

**Town Of Needham Board of Selectman
Minutes for February 27, 2007
Needham Town Hall**

6:45 p.m. Informal Session:

Mr. Cogswell recognized members of Boy Scout Troop #156 who were present to view a public meeting as part of their commitments to achieving a new badge.

7:00 p.m. Call To Order:

A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman John H. Cogswell at 7:00 p.m. Those present were: John H. Cogswell, Daniel P. Matthews, John Bulian, Gerald Wasserman, James Healy, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and Recording Secretary Greg Cooper.

7:00 p.m. Public Hearing - NSTAR:

Maureen Carroll, NSTR representative, appeared before the Board with two petitions for the Board's consideration.

Petition for 1063 Great Plain Avenue and Garden Street:

This request was to install underground conduit on Great Plain Avenue and Garden Street.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve and sign petition from NSTAR to install approximately 49 feet of conduit @ manhole #17036 at Great Plain Avenue and Garden Street, Needham. This work is necessary to provide underground service to #1063 Great Plain Avenue, Needham.

Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Petition for 69 Clarke Circle:

This request was to install underground conduit on Great Plain Avenue and Garden Street.

Motion by Mr. Bulian that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve and sign petition from NSTAR to install approximately 7 feet of conduit @ pole 257/8 on Clarke Circle, Needham. This work is necessary to provide underground service to #69 Clarke Circle, Needham.

Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 5-0.

7:05 p.m. Ms. Fitzpatrick appeared before the Board with two items for the Board's consideration:

1. Close Annual Town Meeting Warrant:
Ms. Fitzpatrick began reviewing with the Board the Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant. She reviewed recent changes and updates on various articles. The Board decided to delay the conversation until later in the meeting.

7:10 p.m. Proclamation - Richard W. Gatto:
The Board read a proclamation recognizing the significant contribution Richard W. Gatto has had to the issue of affordable housing in the Town and many other civic contributions.

Representative Lida Harkins also presented Mr. Gatto with a resolution from the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

7:15 p.m. Draft Housing Strategies:
Lee Newman, Planning Director, and members of the Affordable Housing Task Force appeared before the Board to review the work the group has done in creating a housing plan for the community. Ms. Newman stated that the Task Force updated the community development plan and recommended a number of projects to enhance housing opportunities. Mr. Bulian, the Board's representative to the Task Force, stated that the group initially wanted to issue a five year plan to reach the State required 10% affordable housing target, but decided a more realistic and achievable target would be to plan for 10 years. He stated that the Committee is submitting the recommendations to the Board for review and comment. Mr. Healy asked what the ramifications would be if the Town does not meet the State mandated 10% and how is the group going to get buy-in from the community to achieve its goal. Ms. Newman stated that not meeting the goal subjects the town to potentially more Chapter 40b development projects. The Task Force agreed that educating the community on what affordable housing actually is is an important task in achieving the goals outlined in the Housing Plan. Mr. Wasserman stated that he would like to

see a clearer vision statement for the Town, specifically, not just the region. Mr. Matthews stated that Chapter 40b was originally intended to have state funding to assist communities in meeting the target and this funding has never really materialized. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked that any comments on the Housing Plan be directed to her and the final plan will be brought before the Board for final approval in approximately a month.

7:50 p.m. High Rock Homes Update:

Sheila Pransky, Chair of the Needham Housing Authority, and members of the authority appeared before the Board to provide an update on the progress of the High Rock Homes Project. She stated that the project is coming close to realization. All of the funding is nearly in place to take down 20 single family homes and build 40 duplex properties, half of which will be rentals. Ms. Pransky stated that the Authority hopes to have a groundbreaking ceremony in August. Mr. Healy asked how many of the duplexes will be affordable housing applicable to the Town's 10% measurement. Ms. Pransky stated that 32 of the 40 will qualify. Ms. Pransky informed the Board of how the project was financed and highlighted that Community Preservation Funds are being used. The Board congratulated the Authority on its hard work and wished members success with the project.

8:25 p.m. April 2007 Ballot Question:

Steve Rosenstock, Finance Committee Chair, and Jeff Simmons, School Committee Member, appeared before the Board to discuss override options for the High Rock School and the preliminary FY08 budget.

Mr. Rosenstock suggested that the Town have a policy to address the issue of maintenance and operating costs when considering building new buildings. Specifically related to the High Rock School renovation, he suggested an override to address maintenance and operating costs be considered. He stated that the Finance Committee

wants citizens to have all the information necessary when voting on large capital construction projects.

Mr. Simmons stated that the School Committee is not comfortable with a companion override to the High Rock Renovation because all the programmatic elements in running the school are not yet determined so any attempt to identify maintenance and operating costs could be wrong. He also stated that the maintenance and operating costs will not be incurred for over two years.

Mr. Rosenstock suggested that an override for O & M costs could be put on the fall 2008 ballot. The Board in general preferred this to putting it on the April ballot. He also suggested that the Board, School Committee and Finance Committee need to establish a policy on this issue. Mr. Cogswell suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen work to develop a proposal. Mr. Healy did not agree with having an override in fall 2008 and feels the citizens need the information to make the capital decision. He suggested that the O & M numbers can be developed for an April ballot question. He stated that the Town already has operating issues with the High School and Library because operating and maintenance costs were not recognized up front. Mr. Healy is worried that the residents will say enough overrides and not fund the operation of the building. Mr. Simmons stated that if numbers were developed too early the accuracy of the numbers could be poor.

Mr. Matthews suggested making a stronger effort to communicate to residents the operating and maintenance impacts of building new buildings. He is not in favor of two ballot questions. Mr. Bulian stated that the Board must vote a position on the Warrant Articles and ballot initiatives at its next meeting. The Board discussed various ways to get information out to the residents on the issue.

The Board discussed the FY2008 budget and the proposed School Committee operating override. Mr. Rosenstock stated that the Finance Committee budget was sufficient to prevent the loss of any teachers. Mr. Simmons stated that the School Committee's request is primarily the restoration of the Science Center and other program costs. The Board discussed with the Finance Committee its intention to shift any funding should an override pass. Mr. Wasserman stated that the Finance Committee needs to take a position. Laura Brooks, Finance Committee member, stated that it would not be fair to ask the Finance Committee to make a commitment. Mr. Rosenstock stated that it was not likely that funds would be transferred from schools should an operating override pass. Mr. Matthews suggested the Finance Committee could put funding in the Reserve Fund and make a determination on how to allocate it after the election. Mr. Simmons stated that the School Committee needs to know its budget in order to formulate an override request amount. Mr. Healy stated that the School Committee should not have accepted additional funding if it knew it was going to go for an operating override. The Board must take a position on both override questions at a meeting scheduled for March 6, 2007.

9:30 p.m. FY08 Budget/Capital Improvement Plan Update: Ms. Fitzpatrick and David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director, presented a debt analysis which factors in the revised costs of the High Rock School Renovation. The summary showed that the Town's debt service would be significantly over 10% for some time. Mr. Healy reiterated his position that the School Committee should consider the option of building a new middle school now because the costs of High Rock are so high. The Board acknowledged that the new High Rock Cost estimate impacts the ability of the Town to finance components of the Facility Master Plan including the renovation of Town Hall. The Board discussed the various Facility Master Plan projects and where the funding would come from for these projects. The Board agreed it needs to discuss its current 10%

debt cap policy in light of the information presented in the Debt Summary.

10:40p.m. Close Annual Town Meeting Warrant:
The Board returned to its discussion of the 2007 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Ms. Fitzpatrick reviewed the Articles and revisions since the Board's last version. The Board discussed what information should be presented under the Citizen Petitions. The Board agreed that sponsors of the petition should be identified. The Board agreed to have the Town Manager and Chairman select the best approach for the 2007 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The Board discussed changing the form for submitting a Citizen's Petition to declare the sponsors up front. The Board agreed to mail an election/warrant postcard to all residents. Mr. Matthews asked the Chair and Vice-Chair to meet with the Finance Committee Chair and Vice-Chair to identify opportunities to limit redundant discussion of articles at Town Meeting. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked the Board whether it wanted to continue the Solid Waste Disposal/Recycling Advisory Committee. The Board agreed that a major portion of the committee's work has been completed with the new disposal contract. Mr. Cogswell agreed to speak with Committee members and inform them of the decision to discontinue the committee.

Motion by Mr. Healy that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve and close the 2007 Annual Town Meeting Warrant as presented by the Town Manager subject to minor technical corrections to be made by the Town Manager, Town Counsel and Bond Counsel.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0.

11:00p.m. Consent Agenda:
Motion by Mr. Matthews that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Appointments and Consent Agenda as presented.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Accept donations received totaling \$210 to the Miscellaneous Parks Trust Fund Donation.**
- 2. Accept donation received in the amount of \$700 from**

Louise Condon Realty to the Park & Recreation Dept's Arts in the Parks Program.

3. Accept donation received in the amount of \$700 from Dedham Institution for Savings to the Park & Recreation Dept's Arts in the Parks Program.
4. Accept donation received in the amount of \$1,000 from Louise Condon, Louise Condon Realty to the Needham Youth Commission.
5. Approve minutes from January 23, 2007, January 30, 2007 and February 13, 2007.

Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 5-0.

11:00p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Healy that the Board of Selectmen vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Board Meeting of February 27, 2007.

Second: Mr. Matthews. Unanimously approved 5-0.