

TOWN OF HOLLISTON

SELECT BOARD

November 29, 2021
7:00PM

Town Hall
703 Washington Street

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

Also Present: Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Matthew Stone, Holliston Police Chief; Alexander Keefe, Police Officer Candidate; Sean Keefe, relative of Officer Keefe; Elizabeth Greendale, Town Clerk; Blake Mensing, Attorney representing Zen Growing; Steven Valchuis, entrepreneur; Kate Foedoroff, Town Counsel; and Michael Cassidy, Holliston Fire Chief.

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

APPOINTMENT OFFICER KEEFE:

Chief Stone introduced Officer Alexander Keefe who was the final candidate for the current vacancy on the Holliston Police Department. Officer Keefe is coming to Holliston from the Ashland Police Department. He has also worked in the Town of Framingham. Chief Stone noted that Office Keefe successfully completed the physical aptitude test and a panel of interviews and was deemed the best candidate. Officer Keefe stated that he was drawn to Holliston due to the positive atmosphere among the Police Department.

J. Cronin made a motion to appoint Alexander Keefe as a Patrol Officer to the Holliston Police Department with a start date to be determined by Chief Stone. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0. Elizabeth Greendale, Town Clerk was present and swore Officer Keefe in. Sean Keefe, Officer Keefe's father pinned on his Holliston badge to conclude the appointment.

HCA REQUEST – 72 JEFFREY AVE:

Attorney Blake Mensing representing Steven Valchuis, Zen Growing LLC, whom is requesting an HCA agreement for a proposed business at 72 Jeffrey Ave. At this point Attorney Mensing stated that they have yet to initiate a site review or special permit review, they are looking to seek approval from the Select Board first. He continued to state that the goal of Zen Growing LLC is not to compete with the larger cannabis growers in the State, but to produce "quality over quantity". This proposed site would be considerably smaller in square footage then most others in the area.

The Select Board had the opportunity to ask several questions. J. Cronin made an inquiry regarding S. Valchuis's experience within the industry. S. Valchuis replied that he has worked in the commercial cleaning services industry and has approximately 6 months of cultivation experience. All three Board members expressed their concerns around the nuisance aspects given that the site is near areas that are frequented by children and families, mainly odor and additional traffic in the parking lot which abuts Holliston Pediatrics.

J. Cronin applauded the entrepreneurship, but wished S. Valchuis had more experience.

K. Foedoroff, Town Counsel stated that the HCA can mandate specifics for compliance.

T. Hein noted her concern with the fact that Holliston has approved 7 HCA's, 2-3 which are currently operational, one of which is also in the Lowland Industrial Park, without fully experiencing the community impact of the approved HCAs.

In conclusion the Board asked S. Valchuis to elaborate on his business plan and come back to a Board meeting in the near future. K. Foedoroff stated that she will be available to the Board members and or Attorney Mensing and S. Valchuis prior to meeting with the Board again.

COVID-19 UPDATE/ARPA PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE:

COVID-19 Update: Chief Cassidy joined the meeting and stated that there are currently 20 active cases. Holliston continues to be Yellow. Holliston's positivity rate is lower than the States. The Chief and the Select Board members continued to discuss the importance around mitigation, such as continuing to do what one can to stay safe around the Holiday Season. The Chief stated there is a testing facility now at the Ashland T Station.

ARPA Update: The Chief stated that the next ARPA Steering Group meeting will be held on Wednesday December 1, 2021 at noon. The Group is still actively pursuing a champion to address Small Business Aid to assist with any ARPA requests that may be eligible.

The Chief concluded his updates by noting the final report, accounting of the CARES Act Funding, is due to the State on Friday December 3, 2021. The Town was able to utilize \$1.3 million which was granted.

The Board members thanked Chief Cassidy for all his effort and service in overseeing that the CARES Act Funds were distributed effectively.

WARRANTS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Weekly Warrant in the amount of \$1,481,126.56. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

J. Cronin stated that the Annual Humanitarian Awards were given out earlier this evening in Upper Town Hall. Thanks and congratulations to Kris Westland, Barbara Fritts Worby and Lina Arena-Derosa.

B. Sparrell thanked the Lions Club for sponsoring the Tree Lighting on Saturday November 27, 2021 at Blair Square.

T. Hein stated it was a privilege to light the Menorah at Town Hall earlier this evening and she wished everyone a Happy Hanukkah.

Jay Robinson, 233 Chamberlain Street joined the meeting via zoom to inform residents that if they choose to go to the Ashland testing site to fill out the required paperwork prior to arrival to speed up the wait time. He also asked if the HCA previously discussed regarding 72 Jeffrey

Ave is approved would the owner/operator be able to transfer ownership (HCA) to another party. It was noted that the HCA could be transferred.

T. Hein stated there was a missed texted question from a resident regarding the 72 Jeffrey HCA presentation. The Board will address that question when the applicant returns.

COMMENTS FROM THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:

T. Ahern stated that Holliston FY22 Tax Rate has been set. Thanks to K. Peirce, Principal Assessor, Mary Bousquet, Treasurer Collector and Sharon Emerick, Town Accountant.

T. Ahern is in the process of putting together the FY23 Budget Package.

The annual performance reviews for the Department Heads have begun.

At the next Select Board meeting, Monday December 6, 2021 Stantec will present its final Sidewalk Prioritization Report as well as the final Water Modernization Report.

T. Ahern will invite Representative Dykema and Senator Spilka to the December 13, 2021 Select Board meeting. One of the topics of discussion will be regarding ARPA Funding.

The storm window project is still ongoing at the Town Hall. Last week one of the windows in the Treasurer Collectors Office broke during work hours and caused a bit of a setback. Everyone involved is ok and the window has since been repaired.

The installation of the new septic system at Town Hall has begun. T. Ahern stated that the goal is to be able to continue to access the Church and the Town Hall at all times. Once the project is complete the public will be able to utilize the Upper Town Hall again.

BOARD BUSINESS:

J. Cronin made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 1, 2021 as written. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin made a motion to accept a gift in the amount of \$500 to the Fire Department Gift account from a resident on Meadowbrook for help during the recent flooding. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

J. Cronin read the memo for the Fall Leaf Pickup during the week of November 29, 2021, as well as the Winter No On-Street Parking which went into effect on November 1, 2021.

At 8:15pm J. Cronin made a motion to adjourn. B. Sparrell second. Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Driscoll

Approved____01-03-22____

