

STOCKBRIDGE SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 28, 2021
6:30 p.m.
ZOOM MEETING - TOWN OFFICES, 50 MAIN STREET

Present:

Chuck Cardillo, Roxanne McCaffrey, Patrick White and Mike Canales

Call to Order:

Chuck called the meeting to order.

First on the agenda Chuck made a motion to accept the January 14, 2021 minutes. Roxanne seconded; all were in favor.

Next was discussion on a Road & Maintenance District Tax. Elisabeth Goodman, counsel for the Beechwood- Lenstock Association stated that Art Kreiger, the Association President asked to speak. Art explained that Beechwood had a big network of dirt roads to maintain. Over the year's some members had paid their assessments while a number, about a dozen homeowners, have not. While they function well, they would like to have a more secure basis of funding for community upkeep than they are able to do through voluntary payments. The recommended mechanism is a maintenance district with the Town as the taxing authority. The Association would adopt a budget to send to the Town Assessor, the tax would be put on the tax bill for this district and they would pay this piece to the Town. The Town would then remit this money to the Association in return for an administrative fee, approximately 3% to cover the Town's administrative cost. It is intended to be cost free for the Town, benefit the Town by maintaining their property values and to the association to be able to raise the money necessary to maintain Beechwood. A Warrant would then be put on Town Meeting for special legislation authorizing this district. A two thirds vote of the Beechwood residents would be required to actually establish the district. Art submitted a draft Warrant article for the Town. Chuck asked what would happen if someone did not pay the district portion of the tax. Attorney Goodman said that if this happened, the committee would file the lean, tax taking, etc. themselves. She added that they have drafted a special act to be attached to the warrant or available at Town Hall for people to read. Patrick asked what the annual maintenance fee currently is and Art said \$500-\$600. Attorney Goodman said that if there continues to be a gap in the budget due to nonpayment, the gap continues to grow. Chuck asked what would happen if more and more private developments would want the same thing. Mike said that these fees are usually included in property deeds but as they are not in this case, a road and maintenance district tax would be the only mechanism to enforce the payments. The billing portion would be the only work increase for the Town. Roxanne said that they would need to check with the Tax collector

to determine what burden the work would add. She added that in this case this would benefit the neighborhood and the Town. Patrick listed developments that also pre-date associations and if the Town should be reaching out to them as well. Mr. Kreiger felt that Beechwood was qualitatively different and would not want to be put on hold while canvassing other neighborhoods. Patrick and Roxanne said that they did not have a problem with this but Roxanne said again that she felt it was necessary to first have a discussion with the Tax Collector. Chuck said that he was not for or against; it is up to the Town to decide at Town Meeting. Chuck said that the Board will vote on this at the next meeting; February 11th. Attorney Goodman said that she would get Mike a copy of the special act that was approved by the Beechwood-Lenstock Association.

Next was Budget/Finance Discussion. Mike said that as far as the budget, requests have gone out to all the departments as well as special requests and capital budgets. Mike's goal is that by the 11th he will have a budget to present to the Select Board and to the Board the Tuesday before. At that point he will have the capital items and/or supporting documentation. Following that, they will have meetings with the Finance Committee. Patrick asked about open questions and Mike said if they had any open questions he would like brought back for the 11th or state now. Chuck noted that as a Town, we are financially stable allowing us to push projects, infrastructure, forward now. Patrick noted that there has been a 32% increase in house sales over assessed price; to then increase the assessed value, ultimately adding to free cash. Patrick asked if how we budget will reflect the desire to purchase proper mowers for cemetery mowing. He also questioned if the stone repairs would be covered by the cemetery trust fund or if funds could be appropriated for this. Roxanne stated that the trust fund should be available and she did not see an issue purchasing appropriate equipment. Chuck also noted that he has received complaints that family members cannot access gravesites in the winter as the roads are not plowed. He would like to see if some of the roads in the cemetery could be paved allowing them to be able to be plowed; an article for the Town to vote on. Patrick spoke on the generated free cash and felt it should be considered to take a percentage of last year's free cash as a policy and putting it towards Jay's housing initiative, as a trust fund; to maintain existing homes. Roxanne and Chuck agreed and felt that it needed to go to Finance while also being weighed against existing infrastructure and large ticket items which need to be dealt with.

Next, Mike discussed Warrant Articles and asked the Board if they had items to bring forward to be discussed at the next couple of meetings. Patrick asked for a run down of options to consider. Roxanne noted the possible article just discussed on the road tax, setting up the Stockbridge Bowl Stewardship Commission as a true Commission in the Town Bylaws; an advisory group with defined representation. Chuck brought up a creating a right to farm bylaw. Roxanne added the dog bylaw that missed last year's Town Meeting. Patrick brought up a house numbering bylaw, the police trash/bear bylaw and

Planning Board bylaws; parking, sign, driveways, and OSRD. Planning Board member Christine Rasmussen said that they are working on all of the bylaws Patrick mentioned but could not guarantee the OSRD being done in time. Christine also said that they are going to request funding for the contract planner for another year, Philip Arnold. Patrick also mentioned considering housing trust funds, creating a Housing Commission, a local occupancy tax increase and residential exemptions. Patrick said the last one he had was an Air B&B bylaw; two classes of operators... Air B&B - regularity authority to oversee and ways to apply limits.

Next, Mike brought up the Cares act for the library HVAC. The library is looking to replace their HVAC system in part to address concerns around COVID. Under CARES the State said that this is a project that could be covered under the CARES Act. The amount is \$100,000, we would have been returning this money as unused and Mike encouraged approval. Wendy Pearson, Director of the Library, stated that no one could go into the Archives during COVID. India Sparks, the curator of the Museum and Archives clarified that this system is specifically for the Museum and Archive section of the library. She has applied to a Mass Cultural Council Facilities Grant and will find out in the spring if they received it. This grant involves a match component and the CARES Act piece will serve as a match. India said that she has also put in for a partial match from the CPC (\$20,000) and others as well. The total cost is \$300,000 for just the Museum. Chuck made a motion that the Board approve \$100,000 to go to the library. Roxanne seconded; all were in favor.

Next was the continuation of Special Permit Hearing to consider the application of Chauncey E. and Elizabeth Hazen for property located at 22 Yale Hill Road. Chuck stated that last week it was discussed that a part of the proposed building was on the neighbor's property and the question of ownership. Mike said that they received a letter from the neighbors stating that they would not contest the permit. Looking into the law there is a question if the easement is in full effect. The second property owners would need to sign the application for the Special Permit signifying that both parties have agreed. The Select Board cannot approve a project on two different parcels of land. If the Laidlaws are willing to sign the special permit, the Board can approve the special permit contingent on their signatures. The Laidlaws said that they sent an email to the Board stating that they would not stand in the way of this and would sign the application. Susan Laidlaw questioned why a special permit was needed and Mikes said it was because the setbacks do not meet the bylaw requirements. Chuck made a motion that the Board approve the special permit contingent on the two property owners signing the permit. Roxanne seconded; all were in approval. Vote: I Roxanne, I Chuck, I Patrick.

Chuck recognized and thanked Hugh Page and the highway crew for the good job they did with the last snow storm. Hugh thanked them and said that as they are now moving into the new garage, he wanted to thank Nick Fredsall,

Water and Sewer, Mike Canales and Ned Baldwin for their help with this project. He also thanked the Town residents for their patience.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Chuck adjourned the meeting.