. However, this method must be overseen by a licensed pesticide professional. There could also be adverse effects on non-targeted species and may require closure of the body of water. Drawdowns - relatively inexpensive and fairly effective method of controlling aquatic plants and should be done on an annual basis. This method requires an operable outlet control structure and may also adversely affect adjacent private water supply wells. In addition, it is often opposed by waterfront residents and sportsmen. Mr. Pickart advised that Dredging is probably the most effective method of limiting blooms/infestations in certain lakes/ponds and it is by far the most expensive. There are also extensive local, state, and federal permitting requirements. As far as paying for the cost to perform one of the above remedies, there are several funding sources available: **1) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [USACE]** can be used for a variety of remedies including dredging. They will pay for a feasibility study (which is required) up to \$100,000. If the cost is more, the Town would have to contribute 50% of the costs that exceed \$100,000 plus 35% of the design/construction costs. **2) United States Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA]** and administered by the Department of Environmental Protection [DEP] for development and implementation of measures to prevent nutrients from getting in the water and would require a 40% match from the Town. It would not apply to weed harvesting, but it could be used for an area that has a significant source of runoff. **3) Riverway Small Grant Program** – used for restoring impaired water bodies especially in an urbanized river basin area. Would first need to be identified as a priority project and demonstrate an ecological need. Funding in the amount of \$25,000 to \$200,000 with no match required. **4) Massachusetts Environmental Trust** – give out small awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000, which can be used to improve water resources and matches are encouraged but not required. **Next steps:** Prioritize susceptible lakes/ponds; perform pollutant assessments of priority watersheds; identify potential partners to work with like neighboring towns, local water company, National Park Service, Department of Ecological Restoration,

Watershed Associations and State Representatives. Selectman Melia thanked Mr. Pickart for his presentation and mentioned he was concerned with the status of Riley Pond and asked if it could eventually dry up. Mr. Pickart remarked that it only has algae at this point but if something isn't done it will be prone to plant infestation and with nutrient build-up it could potentially dry up. Mr. Melia also voiced his surprise at the condition of the Linwood Mill pond and asked what the issue is with it. Mr. Pickart responded that there are many factors including climate, but we are probably seeing the effects of many years of development, which contributed to high nutrient loading. Selectman Ampagoomian asked if Mr. Pickart has spoken to Randy Swigor, General Manager of the Whitinsville Water Company, who owns both Carpenter Reservoir and Whittin Pond. Mr. Pickart replied that he heard from Mr. Swigor recently, but wanted to speak to the Select Board first and added that he intends to reach out to Mr. Swigor as it would be in their interest to protect their watersheds in case they ever need to tap into the reservoirs for water. Mr. Ampagoomian also said he is aware the Northbridge Conservation Commission has been in contact with the Uxbridge Conservation Commission and asked if he has contacted the Town of Douglas as they are up stream. Mr. Pickart indicated that he hopes to contact all towns upstream of Northbridge. Mr. Ampagoomian also mentioned that the sluice gate for Riley Pond that allows water to go under Douglas Road to the Mumford River should be looked at and suggested it get closed down periodically to prevent high levels of phosphorous from entering the Mumford River. He then asked if the Conservation Commission Does has any plans to notify residents along waterways about the use of herbicides/fertilizers. Mr. Pickart advised that in order to get support for this initiative, he wants to do some targeted educational outreach. Also asked Mr. Pickart if he has contacted the DPW to test the water quality from the culvert at Lasell Field that dumps into the Mumford River. Mr. Pickart responded that if the Lasell Field Turf project is built as presented to the Conservation Commission, the new drainage should alleviate nutrient loading issues. Selectman Nolan asked about invasive species and how are we getting them. By boats? From upstream? Other sources? Mr. Pickart said more than likely from upstream. The Board thanked him for his presentation.

Community Preservation Plan/Present: Glenn King, Chairman - Community Preservation Committee. Mr. King reminded those present that the State passed the Community Preservation Act about 10 years ago. The concept is that the state wanted to create a mechanism that would give towns the funding resources to address affordable housing, recreation, open space and/or historical preservation projects. He mentioned the Town of Northbridge passed the Community Preservation Act in November 2017 with terms that implemented a 1% surcharge on property taxes excluding the first \$100,000 of valuation. Mr. King added that the State also has matching funds that come from surcharges on activities at the Registry of Deeds. To date, 176 towns have adopted the CPA, and no town has ever repealed it. When the CPA was first instituted, towns were getting a 100% match but with so many towns adopting the CPA, last year the match was around 10% and the State budget allotted additional surplus funds, so the match ends up being about 15%. In Northbridge, the amount of money generated by the CPA surcharge amounts to about \$150,000 to \$200,000 per year. Mr. King provided a brief explanation of the process saying once a town adopts the CPA, the town must create a Community Preservation Committee [CPC] made up of representatives from the School Committee, Historical Commission, Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Housing Authority and members at large. Any resident or town committee can go to the CPC with what they believe is a viable project(s) and the CPC is then charged with evaluating and determining which projects should be funded. Their recommended projects require town meeting approval, so residents actually have the final say. Each year the CPC must set aside 10% of the funds for affordable housing, open space and recreation, and for historical preservation. He advised that the CPC doesn't have to spend the money--just earmark it and set it aside. If the money isn't spent, it will continue to accrue until a project is approved. The CPC has met with various boards/committees to inform them of their existence and what they do. Continuing, Mr. King said the draft Community Preservation Plan is currently being reviewed by the Community Preservation Coalition who will provide feedback on how to tighten things up and make it better, if needed. Selectman Melia asked how much money is in the account at this time and Mr. King said about \$150,000 and the Town Accountant confirmed the amount. For clarification purposes,

Mr. Melia asked if the town is required to set aside funds as follows: 10% for affordable housing, 10% for open space and recreation, and 10% for historical preservation, leaving 70% available for any of the above-listed categories. Mr. King responded that is correct; the funds must be earmarked like that and further stated the purpose of doing it that way is to prevent the town from spending all of its dollars in one category. He also added that the most challenging thing is finding projects for affordable housing because it's very challenging to get set up for that. Selectman Ampagoomian asked if the CPC will inform the Board of the projects they recommend and Mr. King responded yes, they would look for the Board's support for whatever projects the CPC recommends. Selectman Nolan asked about using funds set aside for open space to purchase property for the town. Mr. King replied yes, those funds can be used for that purpose as well as to issue bonds to acquire open space. The CPC would probably have to do that in conjunction with other boards. Mr. Nolan also asked if the funds could be used for playgrounds. Mr. King said yes. Mr. Nolan asked what about the acquisition of sports fields? Mr. King wasn't 100% sure but said probably. Selectman Cannon asked if any projects have been suggested or selected yet and Mr. King said the CPC is not at that point yet. The Board thanked Mr. King for his presentation.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: 1) **Key Meetings Attended:** Monday, January 6, 2020 – Met with DPW Director Jim Shuris to discuss projects and FY2021 Budget. Monday, January 6, 2020 – Participated in Fire Station Project Conference Call. Tuesday, January 7, 2020 – Met with Police Chief Warchol to discuss capital needs and FY2021 Budget. Tuesday, January 7, 2020 – Met with Lenny Smith, the new Chairman of the Historical Commission. Wednesday, January 8, 2020 – Met with Town Clerk Doreen Cedrone to discuss capital needs and FY2021 Budget. Wednesday, January 8, 2020 – Attended the BPCC Meeting (Fire Station/Turf Field). Thursday, January 9, 2020 – Met with Selectmen Melia to go over the agenda. Thursday, January 9, 2020 – Attended a regional Town Manager luncheon. Friday, January 10, 2020 – Held a Department Managers Meeting. 2) **Balmer School Building Project:** The project construction by Fontaine Brothers is well under way. Grading and tree removal are complete. Three of the four detention basins and replacement of a 36" drainage culvert across the site have been completed. The retaining wall on the east property line used for the access way is nearing completion. Fontaine has obtained the foundation-only permit from the Building Inspector and footing installation has been initiated. The School Building Committee next on January 14, 2020. 3) **Fire Station Project (Feasibility Study):** The BPCC met with Kaestle-Boos Architects and the OPM Cardinal Construction this past week on January 8, 2020. The design team is currently working on design concepts (floor plan, site layouts, building renderings) for the preferred site which is the Town-owned Goulet Playground/Riverdale Field site. The Team has finalized the Programming Report and the Response Time Study. The Team has developed a project web page, which will soon be accessed via a link on the Town's website, and will contain aspects of the project that includes existing building conditions, design concepts, reports, etc. The team meets next with the BPCC on January 22, 2020. 4) **Lasell Field Turf Project:** The BPCC met with the Land Scope Architect Activitas this past week on January 8, 2020 to discuss materials alternatives as well as to finalize the design concept and fine-tune the budget. Activitas will continue to work on the construction documents in an effort to advertise February 1st. The Committee meets again with Activitas on January 22, 2020.

SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS: **Selectman Ampagoomian/1)** Asked for an update on the Plummers' Corner lights? 2) He also asked if DPW can collect the branches and trash at the Plummers' ballfield. **Selectman Melia/1)** Will ask the Town Manager about surplus goods in town and look into it (if it's worth it) to get some additional monies back to the Town. 2) Requested an updated list of tax rates of the surrounding towns so we can see where Northbridge ranks after having our first increase for the Balmer School project. 3) Stated there are a lot of rumors going around regarding the 3 major projects going on: Balmer School, Turf Field, and proposed Fire Station project. He said it may be good to have the appropriate persons for each project to come to a meeting to present the correct information to the public. The Board agreed. **Selectman Cannon** announced she attended the quarterly CMRPC meeting and the topic was data and how they work with towns to collect data; that it mostly centered on the 2020 census, which will go out in early March. She said residents can respond online, by phone, or by email. Ms.

Cannon also noted the Census Dept. has employment opportunities for temporary workers/census takers either for door to door or by phone. They are looking for 10 hours per week but it's very flexible and they pay \$21.00 per hour in this area. Further, it was mentioned that towns will stand to lose over \$2,000 per person in federal funding for each person that does not answer the census, which would severely hurt Northbridge. She stressed that all data is kept confidential and not shared with any agencies. She said some towns have set up committees to assist and get word out about the census in order to increase the return rate. Selectman Ampagoomian also pointed out that the census has an effect on town districting as far as representation at the Federal level goes.

Vice Chairman Cannon announced the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 27th.

A motion/Mr. Melia, seconded/Mr. Cannon to adjourn the public meeting. Vote yes/Board Members Ampagoomian, Cannon, and Melia.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

CORRESPONDENCE/None

EXECUTIVE SESSION/None

Meeting Adjourned: 8:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Nolan, Clerk

/mjw

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING - OPEN SESSION

January 13, 2020

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. 1) November 4, 2019 2) November 18, 2019 3) December 2, 2019

- Copy of November 4, 2019 minutes
- Copy of November 18, 2019 minutes
- Copy of December 2, 2019 minutes

II. PUBLIC HEARING: B. 7:05 PM – Massachusetts Electric Company dba National Grid and Verizon New England/Petition #28915393 (East Street) to relocate pole 19 to the West-Southwest Approx. 7' per request of customer/Present: Michael Parent

- Copy of the petition for joint pole relocation (East Street) dated 11/20/2019
- Copy of the order for joint pole relocation dated 11/20/2019
- Copy of National Grid's Permit Request Form
- Copy of map
- Copy of email dated 12.20.2019 from DPW Director Shuris indicating he has no issue with the request to relocate the pole

III. APPOINTMENTS: C. By the Board of Selectmen: Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee [Member at Large]: Joel Vande Werken

- Copy of Talent Bank Form

IV. CITIZENS' COMMENTS/INPUT

V. DECISIONS

D. Spring Annual Town Meeting [May 5, 2020]/1) Vote to open the warrant this date and 2) Vote to close the warrant on Friday, March 6, 2020 at Noon

- No Documentation

E. Linda Usher/Request to hold the 32nd Annual Whittin Five Mile Road Race, Thursday, November 26, 2020, subject to the safety requirements of the Northbridge Police Department

- Copy of email dated 1.8.2020 from Linda Usher requesting permission to hold the race.
- Copy of Hold Harmless Agreement signed by Linda and Douglas (witness) Usher.
- Copy of email from Police Chief Walter Warchol indicating there is no problem with the race request.
- Copy of email dated 1.10.2020 from Highway Supt. Jamie Luchini indicating the DPW has no problem with the race request.

F. Pine Grove Cemetery Deeds/1) Frances Trottier [1 full grave - Lot No. 40B, Elm Ave North]; 2) Barbara VanderKlay [2 full graves - Lot No. 32, Walnut Ave North]; and 3) R. Paul Johnson [1 full grave - Lot No. 31B, Walnut Ave North]

- Copy of Cemetery Deeds for Trottier, VanderKlay and Johnson

G. Riverdale Cemetery Deed/Nancy and Thomas Faber [Single grave - Lot No. 28, Maple Ave North]

- Copy of Cemetery Deed for Faber

VI. DISCUSSIONS

H. Forest Legacy Program/Present: David Pickart, Northbridge Conservation Commission
-Copy of Powerpoint Presentation

I. CPA -Community Preservation Plan/Present: Glenn King, Chairman - Community Preservation Committee
-Copy of “draft” Community Preservation Plan

VII. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

-No documentation

VIII. SELECTMEN'S CONCERNS/No documentation

IX. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/None

X. CORRESPONDENCE/None

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION/None