

TOWN OF HOLLISTON
SELECT BOARD

January 3, 2022
7:00PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

Present: Tina Hein, Chair; Ben Sparrell, Vice Chair; John Cronin, Clerk.

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief, Attorney Blake Mensing, Steven Valchuis, representing Zen LLC; Kate Feodoroff, Town Counsel; Terenzio Volopcelli, CPA Roselli & Clark; Steven Proia, owner Authentic Auto Body; Mary Bousquet, Treasurer Collector; and Sharon Emerick, Town Accountant.

At 7:00pm T. Hein called the meeting to order:

HCA REQUEST – ZEN LLC – CONTINUATION OF 12/31/21:

T. Hein stated that the last time the Select Board meet with the representatives of Zen LLC they did not have all three Board members in attendance so the decision was made to defer a vote until all three members could participate.

S. Valchuis noted that there have been no changes made to the presentation since they attended the December 13, 2021 Select Board meeting. They did hold a Public Outreach at the Holliston Public Library on December 15, 2021. It was attended by one resident whom expressed concern over possible traffic issues. S. Valchuis stated that those concerns had been addressed and the resident left the meeting satisfied with the response.

J. Cronin noted that his concerns regarding the inexperience of S. Valchuis around the cannabis industry and the location of the building within the industrial park had not changed. He continued to state that he felt strongly that this was “not the right fit” for the community.

K. Feodoroff, Town Counsel stated that the Select Board does have the authority to request changes to the language of the HCA and ultimately the authority to approve or deny the request.

B. Mensing stated that he and S. Valchuis have addressed all the concerns the Select Board have expressed.

B. Sparrell voiced appreciation to both B. Mensing and S. Valchuis for their detailed presentations, but also expressed continued concerns.

T. Hein also appreciated the work and time that was put into the presentations, however in the long run felt the concerns around nuisance and odor represent risks that exceed the benefits.

B. Sparrell made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a HCA with Zen LLC. There was No Second. Motion was denied.

ANNUAL AUDIT – EXIT MEETING WITH ROSELLI & CLARK:

Terenzio Volpcelli, the Town Auditor from Roselli & Clark joined the meeting to present the Annual Audit Report. T. Volpcelli touched on a few highlights based on Gap Reporting. He noted that it “was a very good year” for the Town. “It was a clean audit with no deficiencies.”

The Board all agreed that they would like the Town to be in a position to maintain its newly acquired AAA Bond rating. T. Volpcelli stated that this can be accomplished by cross training, succession planning and tweaking internal controls/policies to name a few. T. Ahern explained that per the suggestion of DLS they will retain a new auditor within the firm to take over for T. Volpcelli. The Board thanked T. Volpcelli for his assistance over the past 10 years. T. Volpcelli stated that he will be available in the future for guidance.

PUBLIC HEARING (CONT'D) CHANGE OF ADDRESS FOR AUTHENTIC AUTO BODY:

At 7:42pm the Public Hearing was reopened to discuss the address change for Authentic Auto Body from 229 Lowland Street to 7 Jeffrey Ave.

Steven Proia, the owner joined the meeting via zoom. S. Proia explained that the new location at 7 Jeffrey Ave would now be the headquarters for the business. The current Car Dealer License (approved for 4 cars), allows them to rent vehicles as part of their business. S. Proia stated there will be no other changes to the business in response to a question by B. Sparrell.

J. Cronin made a motion to authorize the change of address for Authentic Auto Body from 229 Lowland to 7 Jeffrey Avenue. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

At 7:48pm J. Cronin made a motion to close the Public Hearing for the Change of Address for Authentic Auto Body. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

COVID-19 COMMUNITY UPDATE / ARPA PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

Chief Cassidy stated that there are currently 114 active cases of Covid-19. Holliston’s positivity rate of 5.5% puts Holliston into the Red category. Approximately 50% of the cases seen in Town are “breakthrough” cases. The Chief explained that the Omicron variant is highly transmittable and the best way to help avoid serious illness is to get vaccinated. It appears that individuals whom are vaccinated are experiencing milder symptoms with all other variants as well.

The Chief stated that the Town has received the 90 rapid test kits previously ordered and 30 each will be distributed to the Senior Center, Food Pantry and the Board of Health. The intent is to make these test kits available to those within the community that are in need and do not have access to over-the-counter tests.

T. Hein outlined what she views are the primary ongoing goals during the pandemic. Mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic on residents, keep children safely in schools and protect the elderly. T. Ahern stated that there is a mechanism within the State that allows municipalities to apply for reimbursement if employees miss work due to covid related illness. Chief Cassidy noted that the first ARPA report is due April 30, 2022 after which there will be annual reporting’s.

The next schedule ARPA Steering Group meeting will be Tuesday January 4, 2022.

WARRANT:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,657,654.68. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

J. Cronin thanked the staff at Town Hall for their patience during all the ongoing projects and renovations that recently took place at Town Hall. He also thanked former Select Board member Mark Ahronian for initiating the replacement of the septic system which was just completed this past week.

J. Cronin participated in the News Year Eve Rail Trail Walk and stated that it was nice to see so many new generations in attendance.

B. Sparrell noted that there is still time to complete the Envisioning Future Holliston survey, there are currently 323 responses. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday January 5, 2022.

T. Hein stated that over 3,000 people participated in the First Night Trail Walk helping to make it a successful event.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern visited the Highway Department for a viewing of the newly acquired brine applicator which the Highway will now be using as part of the snow and ice removal protocol. The Select Board members all praised R. Walker, the Interim Deputy DPW Director for being diligent in getting up and running since accepting the position this past fall as well as the collaborative work ongoing with S. Reese the DPW Director.

T. Ahern noted ongoing discussion regarding a Grounds Division with representatives from FinCom, Park Department and the DPW. He will follow up prior to next weeks meeting on Monday January 10, 2022.

The Governance Committee will join the Select Board meeting on Monday January 10, 2022 with an update.

There will be a Public Forum regarding a potential Downtown Sewage project on Tuesday January 18, 2022. Department budget discussions will be conducted by the Assistant Town Administrator, and due to the Town Administrator on Friday January 21, 2022, beginning with the Select Board and Human Resource budgets.

On Monday January 31, 2022 there will be the Annual Water Rate Hearing.

Pare Corporation will update the Select Board at the February 7, 2022 meeting now that the demolition is complete at 9 Green Street.

T. Ahern concluded his comments by noting that due to recent developments the Select Board will need to review the current status of the street lights and solid waste and recycling within

Town as they will impact those budgets.

BOARD BUSINESS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 29, 2021 as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

T. Ahern presented a rental fee schedule for the Upper Town Hall, which will now be available to the public with the successful installation of the new septic system. J. Keast reviewed the rental information from the Historical Society as a reference. There was discussion regarding a fee structure that now would consist of an hourly rate rather than a single event rate. There is incentive to maintain the new floors which were installed over the past year, which may add to the cost of maintenance and therefore be reflected in the rental rate. All three Board members agreed that the fee schedule was reasonable.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Draft Rental Policy and Fee Schedule for Upper Town Hall as presented. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to approve a donation from Century Ty-Wood to the Holliston Police Department in the amount of \$250. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

J. Cronin stated that the Recycling Center on Marshall Street will be open on Saturday January 8, 2022 and Sunday January 9, 2022 from 8:00am – 3:00pm, which will conclude the holiday hours.

T. Hein noted that the Town Administrators Performance Evaluation is due to the Town Clerk on Monday January 10, 2022.

At 8:42pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved__1-31-2022