

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

November 21, 2022
7:00PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Barbara Gardner, Jeanne Grandy, Sharon Thornton, advocates of Tree City USA; Sam Tyler, Len Engel, Haley Fetrow and Sue Nersessian, members of the Governance Committee.

At 7:11pm B. Sparrell called the meeting to order.

DISCUSSION OF TREE CITY USA:

Barbara Gardner, Jeanne Grandy and Sharon Thornton (via zoom), members of the Garden Club joined the meeting to engage the Select Board in a discussion regarding the qualifications/requirements for the Town of Holliston to become a Tree City USA community. They would like to work towards obtaining a Legacy Tree Certification in time for Arbor Day 2023. The group had met with J. Cronin and T. Ahern in August 2022 to introduce the idea. S. Thornton has also been working with C. Meo the IT Director in an effort to post information regarding significant trees in Town. They have identified a Silver Maple in the Mudville neighborhood which may qualify as the Legacy Tree. T. Ahern noted that there is a checklist that includes official Town action, which falls to the Select Board and a vote at Town Meeting. Holliston does not currently have a Public Tree Ordinance.

B. Sparrell stated that the importance of trees, especially planting new trees in public areas was noted on the recent surveys collected by Envisioning Future Holliston.

T. Hein also pointed out that the Garden Club had recently asked to donate a tree to be planted in Jill Malcolm's honor, which was previously discussed at a Select Board meeting.

B. Gardner suggested creating a funding mechanism in which individuals could make donations so trees could then be planted immemorial. T. Ahern noted that a gift account could be set up for such a thing if the Town moves forward with the program.

T. Hein made a motion to request that the Town Administrator work with the Town Planner to bring a draft of a Public Tree Ordinance to the Select Board and the Planning Board by the end of February 2023 for consideration of development of the Warrant for the May 2023 Annual Town Meeting and further that the Town Administrator draft a Select Board proclamation for Arbor Day 2023 to be reviewed and approved by the Select Board no later than February 2023.

J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin expressed his thanks to B. Gardner for all her dedication to the Town over the years, calling out those spent as the State Representative. J. Cronin stated that she is the perfect

example of a “Public Servant”. He wished her much happiness as she prepares to leave Holliston and move West.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

B. Sparrell began the discussion by stating that there are two questions to be addressed with respect to the Governance Committee. One, is there more work to be done, what needs to be accomplished, and two, is the committee going to be able to successfully complete that work. He noted that there has already been a lot of research and data collection done by the Governance Committee to this date.

Sam Tyler, the Governance Committee Chair along with members Len Engle, Haley Fetrow and Sue Nersessian (via zoom) joined in on the discussion. S. Tyler acknowledged the substantial amount of work that had been accomplished, however with mixed results/reviews from the community. The first proposal brought to Town Meeting was not approved, and the second proposal was indefinitely postponed at the October 2022 Town Meeting. That particular Article 11 was met with some controversy.

S. Tyler explained that the Governance Committee would still like to continue work on upgrading the Town Administrator position, looking to increase the responsibilities held by the Town Administrator. As well as reorganizing the Select Board from a 3 to 5 member Board. The Governance Committee also strongly recommend adopting a Town Charter.

H. Fetrow suggested that possibly more public education is needed. Are there ways to create partnerships with other Boards and Committees. S. Nersessian agreed that collaboration among other Boards and Committees would be greatly appreciated.

Both J. Cronin and T. Hein noted that there was an extensive amount of information available prior to Town Meeting, including articles in the Holliston Reporter. S. Tyler suggested mailing the Town Warrant for upcoming Town Meetings to all residents.

J. Cronin stated that with all the talent on the Governance Committee and the extensive work that’s been done there is a negative perception by the Community. He feels the Governance Committee may well have run its course.

B. Sparrell noted that it would be helpful to have a recap including what items need to be addressed and recommendations on how to move forward.

T. Hein made a motion to request a report from the Governance Committee detailing the Committee’s findings from a comparative data analysis including interviews of internal and external stakeholders and other professional sources to be provided to the Select Board for discussion of postings to the website in January 2023. B. Sparrell second. J. Cronin opposed. Vote 2-0-1. J. Cronin stated that he thought this was a waste of the committee members valuable time.

PUBLIC HEARING – CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP FOR PLANET AUTOMOTIVE:

T. Hein made a motion to open the Public Hearing for a change in ownership for Planet

Automotive located at 567 Concord Street at 8:21pm. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

Gilvan Miranda the prospective buyer joined the meeting via zoom.

B. Sparrell asked if G. Miranda was planning any changes in the current operation at that location. G. Miranda responded that there will be no changes made once he purchases the business.

J. Cronin asked G. Miranda if he could share his background, experiences with the Board. G. Miranda stated that he has experience as a business owner.

T. Hein made a motion to approve the change in ownership of Planet Automotive located at 567 concord Street to Gilvan Miranda and approve the application of Mr. Miranda for a Class II, used car license for buying and selling of second hand automobiles. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

At 8:25pm T. Hein made a motion to close the Public Hearing. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

WARRANTS:

T. Hein made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$2,117,910.47. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

T. Hein stated that last week she attended the Citizen Legislative Seminar, sponsored by Senate President Splika and found it to be a wonderful experience.

T. Hein read the memo regarding Trash & Recycling delayed 1 day starting on Thursday November 24, 2022.

T. Hein read the memo for the Fall Leaf Curbside pickup during the week of November 28, 2022, as well as the memo for the No On-Street Parking Ban in effect until March 2023.

J. Cronin stated that the Lions Club will hold the Holiday Tree Lighting at Blair Square on Saturday November 26, 2022 at 4:00pm.

Liz Theiler, 17 Norland Street joined the meeting via zoom. She supports the suggestion made by S. Tyler earlier in the meeting regarding mailing out the Town Warrants prior to Town Meeting. L. Theiler also had the following list of questions for the Board to pass onto the Fire Chief.

Does Holliston have a required timeframe when it comes to training employees?

Do employees have a probation period?

Are the recent hires replacing retirees or are they additional staff?

What is the total number of EMT's and Firefighters on staff?

Is Brian Rossini, a recent appointee an EMT?

Lastly L. Theiler stated that during the week of October 28 – November 3, 2022 Holliston called for outside (out of town) ambulance services 10 times. According to her calculations this was a loss in revenue of over \$10,000.

B. Sparrell stated that the Town is moving towards the ALS model, however this does take time. Once an ALS model is achieved the Town may benefit from an increase in revenue.

J. Cronin asked that L. Theiler use cleaner/clearer language when posting information regarding the Holliston Fire and EMT Department. He pointed out that stating that the Town is losing revenue at this current time is misleading. Until the Town adopts an ALS model it is not including such revenue in its budget calculations.

The Select Board thanked L. Theiler for her inquiries and will get back to her with the answers next week.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern stated that he received a letter signed by the residents at 492 Washington Street, Cole Court regarding the traffic light at the crosswalk there. The residents feel this is a safety concern, as many vehicles travel at high speeds and often run the light. The Deputy DPW Director will install an electronic speed display device in an effort to slow traffic. The Police Chief also reminded pedestrians to use the beacon when using the crosswalk.

T. Hein suggested having a larger conversation around the issue of recommended speed limits on Washington Street.

T. Ahern received 6 responses from local farms regarding the letter sent soliciting feedback with regards to the future of the Agricultural Commission.

T. Ahern will begin working through the budget packet to start preparation for the FY24 budget process.

T. Ahern appointed Chinmaya Gogineni as the seventh member of the Economic Development Committee last week. His term will expire June 2024.

The OPEB Trust committee is scheduled to meet on December 13, 2022.

BOARD BUSINESS:

T. Hein made a motion to appoint Brian Rossini as a member of the Holliston Fire Department through June 30, 2023. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

T. Hein made a motion to request the form for the Chapter 90 Reimbursement in the amount \$184,555.74 be sent to the MassDOT. J. Cronin second. Vote 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

J. Cronin wished all a Happy Thanksgiving.

At 8:52pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved __12-19-22

