

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, October 22, 2024
Powers Hall and
Via ZOOM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046>**

- 6:04 p.m. Call to Order:
A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Kevin Keane. Those present were Vice Chair Heidi Frail, Marianne Cooley, Cathy Dowd, Joshua Levy, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance, Katie King, Deputy Town Manager, and Susan Metropol, Recording Secretary, were also in attendance.
- 6:05 p.m. Public Comment Period:

No public comments were heard.
- 6:05 p.m. 2024 National First Responders Day Proclamation:
Presenters: Shane Mark, Assistant Director of Public Works, Tom Conroy, Fire Chief, Chris Baker, Deputy Police Chief

Shane Mark, Assistant Director of Public Works, discussed the services the Fire, Police, and DPW provide as first responders. Ms. Frail then read the 2024 National First Responders Day Proclamation, designating October 28, 2024 as National First Responders Day.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve and sign the 2024 National First Responders Day Proclamation.
Second: Ms. Frail. Unanimously approved 5-0.
- 6:09 p.m. 2024 Veterans Day Proclamation:

Ms. Frail read the 2024 Veterans Day Proclamation, designating November 11, 2024, as Veterans Day.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve and sign the 2024 Veterans Day Proclamation.
Second: Ms. Frail. Unanimously approved 5-0.
- 6:11 p.m. Public Hearing: Grant of Location – 223 Warren Street:
Presenter: Hannah Cooper, Eversource Representative

Eversource Energy requested permission to install approximately 38 feet of conduit in Warren Street. The reason for this work is to provide service to 233 Warren Street. The Department of Public Works has approved this petition, based on

Eversource Energy's commitment to adhere to the Town's regulation that all conduit installed must be 3" schedule 40 minimum; and, that when buried, that conduit must be placed at 24" below grade to the top of the conduit.

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 38 feet of conduit in Warren Street.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.

6:13 p.m. Eversource Underground Cable Modernization Program:
Presenter: Peter Bowman, Eversource Community Relations, Ian Kea, Eversource Project Services, Hector Escalante-Yuman, Eversource Engineering

Eversource Energy provided the Select Board an overview of its proposed Underground Cable Modernization Program (UCMP). The UCMP is a project intended to improve the capacity and reliability of electrical transmission infrastructure in Needham and surrounding communities. This project specifically focuses on the replacement of cable from Dover to Needham. This is to meet future energy demands with the following long-term improvements:

1. Replace existing lines with XLPE to eliminate risk of leaks
2. Proactive switch to XLPE means having increased supplier options
3. Reduce failure risk in densely populated areas
4. Increase speeds of restoration and better access to pipes
5. Improve capacity to meet future demand of Electric Vehicle charging and heat pumps

The proposed route of this project would run between Dover and Needham, with most of the work focusing on the Chestnut Street Substation. There are no plans to interrupt regular electric service. The approximate timeline of the project is from Q4 of 2026 until Q4 of 2029. Eversource representatives also outlined their engagement strategy for outreach to community members, including stakeholder meetings, project information materials, and information sessions with the community.

Select Board members asked the Eversource Energy team about the increase in voltage capacity, what commuters will experience driving the route of the project work, and the traffic management plan for the duration of the project. This plan includes how to accommodate school bus routes and commuting routes, including paving as the work is completed to reduce construction time. Of note, the road will remain open during construction. The work will involve digging down to the existing line, which is approximately 3 to 5 feet. Eversource Energy will coordinate with affected homes at the appropriate times with special attention along Chestnut Street with that being the ambulance route to Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital.

6:39 p.m. Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda:
Motion by Ms. Frail that the Board vote to approve the Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda.
Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

1.	Guus Dreissen	Mobility Planning and Coordination Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2027
2.	Justin McCullen	Needham Center Project Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2027
3.	Heidi Frail	Large House Review Study Committee (Recommendation for Appointment to Planning Board)
4.	Marianne Cooley	Large House Review Study Committee (Recommendation for Appointment to Planning Board)
5.	Catherine Dowd	General By-Law Review Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2026
6.	Zohar Gorman	Needham Historical Commission Term Exp: 6/30/2026
7.	Jacqueline DeWolfe	Needham Center Project Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2027

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve Open Session Minutes of September 24, 2024 and Executive Session Minutes of October 8, 2024
2.	Approve a request from Maggie Flanagan, Needham Athletic Booster Club, to hold the road event "NHS Athletic Booster Rocket Run." The event is scheduled for Sunday, March 23, 2025, at 9:00am - 12:00pm. The event and route have been approved by the following departments: Fire, Police and Public Works.
3.	Accept the following donations to the Needham Free Public Library: • From Josephine Glassenberg via the Abigail P. & Charles S. Glassenberg Fund, \$100 • From Whitney F., \$608 • From the Indian Community of Needham (ICON), \$500
4.	Accept the following donation to the Department of Public Works: • Daffodil bulbs to be planted around the Town Common (estimate \$250)
5.	Approve and Sign Water Sewer Abatements 1331 & 1332.
6.	Approve and Sign Fire Abatements for Invoices 38, 39, & 48.

NOTICE OF APPROVED BLOCK PARTIES

Name	Address	Party Location	Date	Time	Rain Date
Todd Glaskin	1092 Highland Ave	Carey Road	10/20/24	5pm-8pm	N/A
Leila Johnson	341 Nehoiden Street	Glendoon Road	10/26/24	3pm-7pm	10/27/24
Michael Droney	10 Great Plain Terrace	10 Great Plain Terrace	10/26/24	5pm-9pm	N/A
Jamie McCarthy	14 Meadow Lane	Meadow Lane	10/27/24	3:30-5:30pm	11/2/24
Elizabeth Lawlor	76 Howland Street	Pleasant Street	10/27/24	4pm-7pm	N/A
Michael Droney	10 Great Plain Terrace	10 Great Plain Terrace	10/31/24	4pm-9pm	N/A

NOTICE OF APPROVED ONE-DAY SPECIAL ALCOHOL LICENSES

Hosting Organization	Event Title	Location	Event Date
Needham History Center & Museum	Tequila Tasting	Needham History Center, 1147 Central Avenue	10/23/2024

6:40 p.m. Local Initiative Program Proposal – 339 Chestnut Street:
 Presenters: Matt Borrelli, Needham Enterprises, George Giunta, Jr., Counsel for Needham Enterprises, Scott Melching, Architect for Needham Enterprises

Matt Borrelli presented to the Board seeking support in filing a Local Initiative Program application for a proposed six-unit development at 339 Chestnut Street. Two of the units will be affordable (33% of the units). Mr. Borrelli introduced himself as a commercial and residential developer. He introduced his attorney, George Giunta, Jr. and architect, Scott Melching, who continued the presentation.

Mr. Giunta, Counsel for Needham Enterprises, described the parcel at 339 Chestnut Street. This parcel itself is somewhat limited under the existing baseline zoning, due to lack of sufficient area and frontage. In order to maximize the use of the parcel, Mr. Borrelli is seeking to develop the parcel under the Local Initiative Program. Mr. Keane asked specifically about the MBTA Neighborhood Plan that was passed by Town Meeting the previous night. Mr. Giunta explained that because it is a substandard lot, there is limited ability to redevelop the lot, which is in a commercial district. Scott Melching, architect, described the design of the proposed building. With smaller square footage of units, these units will be marketed to people who work in Needham who can walk to work and aim to be simple but efficient units for individuals who work nearby. Mr. Giunta added that they are seeking support on the project as a Local Initiative Program (LIP) project. A LIP

project is a joint monitoring arrangement between the Town and the State, which allows the Town the opportunity to participate in future issues, such as rent increases.

Discussion ensued among Board members and presenters regarding the benefit to the Town of supporting this proposal, noise protection within the building to protect residents due to close proximity to the train, and streetscape of the building. There was also extensive discussion of the MBTA Neighborhood Plan and its relevance to this.

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to support the Local Initiative Program application for the six-unit development at 339 Chestnut Street. Second: Ms. Cooley. Approved 4-1 with Mr. Levy against.

7:25 p.m. Townwide Trail Signage Improvement:
Presenters: Dave Herer, Needham Conservation Commission Chair, Deb Anderson, Director of Conservation (Remote)

The Conservation Commission Chair and Director of Conservation presented a proposal to update signage on Town-owned trails throughout Needham. The trails fall under various jurisdictions including the Select Board, the School Committee, the Park & Recreation Commission, and the Conservation Commission. Dave Herer explained that the aim is to improve the way finding signage and ensure it is updated, consistent, and complete. He added that they are planning to build additional kiosks at various locations on Town trails. This project has been submitted as a request in the Town's capital budget for consideration.

Select Board members had the opportunity to ask about standardization of trail markers, the Trail Stewards Program to provide volunteer assistance, and the timing of the application for Community Preservation Committee funding.

Motion by Ms. Frail that the Board vote to support the submission of a Community Preservation Committee application for the Townwide Trail Signage Improvement Project.

Second: Ms. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.

7:36 p.m. Zero Emission Vehicle First Policy:
Presenters: Gabby Queenan, Sustainability Manager, Shane Mark, Assistant Director of Public Works

In 2019, the Select Board adopted the Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy which was a requirement for municipalities to achieve Green Communities designation from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER). DOER has since developed a new designation program for municipalities, Climate Leader Communities. Municipalities seeking state Climate Leader Community designation are required to demonstrate their commitment to greenhouse gas emissions

reductions by replacing fleet vehicles powered by fossil fuels over time with those that are powered by electricity or other means that emit no greenhouse gases. To meet these criteria, DOER requires that communities seeking Climate Leader designation adopt a Zero Emission Vehicle First Policy by action of the local official or body with authority to enact municipal policies.

Needham has made significant progress towards the Climate Leader Communities designation, having achieved 4 out of 6 requirements. Those remaining are 1) create a municipal decarbonization roadmap and 2) adopt a Zero Emission Vehicle First Policy. Grants provided to Climate Leader Communities is significantly more than the Green Communities designation.

Ms. Queenan reviewed various definitions relevant to the discussion of Electric Vehicles (EVs), a comparison of electric vehicle costs and fuel vehicle costs, costs of maintenance for electric vehicles, and various eligible electric vehicle incentives. She also highlighted the retail costs of electric vehicles, reliability in cold conditions, and concerns regarding electric vehicle batteries and electric grid concerns.

Ms. Queenan also summarized the current fleet of EVs in Needham. Select Board members asked Ms. Queenan and Mr. Mark about relevant planning for weather events, flexibility within the policy related to emergency response and heavy duty vehicles, and how this policy aligns with current DPW goals. The application for the first round of designations ends on December 31, 2024.

8:07 p.m.

Needham Power Choice Program Update:

Presenters: Gabby Queenan, Sustainability Manager, David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance, Cecilia Simchak, Assistant Director of Finance, Paul Gromer, Mass Power Choice

Ms. Queenan provided an update on the status of Needham Power Choice, a municipal energy aggregation program for Needham residents and businesses. She reviewed the program goals: 1) to provide cleaner electricity for residents and businesses; 2) to create new electricity choices; and 3) to provide stable and competitive electricity prices. She also outlined the three program options.

Planning for program launch is now underway, with a public education period beginning in December and an estimated program launch date of March 1, 2025. Discussion among Board members and presenters included how the Town will weigh cost and renewable energy priorities as adding renewable electricity increases the price. Ms. Queenan explained that the goal is to add some renewable energy while keeping the price below the price of Eversource's Basic Service. It is possible to add as much as 30% additional renewable electricity and still be below the pricing for Eversource Basic Service, however, most communities add 10% to 20%. Other questions from the Board included how to present options to residents and how this program will impact the Town's climate goals.

8:30 p.m. Town Manager:

RTS Employee Use Policy

At its meeting on October 8, the Select Board reviewed a proposal policy to allow municipal employees access to the Recycling and Transfer Station. This policy would be an additional employee benefit and would serve the mission of the RTS to ensure that materials are disposed of in the most sustainable manner.

Motion by Mr. Levy that the Board vote to approve Select Board Policy SB-PERS-005, RTS Employee Use Policy.

Second: Ms. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Tree Preservation Planning Committee

At its meeting on October 8, the Select Board reviewed a proposed Composition and Charge for the Tree Preservation Planning Committee. The Town Manager and Deputy Town Manager recommended that the Board vote to establish the Committee. Ms. Fitzpatrick also suggested that the Committee include a member from the Stormwater By-Law Working Group and the Large House Review Working Group. Ms. Fitzpatrick added that hosting a public listening early in the Committee's work has been added to the charge.

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to establish the Tree Preservation Planning Committee.

Second: Ms. Frail. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Town Manager Report

Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick informed the Board that she intends to retire next summer after almost 35 years with the Town of Needham, including 23 as Town Manager. She emphasized that she would work closely with the Select Board over the coming months to help manage the transition process. All Select Board members expressed their gratitude to Kate for her many years of commitment and service to the Town.

8:35 p.m. Board Discussion

Committee Reports

Mr. Keane noted the Board's meeting with Babson leadership on October 17th, noted the passage of the Community Housing Plan by the Special Town Meeting, and noted the upcoming Fall Family Festival.

8:38 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Exception 10: to discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive or other proprietary information provided in the course of activities conducted as a municipal aggregator under M.G.L. chapter

164, section 134, when such municipal aggregator determines that such disclosure will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling or distributing electric power and energy and not return to Open Session prior to adjournment.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Levy – Aye

Frail – Aye

Dowd – Aye

Cooley – Aye

Keane – Aye

Note: The Executive Session portion of the meeting concluded at 9:30 p.m.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting is available at:

<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID>

The next Select Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.