

**HOLDEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2018**

6:35PM

Memorial Hall

Present: Chairman Geri Herlihy, Jeremy Kurtz, Anthony Renzoni, Tyler Gibbs

Not Present: Robert Lavigne

Others Present: Peter Lukes, Town Manager
 Stephen Madaus
 Liz Fotos, Town Recorder

Chairman Herlihy called the meeting to order at 6:35PM. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Herlihy stated that the Board was reconvening from 5:30PM meeting for the Town Manager's Goal Setting. She stated that they would have those goals for the public at a future meeting.

Chairman Herlihy stated that the Board had a special guest at the meeting; Kevin Carroll who was working on a Citizen in the Community for the Boy Scouts. She stated that they had him sit in on the goal setting session to see what topics were important to the community.

1. Appointments, Licenses, and Permits

None

2. Vacant Commercial Property Discussion

Sel. Kurtz stated that people always want to know what is going on with the vacant commercial properties particularly on Main Street and what the Town was doing about them.

Mr. Lukes stated that this matter was added to the agenda at the request of several of the Board members. He stated that there are specific properties that stand out but they are never leased. He stated the Town gets complaints regarding this matter often. He stated that they were private properties and there was little the Town could do as they were up to building code and taxes were paid. He stated that it is the same landlord and they have spoken to him a number of times with no luck. He stated that it is a matter of the owners not wanting anything there and as a Town there is not much that can be done.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he was on the Master Plan Steering Committee and they have been collecting a lot of data and this topic comes up often. He stated that when you drive up Main Street it seems as though Holden is not doing well because of these vacant lots.

He stated that Holden as a town was very inviting to businesses and this made it seem like that was not the case. He stated that it is a big talking point and will be incorporated into the Master Plan but they will have a hard time moving past it other than working with the business owners to facilitate occupancy. He stated that he had heard another Selectmen mention imminent domain but he did not believe that would go anywhere.

Mr. Lukes stated that there was one bylaw that he has looked into and that he has researched other municipalities as well. He stated that other places have an ordinance that increases taxes exponentially if the property goes unused for a period of time. He stated that it is not a lot of properties but the issue is they stand out so much and have gone unused for decades.

Sel. Renzoni stated that he could not speak on behalf of the Master Plan Committee formally but vacant properties on Main Street will be mentioned in some capacity and there will be recommendations to go along with it.

Sel. Kurtz stated that one of the issues is that it is one set of owners and they will continue to pay and maintain the property. He stated that if there was a tax imposed they would likely just pay it and move on. He stated that outside of taxing them they were very limited on what they could do. He stated that it is bought up at least yearly on the Board along with many members of the Board and Town have reached out to the owners with no response. He stated he would be interested in hearing what options they may have.

Sel. Kurtz asked if they had heard from the Chamber on this matter.

Mr. Lukes replied not formally.

Sel. Kurtz stated that they were just as frustrated as the Town. He stated that they were open to suggestions.

Mr. Madaus stated that Holden was not alone in this concern. He stated that there was mostly incentive programs for this situation not punitive measures. He stated that in MA there is not the ability to tax for this and he was not aware of any programs that increase taxes but they can incentivize. He stated that he was happy to look into this and work with any department for suggestions.

Chairman Herlihy asked Mr. Madaus about zoning provisions.

Mr. Madaus replied that if there was some sort of zoning bylaw in the way such as parking requirements for x amount of spaces they could use adaptive reuse to incentive them. He stated that in this particular case he believes it is a communication issue.

Chairman Herlihy stated that she thought there was a lot of frustration in Town.

Mr. Lukes stated that incentives may not work as the Town had sent a lot of viable tenants in the past and they had been turned away.

3. **Town Manager Update**

January to June 2019 Selectmen Meeting Schedule: We have prepared the enclosed Board of Selectmen meeting schedule for the period of January 2019 through June 2019 for your consideration.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Board often moves some of the meeting dates to be outside of school vacation. He suggested that the Chairman work with the Town Manager and come back with an updated schedule at the next meeting.

Chairman Herlihy agreed.

Special Town Meeting and Special Election: Reminders for the Special Town Meeting to be held on Monday December 3, 2018 at 6:30PM at the Wachusett Regional High School and the Special Town Election on the following day, December 4, have been posted on the electronic sign, Town's Facebook page and website, along with Holden Community Access Cable. There are also small note cards at Town Hall, Starbard Building and other public areas reminding people of the dates and events. Friday, November 23rd is the last day to register to vote at the Special Town Meeting. Because town offices close at Noon of Friday, those wishing to register can do so until 8:00PM at the Public Safety Building, 1370 Main Street, in the main lobby. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is December 3 at noon. The deadline for voter registration in order to vote in the Special Election has passed.

Sel. Kurtz asked if they could post a notice on the front of Town Offices redirecting everyone.

Mr. Lukes replied that they would and the Town Clerk would also change the voicemail.

Document Shredding: Free Document Shredding Day will be held at the Wachusett Regional Recycling Center, 131 Raymond Huntington Hwy, West Boylston on Saturday, December 1, from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

Santa's Arrival: Santa's arrival and tree lighting ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, December 1, at 5:00PM at Town Hall. Girl Scouts will be singing holiday songs starting at 4:30PM, while residents gather and wait for Santa. Children have the opportunity to sit on Santa's lap and will receive a goodie bag. Hot chocolate and popcorn will be available in the First Congregational Church following Santa's Visit.

Back Lot 18 Industrial Drive: Last week I met with a group of representatives from Holden Youth Sports Leagues. The purpose of the meeting was to begin a dialogue and solicit some input as to what could be done with the remainder of the space at 18 Industrial Drive, should the DPW Facility project pass. We still hope to create playing fields in the back lot and connect the property there to the Dawson Recreation area and

the playing fields already in existence there. The meeting was positive and should the DPW project pass I will be examining the prospect of creating a citizen's committee specifically dealing with the renovation of playing fields in that portion of the 18 Industrial Drive property.

Year-to-Date Revenue and Expenditure Reports: Attached are the Year-to-Date Revenue and Expenditure report for the period ending October, 2018, prepared by Lori Rose, Town Accountant.

Photos with Santa- Holden's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) will be hosting their annual photo sessions with Santa Claus Saturday Dec 8 at 10-noon and 1-3 in the Holden Fire Department Annex, 1384 Main Street, next to the Public Safety Building. Families, including pets, can have their holiday greeting card picture taken with Santa with a fire truck background. Photos will be provided as a high resolution digital file for a \$15 cash donation. Pets must be leashed or in carriers until their photo time. Proceeds will help fund CERT equipments and supply purchase as well.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Master Plan Steering Committee would be set up next to the hot chocolate and they would love to see everyone. He stated that they have a fun way to have the Town prioritize what is important to them by using Holden Bucks which would be fake money handed out to let people decide where to spent the money. He stated they would be doing the same thing outside of Town Meeting. He stated this would help the Committee see what was important to the public.

Mr. Lukes stated that with regards to the land that they have and were considering for recreational purposes he had met with leaders from the sports leagues in town to discuss what could possibly be done in the future. He stated that he felt it was a productive meeting and should the project pass they can move forward with a committee to study it more formally.

Mr. Lukes stated that Chief Armstrong asked for a moment of the Boards time.

Chief Armstrong was present at the meeting and stated that he wanted to bring it to the Boards attention that the other night the varsity soccer had won the State Championship and members of the force had set up a police escort for the team leaving Town and they also coordinated it coming back in with the win. He stated that they had fire trucks and police lined up and it was a nice event for Community Policing. He stated thanked the members of his force that worked on this and stated they were all proud of the kids.

4. Selectmen Miscellaneous

Sel. Renzoni: none.

Sel. Gibbs: none.

Sel. Kurtz stated that the Thanksgiving Road Race was on Thanksgiving and that this year we were also hosting the Thanksgiving Football game. He stated that there would be lots of traffic in the early morning of Thanksgiving and everyone should plan accordingly.

Mr. Lukes stated that they should dress warm too as it was going to be cold.

5. Selectmen Subcommittee

Sel. Renzoni stated that the Master Plan Committee had accepted a schedule that will have them completing the work before Town Meeting. He stated that they will offer it to the Planning Board as it moves forward. He welcomed anyone to go in and speak to them so they could gather as much input as possible.

Sel. Renzoni stated that the VA Committee worked with the American Legion and the Vet Service Officer and raised over \$1,300 for the poppy sales. He stated that these funds go to assisting vets through the holidays. He stated that if anyone knew of someone who needed assistance to reach out so they can do what they could to make their holidays special.

6. Citizens Address

None

Selectmen Subcommittee Cont.

Chairman Herlihy stated that December 3 was going to be the Special Town Meeting and that the Committee was working on outreach. She stated that they have been at Jed's and that they had done letters to the editors, phones banks and more. She stated that they were hopeful they would get good turn out for the meeting.

Chairman Herlihy called a 15 minute recess until the Public Hearing scheduled for 7:15PM.

Chairman Herlihy called the meeting back to order at 7:15PM.

7. Public Hearing – Liquor License// Flip Flops Change of Officers, Change of Ownership Interest, Change of Stock Interest, Change of DBA, Change of Manager

Sel. Kurtz recused himself for this matter.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **VOTED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING BY A VOTE OF 3-0-1 FOR LIQUOR LICENSE/ FLIP FLOPS CHANGE OF OFFICERS, OWNERSHIP INTEREST, STOCK INTEREST, DBA, AND MANAGER AS PRESENTED.**

Sel. Renzoni stated that they would hear from the representative and then would take the vote on the matter.

Paul Grizzly was present on behalf of Flip Flops. He stated that they were looking to transfer the business from father to daughter as he was taking a step back.

Mr. Lukes stated that everything had gone through on their part and that they had been transferring management duties over the last few years.

Chairman Herlihy asked if there was any public comment; no members of the public stepped forward.

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, second by Sel. Gibbs, it was **VOTED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING BY A VOTE OF 3-0-1 FOR LIQUOR LICENSE/ FLIP FLOPS CHANGE OF OFFICERS, OWNERSHIP INTEREST, STOCK INTEREST, DBA, AND MANAGER AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **VOTED TO APPROVE THE BY A VOTE OF 3-0-1 FOR CHANGE OF LIQUOR LICENSE/ FLIP FLOPS CHANGE OF OFFICERS, CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP INTEREST, CHANGE OF STOCK INTEREST, CHANGE OF DBA, AND CHANGE OF MANAGER AS PRESENTED.**

Motion by Sel. Renzoni, seconded by Sel. Gibbs, it was **VOTED TO ADJORN THE NOVEMBER 19, 2018 BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 7:21PM BY A VOTE OF 3-0-1.**

APPROVED: _____ 1/7/19 AS CORRECTED