

MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
NOVEMBER 12, 2009

At 6:30 p.m., Chairman David W. Heinlein called the meeting to order with members Joseph M. Melican and Carol Lisbon present. Also present were David W. Ramsay, Town Administrator, and Greer Pugatch, Assistant Town Administrator.

ATTENDANCE: Tad Staley, Erin Gorden & Tom Connors, Bay Colony Rail Trail Group; Pam Ellsworth, Jim Sullivan, Dennis Dyer & other abutters to the MBTA railroad tracks; Craig Rafter; Jim Kinder, Warrant Committee

PRESS: Neil Johnson, D-S Press

Bay Colony Rail Trail Group Feasibility Study Request

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, Chairman David W. Heinlein welcomed proponents of and abutters to a proposed recreational path project along the inactive MBTA railroad tracks to this evening's meeting to consider whether the Board should make a request to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to conduct a feasibility study. He introduced Needham resident Tad Staley, Bay Colony Rail Trail (BCRT) advocate for this conversion.

Mr. Staley described the project as a 7-mile stretch of railroad tracks running from Needham (2 miles) through Dover (3.7 miles) and Medfield (1.2 miles) which would be turned into a multi-use trail. He said that the rail trail could serve any of a number of purposes, such as bicycling, horseback riding, jogging, cross-country skiing, etc., and could have different surfaces such as asphalt, crushed stone or dirt. At present there are 103 active rail trail projects and dozens of completed projects in Massachusetts. Mr. Staley identified some of the benefits of such a project including health, environment, livability, open space preservation and community identity. He said each of the three communities would define its requirements in terms of trail surface, landscaping, barriers and accessibility, and set rules about parking, dogs, motorized vehicles, etc.

Mr. Staley briefly outlined the rail trail exploration/implementation process. If the project received federal and state funding through Mass Highway, the trail could cost approximately \$1 million per mile and take up to 20 years to complete. If it was built with grants and private funding, it could cost approximately \$100,000 per mile and take 6 or more years. The BCRT group has requested that each of the three involved communities authorize the MPO to conduct a non-binding feasibility study at no charge to the towns. The Needham and Medfield Boards of Selectmen have already forwarded their requests to the MPO, but Dover's approval is also required. This study would take 6 to 12 months to conduct and would contain up to

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75% of the information needed for Dover's town officials and citizens to then more closely examine the issues specific to Dover and make better informed decisions about the project. The MBTA has no plans to use this stretch of tracks in its *Journey to 2030* plans, so at this stage either the DCR or each of the three towns would negotiate a lease of the property with the MBTA directly or through the DCR, and the tracks would be removed. Mr. Staley estimates that towns would begin the funding/grant process in 2012 with timeline leading to completion dependent on source of funds.

Mr. Heinlein encouraged interested residents to visit the www.baycolonyrailtrail.org website for additional information on this project, and a list of suggested websites on rail trails was distributed. A copy of the Central Massachusetts feasibility study is available for viewing in the Selectmen's office.

Mrs. Lisbon said that recently the BCRT group disseminated information at Dover Days, and met with the Dover Hunt Club and the Open Space Committee.

Mr. Heinlein opened the floor to questions related generally to rail trails and specifically to the feasibility study. He assured citizens that if the project appears feasible and a potential rail trail is further considered, after the study there will be more than ample opportunity to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the project as related specifically to Dover.

Jim Sullivan of Bridle Path Circle asked how citizens will be kept informed as this process unfolds, and at what stage they will become involved. Mr. Heinlein told him that once the MPO indicates whether the rail trail concept is feasible for Dover, Needham and Medfield, local committees/task forces would be put together to research and evaluate all of the various issues applicable to each town.

Dennis Dyer of Centre Street asked that if the project is to have a cohesive path, if Dover refused to permit, for example, motorized vehicles or dogs allowed by the other town(s), how would this be policed? Mr. Staley responded that although it is less usual, each town may have its own differing set of allowed/prohibited activities for their segment of the trail posted on placards with citizen volunteer groups enforcing those rules. Mr. Heinlein also mentioned the possibility of having broader inter-town meetings on rules to gain unanimity.

It was the sense of the Board to request a non-binding rail trail feasibility study at no charge. It would provide a tremendous amount of information and education to citizens to give them choices.

Mrs. Lisbon moved to approve asking the Boston region MPO to conduct a feasibility study for the Bay Colony Rail Trail, seconded by Mr. Melican; it was unanimously voted.

A letter regarding same will be prepared for Mr. Heinlein's signature.

Annual Alcohol License Renewals

Mrs. Pugatch told the Board that the annual club alcohol license for the American Legion and the annual package store license for Higgins Wine & Spirits are due for renewal this month. Police Chief Griffin has reported no incidents of note at either location this past year and recommends renewal of both licenses. The Fire and Building Inspectors have issued the required certificate of fire safety for the Legion. The new manager for that establishment has submitted the forms and fee associated with this change of status, which will be forwarded to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission.

Mr. Melican moved to approve the license renewal for the year 2010 for Avatar, Inc. [d.b.a. Higgins Wine & Spirits] and George B. Preston Post 209, American Legion, seconded by Mrs. Lisbon; it was unanimously voted.

Historical Society Request re: Boston Post Cane

Mr. Ramsay said that the Dover Historical Society has recently recovered the “Boston Post Cane”. In past years the now-defunct *Boston Post Newspaper* had a tradition of distributing canes to the oldest resident in each of a number of the communities in Massachusetts. The Historical Society is requesting that the Board of Selectmen both display the cane, recently re-acquired from an area antique store, and revive the tradition of awarding it symbolically to Dover’s oldest living resident.

Mr. Ramsay has spoken with the Town Clerk, who supports this request and has volunteered to display it in his office. Those present could not tell Mrs. Lisbon if this is the cane that is currently on display at the library. She suggested placing the display in a venue where it is likely to be most viewed by the public.

The Selectmen agreed that it is a wonderful idea to carry on this tradition, and will determine location at a later date after conferring with the Historical Society. They will make the presentation of a certificate to whomever the Town Clerk has indicated is Dover’s oldest resident at a future meeting.

Mr. Melican moved to reinstitute the tradition of presenting the Boston Post Cane to Dover’s oldest resident on an annual basis with further discussions to follow with the Historical Society as to placement and security, seconded by Mrs. Lisbon; it was unanimously voted.

Building Department Fee Survey

Mr. Heinlein said that Building Inspector Tony Calo has prepared the building department fee survey requested by the Board after reviewing the various fees under its jurisdiction this fall. The Board wants to see where Dover’s fees stand relative to other communities to which it is most commonly compared. It appears that Dover is right in line with those other building departments. Mr. Heinlein thanked Mr. Calo for the effort put into this compiling this data.

The Board was satisfied with the fees currently charged for those departments under its jurisdiction, which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

A copy of the survey was provided to Craig Rafter at his request.

Other Business:

Town Report

Mrs. Pugatch said that the Town Report Committee met today and, after making a few minor changes to the Town Report preparation instructions, it is requesting that Mr. Heinlein initiate this year's process by issuing the revised memorandum to all Town offices, boards and committees submitting reports. The process is now streamlined with electronic submission of reports by January 15, 2010.

Mr. Melican moved to approve this memorandum regarding Town Report instructions dated November 13, 2009, seconded by Mrs. Lisbon; it was unanimously voted.

Reserve Fund Transfer – Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund

The Board approved a Prior Notice for the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund in October related to unanticipated increases in the total monthly amounts the Town is obligated to pay which are significantly higher than its recent experience. The Board will consider very carefully the amount requested in the FY11 warrant article to replenish this trust fund. Mr. Melican answered questions by the Warrant Committee related to unemployment compensation benefits at its last meeting.

Mr. Melican moved to approve this request for a transfer from the Reserve Fund for the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund in the amount of \$36,000, seconded by Mrs. Lisbon; it was unanimously voted.

Special License

The Board reviewed a special license request by The Catered Affair for December 5, 2009 at Elm Bank. The Police Chief has spoken to this caterer, new in the Board's experience, and he recommends approval of the license as requested.

Mr. Melican moved to approve this special license for December 5, 2009 as noted on the application, seconded by Mrs. Lisbon; it was unanimously voted.

Approve October 29th & Revised October 15th, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Melican moved to approve the [revised] minutes of October 15, 2009, seconded by Mrs. Lisbon; it was unanimously voted.

Mr. Melican moved to approve the meeting minutes of October 29, 2009, seconded by Mrs. Lisbon; it was unanimously voted.

Citizens' Comments

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Mr. Ramsay explained to Mr. Kinder that there is one user per department who is allowed access to that department's KVS budget(s).

Mrs. Lisbon said that the Board should anticipate meeting with the Open Space Committee in the next month or two to get an update on and approvals for the new Open Space Plan before an Open Hearing and its subsequent submission to the state for finalization.

Adjournment

At 7:38 p.m., Mr. Melican moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Lisbon; it was unanimously voted.

DOVER BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Joseph M. Melican, Clerk