

## TOWN OF HOLLISTON

### SELECT BOARD

November 6, 2023  
7:00PM

Town Hall  
703 Washington Street

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

**Also Present:** Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Derek Hug, PARE Corp Engineer; Karla Alfred, Library Trustee Chair; Robert McGrath, Library Trustee Appointee; Robert Blair, Holliston Resident; Lisa Deering, Theresa Lamkin, Celebrate Holliston 300<sup>th</sup> Committee; Matthew Stone, Holliston Chief of Police, Sam Elichalt, Rich Davis, Holliston Police Appointees and James Keast, Facilities Manager.

At 7:00pm J. Cronin called the meeting to order.

#### **BOARD BUSINESS: APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS:**

Chief Stone stated that with the upcoming conversion to the regional dispatch center the Holliston Police Department has been able to hire three additional Police Officers, two of which will be appointed this evening. Chief Stone introduced Rich Davis who comes to Holliston from the Medfield Police Department. Chief Stone noted that while interviewing Officer Davis's superiors it was apparent that he is professional, loyal, dependable and always willing to volunteer within the community. Officer Davis added that he was drawn to Holliston due to its "Small Town" appeal. Chief Stone then introduced Sam Elichalt who will be attending the Academy at the end of November. In doing his background check it was noted that S. Elichalt has a very good work ethic, is always punctual and an exemplary young man. Similar to Officer Davis, S. Elichalt is drawn to the community within Holliston.

B. Sparrell made a motion to appoint Richard Davis as a Holliston Police Officer effective November 7, 2023 and Sam Elichalt as a Holliston Police Officer with an effective start date to be determined at the discretion of the Chief of Police. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **JOINT APPOINTMENT / LIBRARY TRUSTEE:**

Karla Alfred, Chair of the Library Trustees stated that due to a recent vacancy the Board of Trustees had voted to appoint Robert McGrath as a member at their last meeting. Robert McGrath introduced himself and stated that he has been active on several other committees throughout the years and looks forward to lending his support to the Library. He added that he would also support a new facility in the future if that became a possibility.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the joint appointment of Robert McGrath as a Library Trustee for a term ending in May 2024, with the election. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **TRAFFIC ENGINEERING REPORTS & UPDATES:**

Derek Hug, an engineer representing PARE Corp. joined the meeting to present the reports for

Traffic Studies for Norfolk/Franklin/Central Streets. The Study took traffic counts at the intersections of Norfolk Street and Central Street, Norfolk Street and Franklin Street and Franklin Street and Central Street, as well as looking at a five year crash history. Of which there were thirty-three crashes, twenty-one at Central and Norfolk, seventeen of the collisions were “angle type”. Speed observations which captured one hundred vehicles resulted in 85% traveling at or below 35-40mph on Central Street, 30mph on Norfolk Street and just under 30mph on Franklin Street. D. Hug provided several recommendations including speed humps/cushions which can be designed so that larger vehicles avoid them. Also lane narrowing down to a width of 10 feet. Adding supplemental signage with speed feedback signs. Changing the speed limit from 35-25mph past Franklin Street by the curve in the road on Norfolk Street. Tighten up the intersection of Franklin Street and Norfolk Street with temporary delineators, making it permanent with new curbing if so determined, and finalize a crosswalk at Franklin Street and Norfolk Street. There is not enough traffic to warrant signalization at the Central Street and Norfolk Street intersection at this time.

D. Hug then presented the update for the Traffic Study for the intersection of Green Street and Washington Street. With the new parking lot at Green Street additional signage will be needed to direct traffic in and out of area. One way access to the Superette Parking lot off of Washington Street, two way exit at the Green Street and Washington Street intersection as well as signs indicating the parking area and EV Charging Stations. T. Ahern pointed out that there is still ongoing discussion with the business owners and community regarding the traffic flow including the One-way into the Superette Parking lot off of Washington Street. D. Hug stated that PARE Corp is not proposing any changes to the traffic light currently at the intersection of Green Street and Washington Street.

Both S. Reese, DPW Director and R. Walker, Deputy DPW Director, Highway Superintendent stated that speed cushions could be an issue with snow plowing, as well as a noise issue.

Vin Murphy, 432 Norfolk Street asked if a four way stop at the Norfolk and Central Street intersection was considered. D. Hug stated that there is a new thought process that four way stops may increase accidents.

Liz Dembitzer, 45 Franklin Street voiced her concerns regarding speeding on Franklin Street, specifically during commuting hours. D. Hug stated that on the day the data was collected speed on Franklin Street was not excessive. L. Dembitzer asked if the speed limit could be dropped to 20mph from 25mph. D. Hug stated that was up to the Towns discretion, however it is unlikely that would not change the behavior.

John Beling, 31 Franklin Street, asked if the Town was limited to only the recommendations of the PARE Corp report once accepted. J. Cronin replied that no, the Select Board was not tied to the report by accepting it. J. Beling asked if speed cushions could be installed on Franklin Street, or possibly making it a one way from Central Street to Norfolk Street. D. Hug noted that making a street on one way often increases speeds.

Mark Bunker, 53 Green Street asked that a turning lane be added on Washington Street,

turning onto Green Street, as it is very difficult to make a left turn onto Green Street currently. Also could the Town replace the “no exit” sign on Green Street as cars often get to the end of the street and have to turn around, possibly place it at or near the entry of the new parking lot. Kristine Westland, 103 Norfolk Street, stated that the speeding of vehicles specifically at the curve of Norfolk Street, where her home is located is a safety issue. She wondered if a stop sign at the Norfolk/Franklin Street intersection might help slow the traffic. K. Westland noted that she does not see how the recommendations will detour the speeding of vehicles and does not find the study or the recommendations to be constructive.

Lixie Carey, 37 Green Street, agrees with her neighbor M. Bunkers’ suggestion of a left turn lane onto Green Street. She made an inquiry as to whom owns the easement behind the Holliston Superette. L. Carey also stated that there does not appear to be significant “green space” at the new parking lot, which had been part of the original plans.

Christine Beling, 31 Franklin Street stated that there are no real walkable sidewalks on Franklin Street and she also supports the installation of speed cushions.

T. Ahern noted that the sidewalks will be installed on Norfolk Street as part of the DPW water main replacement project.

Chris Leoncini, the owner of 777 Washington Street, Holliston Superette voiced his disappointment in the way the Select Board has handled the decision regarding the traffic flow at the location of his building, specifically the vote for a one-way entrance into the Superette parking lot. C. Leoncini stated that no one reached out to him prior to the various meetings in which the traffic was discussed, he heard about it through another party. J. Cronin apologized and informed C. Leoncini that the Board never intended to keep the business owners out of the loop. T. Hein noted that C. Leoncini attended a meeting recently with several other owners and several Town Employees to further discuss the one-way entrance. C. Leoncini pointed out that that particular meeting took place after the Select Boards decision was made. He added that his biggest concern lies with the care/maintenance of the entrance. Specifically during the winter months when the area will need to be plowed/salted and made safe for users. Although the Town has committed to providing that service he is not comfortable with their ability to be prompt and worries about liability issues, too many unknown variables. J. Cronin and T. Ahern both noted that continued discussions are necessary to develop a plan. C. Leoncini again noted his disappointment on the way in which this process has unfolded.

John Nichols, owner of 761 Washington Street also voiced his support for a “cross hatching” on Washington Street to ensure a safe left hand turn into the driveway between the two buildings. He echo’s much of C. Leoncini’s concerns.

Celia Gagnon, 110 Norfolk Street stated that one of the issues on Franklin Street is that cars are parked on the sidewalk making them unusable. She also echoed K. Westlands concerns over the traffic speeds on Norfolk Street.

T. Ahern received an email from a resident at 170 Karen Circle, noting that although there is

a need to address the traffic issues on Central Street they do not support speed cushions.

B. Sparrell asked if the timing on the traffic lights at the Green Street/Washington Street intersection could be adjusted to accommodate the new traffic pattern. D. Hug responded by stating that an arrow light would need to be added and that analysis was not done. B. Sparrell also asked if the study captured the crossover from lower Norfolk Street, off of Church Street to the part of Norfolk Street off of Central Street. D. Hug noted that the accidents at the crossover are “angled accidents” it is unclear as to whether those accidents occur when a vehicle is turning left onto Norfolk Street or crossing Central Street from lower Norfolk Street. D. Hug stated in the Complete Streets Tier II a RRFB, Flashing Beacon will be installed at that crosswalk. J. Cronin thanked D. Hug for the reports presented and will look for more public feedback once they have been released and posted. Again J. Cronin apologized to C. Leoncini, as it was not the Select Boards intention to upset him.

B. Sparrell made a motion to release the various traffic studies and draft for public viewing, reviewing the questions asked during this evenings meeting to be answered prior to finalization for both reports. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

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T. Ahern stated that a representative for McMahon & Associates was not able to attend this evenings meeting with an update for the Highland Safety Zone Implementation. Currently there is a School Zone in place, which is only for the hours that School is in session. McMahon & Associates has recommended a 24/7 Safety Zone. T. Ahern noted that since the stop signs have been installed there has been an improvement, however speed is still an ongoing issue in that area and residents are looking for a long term solution. The Holliston DPW can install the 24/7 Safety Zone signage at an approximate cost of \$3,000.

Lixie Carey, 37 Green Street asked if the need to have a 24/7 Safety Zone was completely necessary at this time. J. Cronin stated that residents have been very proactive in expressing the continuing need to address speeding traffic.

B. Sparrell noted that the speed limit signs on Highland Street heading from Ashland towards Hollis Street are not consistent with the signs heading in the opposite direction.

T. Hein stated that traffic management is an ongoing issue within the Town and in this area converting to a Safety Zone is completing the task.

B. Sparrell made a motion to authorize the DPW to implement the recommended signage changes for the 24/7 Safety Zone on Highland Street at an estimated cost of \$3,000 and direct the Town Administrator to work with the MassDOT to rescind the existing 25mph speed regulation on Highland Street and replace with the Safety Zone. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **BOARD BUSINESS: CONT'D**

Bob Blair, 57 School Street, has made several requests for the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration including a St. Patrick's Day Breakfast Roast, as well as a Laser Show and Orchestra. B. Blair has also requested that Irish Bunting be displayed at Town Hall from March 15<sup>th</sup> - March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Theresa Lamkin, member of Celebrate Holliston 300<sup>th</sup> Committee stated that funding for the

Laser Show/Orchestra could be considered as a request from the \$30,000 previously appropriated by the Town. J. Cronin asked that it be placed on a future agenda. B. Blair will put together a proposal and send it to T. Lamkin. B. Blair will also reach out to the Facilities Manager J. Keast to inquire if a garden could be planted near the benches that have been installed at the 9 Green Street parking lot.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

J. Cronin stated that the Veterans Day Luncheon will be held in the Upper Town Hall on Saturday November 11, 2023. The Town Hall will be closed on Friday November 10, 2023 in observance of the Holiday. J. Cronin added that the Humanitarian Awards will be held at 6:00pm in the Upper Town Hall prior to the Select Boards Meeting Monday November 13, 2023.

B. Sparrell stated that there will be no change in the Trash and Recycling schedule this week. B. Sparrell read the "No On Street Parking Winter Parking Ban" memo as well as the Fall Leaf Curbside Pickup for the week of November 27, 2023. The Marshall Street Recycling Center will be open on Sundays during the months of November, December 2023 and January 2024. The Recycling Center will be closed on Saturday November 11, 2023.

**WARRANTS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to accept the Weekly Warrant in the amount \$2,553,582.29. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

**COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:**

T. Ahern gave a presentation as part of a Budgeting 101 Seminar to the members of the Association of Town Finance Committee held in the Town of Sharon on Saturday November 4, 2023. He extended his thanks to the MMMA for the invitation. The Envisioning Future Holliston Committee is accepting feedback for the 5 Year Strategic Plan. Their next meeting will be held on Tuesday November 14, 2023.

**BOARD BUSINESS:**

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the contract between the Town of Holliston and the owner of Anthony's on the Green, Michael Ficco as presented with the understanding that the owner will finalize Insurance Coverage as stipulated in the contract prior to January 1, 2024. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Event Permit for the Veterans Day Parade to be held on November 11, 2023 at 10:30am, beginning at the Iraq/Afghanistan Monument, traveling via the Rail Trail to Central Street to Washington Street, ending at the Town Hall. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the Chabad Center request for the Menorah to be displayed outside of Town Hall from December 3, 2023 to December 24, 2023 with the lighting on December 7, 2023 at 6:00pm. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the request to waive the rental fee for the Upper Town

Hall for a St. Patrick's Day Breakfast Roast as part of the Towns 300<sup>th</sup> Celebration. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the request to hang Irish Bunting on the Town Hall from March 15 to March 18 2024. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

A request to hang the Irish Flag from the flag pole in front of Town Hall during that same period of time is under review.

**OTHER BUSINESS:NONE**

At 9:10pm B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn and enter into Executive Session for Reason 6, to consider purchase or value of real estate where an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiation position of the public body, not to return to Open Session. T. Hein second. Roll Call Vote: B. Sparrell, AYE; T. Hein, AYE; J. Cronin, AYE.

Respectfully submitted;

Margaret Driscoll

Approved\_\_12-18-23