

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, October 8, 2024
Select Board's Chamber and
Via ZOOM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046>**

6:01 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.

6:01 p.m. Public Comment Period:

Wells Blanchard, 580 High Rock Street, Town Meeting Member, noted several concerns he has about the Neighborhood Plan and HONE analysis more generally. His biggest concern is the overcrowding that he noted is already occurring in schools, citing the Sunita Williams school as an example. He urged the Select Board to support the Base Plan and consider the present issues when planning for the long-term future of the Town's schools.

| 6:07 p.m. Zoning Articles on the Special Town Meeting Warrant:
Presenters: Natasha Espada, Chair, Needham Planning Board (Remote), Artie Crocker, Vice Chair, Needham Planning Board, Paul Alpert, Planning Board Member, Adam Block, Planning Board Member, Justin McCullen, Planning Board Member, Lee Newman, Director of Planning & Community Development, Katie King, Deputy Town Manager

The presentation began with Lee Newman presenting an overview of the MBTA Communities Act, specifically outlining the Base Compliance Plan (Articles 8 & 9) and the Neighborhood Housing Plan (Articles 10 & 11). The Base Compliance Plan adheres very closely to the zoning boundaries and dimensional standards in Needham's current Zoning By-Law. This scenario is intended to meet the minimum compliance requirements of the MBTA Communities Act. The Neighborhood Housing Plan increases dimensional standards and the number of units that can be built on a parcel of land as a way to encourage housing production. Ms. Newman highlighted the different parameters of the two zoning plans, including the number of stories, floor area ratio, max lot coverage, max dwelling units per acre, and parking per unit. She noted that the goal of analyzing a zoning proposal is to provide the Town with projections, not exact predictions. RKG Associates has projected it could take 19 to 24 years for the zoning proposals to be fully built. For planning purposes, Town staff have applied a 10-year time horizon to the "likely" build outs of both plans.

Natasha Espada noted that both zoning plans include additional site plan review standards to:

- Ensure that buildings are designed with regard to their relationship to open spaces, existing buildings and other community assets in the area;
- Address all collection and storage areas for residential refuse;
- Ensure provision of adequate water, sewer, and utility service to serve the project;
- Address pedestrian and vehicular movement within and outside the project site including application of reasonable mitigation measures to address traffic attributable to the project; and
- Include construction management standards consistent with those of the Town's General By-Laws.

Katie King subsequently outlined recent developments from the most recent Traffic Study. Of 15 key intersections, GPI recommended that 9 of these are addressed with potential mitigation strategies. She also outlined school enrollment projections, including a breakdown of unit distribution, affordability, and school aged children ratio per unit. RKG has used a more conservative rate for the 2 bedroom market and added in units for Avery Square and 100 West in the "likely build" scenarios. Currently, there is an average rate of 0.13 students/unit. Projections are consistent with the student generation rates that Needham has experienced over the last five years from Charles River Landing, the Kendrick, Modera, Hamilton Highlands, Rosemary Ridge, and Rosemary Lake Apartments. Ms. King emphasized the mechanisms and methodologies in place that would enable the Town to track the number of units built and new students. She also explained the School Building Capacity Analysis of each housing plan, which consider the McKibben peak enrollment projection, the RKG enrollment projection, current school capacity, and proposed school capacity. Ms. King concluded that the School Master Plan at the Elementary level can accommodate both build outs and highlighted that the Middle School level will require further attention, with the Base Plan projection being 2.5% over the school capacity and the Neighborhood Plan at 5.5% over the school capacity.

Ms. King also summarized the Fiscal Impact Analysis, highlighting the net fiscal impact of the full builds of each housing scenario. She also noted funds at risk from state funding sources, discretionary grant programs, and other awarding authorities if Needham is not compliant.

Discussion ensued with specific questions regarding the articles that will be presented at Town Meeting, the Town's efforts and commitment to improve access to housing, and the length of the process that has led to these articles. Adam Block, Planning Board Member, emphasized the rigorous process through which the Planning Board considered the impact of additional housing on schools, infrastructure, and other factors. He also noted the challenges of real estate development with smaller parcels in town and market conditions that are at play in the background of the Town's efforts.

7:03 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. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

1.	Kevin Keane	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
2.	Joshua Levy	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
3.	Sue Barber	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
4.	Tripp Pace	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
5.	John Salo	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
6.	Preston Hall	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
7.	Janine Helwig	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
8.	Tom Ryder	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
9.	Deb Anderson	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025
10.	Joe Prondak	Stormwater By-Law Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2025

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve Open Session Minutes of September 10, 2024
2.	Authorize the placement of lawn signs promoting the Park and Recreation Fall Family Day in the following locations from October 9, 2024 through October 27, 2024: • Town Common • Needham Heights Common • Recycling and Transfer Station • Public Services Administration Building • Berms Adjacent to the Needham Free Public Library • Harris Avenue Median
3.	In accordance with Section 20B(v) of the Town Charter, approve an amendment to Schedule A of the Classification Plan.

NOTICE OF APPROVED BLOCK PARTIES

Name	Address	Party Location	Date	Time	Rain Date
Alison Premo	354 Brookline Street	Brookline St. between Manning St. & Webster St.	10/19/24	4pm-6pm	N/A
Bryan McCorry	61 Bradford Street	Cleveland Road	10/20/24	1pm-4pm	N/A
Mark Stoughton	71 Upland Road	Upland Rd at corner of Melrose Ave	10/27/24	4pm-6pm	11/3/24

7:03 p.m. NCAC Mural in Needham Center:
 Presenters: Heather Simmons, Co-Chair (Remote), Needham Council for Arts & Culture, Joni Schockett, Co-Chair, Needham Council for Arts & Culture, J.P. Cacciaglia, Economic Development Manager

The co-chairs of the Needham Council for Arts & Culture and Economic Development Manager presented an update on NCAC's Needham Center Mural Project. The mural's objective is to enliven and educate the town with public art that connects and inspires the community. The mural will also reflect Needham as a welcoming and inclusive community. Joni Schockett noted that the mural, entitled "Tight Knit" will pay homage to the women in Needham who over 200 years ago worked in the knitting mills. This contributed to the reputation of Needham as a textile business area. The mural will also include birds that are native to Needham, made famous by Timothy Otis Fuller, a Needham resident who studied, documented, and illustrated the birds of Needham. The artist has connected the nature and technology of our Town and highlights the role women played in the economy of Needham. The mural will take approximately two weeks to complete in late October.

7:10 p.m. RTS Employee Use Policy:
 Presenter: Carys Lustig, Director of Public Works

Carys Lustig provided a proposed policy to allow municipal employees across 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. Ms. Lustig noted that similar to residents, employees would be able to obtain a sticker for their vehicle.

7:17 p.m. Intermunicipal Agreement for the Charles River Public Health District:
 Presenters: Kerry Dunnell, Manager, Shared Services and Training Hub, Needham Public Health Department, Timothy McDonald, Director, Health & Human Services

Mr. McDonald updated the Board on the Charles River Public Health District Intermunicipal Agreement to formalize the public health shared services arrangement among the communities of Needham, Dover, Medfield, and Sherborn. Detailed discussion ensued regarding the clarification given in the memo provided explaining shared services and how the agreement benefits Needham, how the program would be funded when grant funding ends, and the scope of the agreement and how that might shift over time. Mr. McDonald and Ms. Dunnell also answered questions from Board members about oversight of the intermunicipal agreement, detailing the structure of the Advisory Board comprised of representative from each community that meets monthly. Oversight also includes detailed progress to the State, such as elements of the workplan and budget line items.

Motion by Ms. Frail that the Board vote to approve and sign the Charles River Public Health District Intermunicipal Agreement.

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

7:44 p.m. Town Manager:

Tree Working Group Update

Ms. King reviewed updates from the Town Manager's working group on protecting the Town's tree canopy. The initial takeaways of this working group include who should comprise this committee, the composition and charge of the Committee, and goals, guidelines, and strategies. The Tree Preservation and Planning Committee was modeled after the Climate Action Plan Committee. Select Board members highlighted concerns about a timeline for concrete recommendations from the Committee and providing a forum for the public to express their thoughts. There was further discussion about public trees in the berms and their impact on underground utilities. These concerns included the Town's liability relative to berm trees and the cost of replacement trees, likely to be placed on private property. The Board recognized that this new committee will need to collaborate with the Large House Review Study Committee and the Stormwater By-Law Working Group.

Special Purpose Stabilization Funds

Mr. Davison updated the Board on a proposal to adjust the following special purpose stabilization fund targets/funding sources:

- Capital Improvement Fund
- Capital Facility Fund
- Athletic Facility Improvement Fund
- Debt Service Stabilization Fund

Mr. Davison provided a detailed review of each of the funds, highlighting how the Town can utilize these funding sources and answered questions from Board members about what decisions might need to be made in the future regarding potential costs and funding options. Mr. Davison emphasized that the Town has worked to add layers of reassurance to financing of planned projects with contingency plans in place if necessary.

Positions on Warrant Articles

The Board reviewed articles on the October 21, 2024 Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Article 3: Appropriate for Stephen Palmer Planning

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to support Article 3 in the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

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

Article 8: Amend Zoning By-Law – Multi-Family Overlay District (Base Compliance Plan)

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to support Article 8 in the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

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

Article 9: Amend Zoning By-Law – Map Change for Multi-Family Overlay District (Base Compliance Plan)

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to support Article 9 in the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

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

Article 10: Amend Zoning By-Law – Multi-Family Overlay District (Neighborhood Housing Plan)

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to support Article 10 in the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Second: Ms. Dowd. Approved 4-1, with Mr. Levy against.

Article 11: Amend Zoning By-Law – Map Change for Multi-Family Overlay District (Neighborhood Housing Plan)

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to support Article 10 in the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Second: Ms. Dowd. Approved 4-1, with Mr. Levy against.

Article 13: Appropriate for Town Hall Repairs and Upgrades

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to support Article 13 in the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

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

Article 14: Amend Stabilization Fund

Motion by Ms. Frail that the Board vote to support Article 14 in the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

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

Town Manager Report

- No items to report.

9:01 p.m. Board Discussion:

Committee Reports

Mr. Levy reported that the Stormwater By-Law Working Group met and discussed model by-laws from the towns of Natick and Weston that could be helpful in developing the Town's by-law.

9:03 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Ms. Frail that the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Exception 2: to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel 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

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, October 22, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.