

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Board of Selectmen

Minutes

September 2, 2021

HYBRID MEETING

Present: First Selectman James L. Brinton, Selectmen Jay Hubelbank and Dean Sarjeant.

Public: Chris Charles, Michelle Gorra, Carole Matteo.

Press: Linda Zukauskas – VOICES.

Call to Order: First Selectman Jim Brinton called the meeting to order 1t 5:30p.m.

MOTION: To add subsequent business not already on the Agenda. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank. Discussion: Plastic Bag Ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

- **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the August 19, 2021 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. BY Jay Hubelbank, seconded by Jim Brinton and unanimously approved.

Communications: None.

Appointments/Resignations:

- **Appointment of Melinda Dubow to Inland Wetlands: Motion:** To appoint Melinda Ely Dubow as an alternate on the Inland Wetlands Commission until 6/30/2023. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank. Discussion: Melinda has attended meetings of the Commission, submitted a letter of interest and her appointment is supported by the Chairman of the Commission and both the Democratic and Republican Town Committees. The motion passed unanimously. Jay Hubelbank suggested that Commissions distribute the Plan of Conservation and Development to its members.

First Selectman's Report: Jim Brinton reported the following:

- **Storm Ida:** The Town suffered some damage from the storm - including the boat launch pulling loose, downed trees, road washouts, and power losses. Eversource's response was not satisfactory – sending assessment crews when our highway department had already done a road by road assessment. It was hours later that restoration crews arrived.
- **Speeding Issues:** Speeding, particularly in the Depot, where there is a density of vehicles and pedestrians, is becoming an increasing problem. After several phone calls, and at the suggestion of the Department of Transportation, he will be writing a letter to the Commissioner of the DOT requesting a traffic study to determine what can be done to make it safer, especially through the center of the Depot. In the meantime, speeders do seem to respond to the flashing speed limit signs - there are some that can also take pictures of vehicles and license plates and issue tickets. More police presence and more issuing of citations was also discussed.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Discussion of ARPA Funds:** The Selectmen continue to review and discuss the distribution of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. They have, or will be, contacting non-profits in Town to determine their needs. Discussion of an emergency shelter at the Salem Church continued-after weighing the pros and cons and possible alternative locations, that appears to be the best location, with the Library being a secondary location. All possible distributions will be vetted with the Town Attorney.

- **Cannabis Regulations:** There does not appear to be any urgency in regard to a retail location for the sale of cannabis in Town. Eventually, a Zoning permit would need to be approved and/or an Ordinance allowing for the sale in the Town, would need to be approved at a Town Meeting. However, it is not illegal to possess or use. Discussion continued about regulating where smoking would be allowed on Town property. According to the State regulations, anywhere smoking or vaping tobacco is prohibited, smoking or vaping cannabis is prohibited. The Town could enact an Ordinance to further regulate whether and where cannabis can be consumed in public.
- **POCD:** The Board of Selectmen will continue to review its assignments and responsibilities. They will also request that each Commission review its assignments and what still may need to be accomplished.
- **Plastic Bag Ordinance:** An Ordinance was passed in 2019 prohibiting businesses from using single use plastic bags. Jay Hubelbank reported that some businesses have distributed them to customers. The Washington Environmental Council has a meeting next week at which time they will discuss sending a letter to businesses, reminding them of the requirements of the Ordinance.
- **WiFi in the Depot:** New devices will be installed at the Judy Black Park and the Hickory Stick that will strengthen the WiFi signal in the Depot.
- **Tree Trimming:** Jim Brinton reported that Eversource and Lewis Tree, in conjunction with Eversource, cannot trim or remove a tree on private property without the owner's permission. Jim will add a note in the Friday email blasts reminding residents that allowing the trimming to take place may prevent power outages.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Waiving the fee for use of the Main Hall:** The Knights of Columbus have written a letter requesting the fee be waived for use of the Main Hall for their Annual Charity Wine Tasting on October 16, 2021. Funds raised at the event support scholarships, Emergency Fuel Fund and the Washington-Warren Food Bank. **Motion:** To approve the request of the Knights of Columbus. They will need to provide a Certificate of Insurance and a deposit. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

Visitors:

- **Chris Charles** suggested that the new Land Use Enforcement Officer attend the Sustainability Committee meeting. Sean Hayden will be presenting LID storm water materials. In reference to the Democratic Town Committee's request that affordable housing be considered in the planning for the Community Center at the old town garage site on Titus Road, Chris suggested that soil analysis be done to determine the viability of a septic system installation at that site. The fact that the site is also in a flood plain should be considered. There was discussion as to the additional cost of including housing in the plans and the practicality of having housing over a center where numerous activities would be taking place.

Adjournment:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 6:30p.m. as there was no further business for discussion. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Greene
Selectmen's Assistant