

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, May 27, 2025
Select Board Chambers and
Via ZOOM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046>**

- 6:02 p.m. Call to Order
A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Heidi Frail. Those present were Vice Chair Cathy Dowd, Joshua Levy, Marianne Cooley, Kevin Keane, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance and Katie King, Deputy Town Manager were also in attendance.
- 6:02 p.m. Public Comment Period

No public comments were heard.
- 6:03 p.m. 2025 Pride Month Proclamation

Ms. Dowd read the Pride Month Proclamation, highlighting the Town of Needham as a welcoming community that values and embraces the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to approve and sign the 2025 Pride Month Proclamation.**
Second: Ms. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.
- 6:06 p.m. Public Hearing: Application for an Alteration of Premises Amendment to an All-Alcohol License – North Hill Needham, Inc. d/b/a North Hill
Presenters: Briana Tucker – Manager of Record, North Hill Needham, Inc. d/b/a North Hill, Bethany Mercer, Director of Operations – North Hill Needham, Inc. d/b/a North Hill, Thomas Miller, Esq., McDermott, Quilty, Miller & Hanley LLP – Applicant Counsel

North Hill Needham, Inc. d/b/a North Hill has applied for an Alteration of Premises to their existing Section 12 Continuing Care Retirement Community All-Alcoholic Beverages License at 865 Central Avenue, Needham, MA. The amendment proposes to add already existing and constructed portions of the structure to the Licensed Premises, specifically adding two other dining areas and their associated outdoor spaces. Board members asked if food will be served in these areas and about positive control of alcohol across the expanded licensed premises.
- Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to approve the application for Alteration of Premises to a Section 12 Continuing Care Retirement Community All-Alcohol License submitted by North Hill Needham, Inc. d/b/a North Hill, and if so approved, forward the application to the ABCC for review and final approval.**

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

6:12 p.m. Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda
Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve the Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda.
Second: Ms. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

1.	Wenlie Zhou	Needham Council for Arts and Culture Term Exp: 5/27/2028
2.	Christopher Teachout	Council of Economic Advisors: Term Exp: 6/30/2026
3.	Karen Price	Norfolk County Advisory Board Term Exp: 6/30/2028
4.	Ann Cosgrove	Registrar of Voters Term Exp: 3/31/2028
5.	Natasha Espada	Stephen Palmer Reuse Development Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2027
6.	Margaret Murphy	Stephen Palmer Reuse Development Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2027
7.	Michela DeSantis	Stephen Palmer Reuse Development Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2027

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve Open Session Minutes of May 7 and May 12, 2025 (amended)
2.	Approve Personnel Administration Policy #432: Anti-Nepotism Policy
3.	Approve a request from Stefanie Forman for an Entertainment license for a one-time event, Newman PTC Springfest, on June 7, 2025. This event has been approved by the following departments: Police, Fire, Park & Recreation and Public Works
4.	Accept the following donation made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: • \$100 from the Rotary Club of Needham
5.	Accept the following donation made to the Needham Public Health Division: • \$300 from Christ Episcopal Church for Needham's Gift of Warmth program
6.	Accept the following donations made to the Needham Free Public Library: • \$500 from Barbara Kochaniak • \$15 from Beverly Singer • \$300 from anonymous donor • <i>Stormstruck!</i>, <i>Into the Trap</i>, and <i>The Sea Singer</i>, estimated value \$50, from the author, Craig Moodie
7.	Authorize the placement of Pride Month lawn signs at the Town Hall and Public Services Administration Building from June 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025
8.	Approve and authorize the Select Board Chair to sign a letter allowing the Town to request a health insurance rate quote from MIIA (Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association),

	solely for cost analysis as part of the Town’s ongoing review of its health insurance offerings with no immediate changes to current plans
9.	Approve and authorize the chair to sign the employment agreement between the Town and the Fire Chief for FY2026-2028

NOTICE OF APPROVED BLOCK PARTIES

Name	Address	Party Location	Date	Time	Rain Date
Matt Corkin	14 Pinewood Road	Pinewood Rd between Harris Ave & Great Plain Ave	6/14/25	11am-7pm	6/15/25
Lauren Soper	32 Mark Lee Road	Between Mark Lee Road & Alfreton Road	6/16/25	12pm-6pm	N/A

NOTICE OF APPROVED ONE-DAY SPECIAL ALCOHOL LICENSES

Hosting Organization	Event Title	Location	Event Date
Needham Pool and Racquet Club	NPRC New Member Social	1545 Central Avenue	6/06/2025

6:13 p.m. 40B Housing Proposal – Charles River Heights
Presenters: Anne-Marie Bajwa, Charles River Center President & CEO, Phil Crean, Planning Office of Urban Affairs Project Manager

Ms. Bajwa and Mr. Crean provided the Board with an update on the Charles River Heights project and asked for the Board’s support for a “Friendly 40B” project. The mission of Charles River Heights is to provide inclusive housing and a full spectrum of supportive services that empower individuals with disabilities to live independently, achieve their personal goals, and actively participate in their communities. A considerable percentage of adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) face challenges in achieving independent living. Ms. Bajwa emphasized that by offering inclusive housing and flexible, integrated support services, Charles River Heights aims to empower adults with ASDs to access their communities, gain employment, and live more independently.

Mr. Crean outlined the project team. The developer for the project is the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, which was formed in 1969 by the Archdiocese of Boston with the mission to develop high-quality housing where people can live with dignity and respect in homes they can afford, in order to create inclusive and vibrant communities. The organization has completed over 3,000 units to date and has provided a wide range of affordable rental and homeownership opportunities throughout a variety of income levels.

Ms. Bajwa presented that Charles River Heights will include:

- 86 new affordable housing units to attract and retain households earning at or below 30% to 80% of the Area Median Income, including elderly residents,

individuals with disabilities, young professionals, and public/private employees essential to the Town's services.

- 43 handicapped-accessible units with integrated supportive services
- Five affordable apartments for Charles River Center's staff to provide emergency support after hours.
- Community Center: 4,440 square feet – to bring the community together

The hope is to establish a creative, inclusive model that other municipalities across the state and beyond can replicate. Feedback has been collected via focus groups and self-advocacy groups. The project will include four buildings, which were illustrated in a site plan and other renderings as part of the accompanying PowerPoint presentation. The goal is to complete construction and receive the Certificate of Occupancy by October 2028.

Board members commended the project, noting its innovative spirit and unique mission. Discussion included topics such as the timing and the type of this zoning application and support for the project at the Town and State level. Ms. Bajwa and Mr. Crean emphasized that the funders, as well as the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, are very excited about this project given the current lack of opportunities for the target population. Chair Heidi Frail praised the project team for their commitment to providing housing for low-income residents and the security this project provides for the Town's subsidized housing inventory. She noted that the wide support at Town Meeting is a positive indication of community support.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to support the Charles River Center's Charles River Heights project as a "Friendly 40B."

Mr. Levy expressed his preference that zoning relief be sought from the Planning Board. He further noted that there are no established review criteria for the Select Board to use in evaluating requests such as this one, and he suggested that the Select Board establish such criteria. He stated that he would be voting against due to these reasons although he supported the project itself.

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

6:43 p.m.

Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap

Presenters: Gabby Queenan, Sustainability Manager, Carys Lustig, Director of Public Works

Ms. Queenan provided an overview of Green Communities, a designation which provides municipalities with the opportunity to obtain grant funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Green Communities was established in 2008, with Needham receiving this designation in 2020. Needham has received a designation grant and a competitive grant and currently has a second competitive grant under review.

The Commonwealth recently created a Climate Leader Communities program, to encourage municipalities to focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing electrification. Climate Leader Communities are eligible for additional grant funding, including grants for technical assistance and accelerated grants. In order to become a Climate Leader Community, municipalities must meet six criteria, five of which Needham has achieved. The Decarbonization Roadmap is the final criteria that Needham must meet in order to be eligible for the Climate Leader Communities program. Municipalities with Climate Leader Community Certification are required to develop a Department of Energy Resources approved roadmap for decarbonizing municipal buildings and vehicles. Municipal decarbonization roadmaps focus on eliminating the use of onsite fossil fuels in buildings and vehicles. The proposed draft Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap for Select Board review is an aspirational planning document. To the greatest extent possible, the proposed draft seeks to align electrification opportunities with replacement planning for equipment and end-of-life timeframes. The intent of the roadmap is to evaluate and implement upgrades where technically and fiscally feasible.

Ms. Queenan is consulting with the Superintendent of Schools as well, since the Climate Leader Communities program requires both general government and school district adoption of the Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap. A vote of the Select Board will be needed in order for the Town to apply for Climate Leader Communities certification before June 30, 2025.

Discussion ensued regarding the technicalities of the document as a planning tool for the Town in terms of capital and administration. Ms. Queenan noted that there are no requirements tied to the roadmap, though it must be updated every three years. There are currently nineteen Climate Leader Communities.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to adopt the Needham Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap as part of Needham's application for Climate Leader Communities Certification.

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

6:59 p.m. DeFazio Parking Lot Stormwater Bioretention Basin
Presenters: Gabby Queenan, Sustainability Manager, Justin Savignano, Assistant Town Engineer, Christopher Brainard, BETA, Phil Paradis, BETA, Arrianna Proia, Charles River Watershed Association

In August 2024, the Town of Needham was awarded a \$125,425 grant by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Office of Coastal Zone Management Coastal Habitat and Water Quality Grant program for its project proposal for the design of a bioretention basin to improve stormwater management along Alder Brook at the DeFazio Parking Lot. The project team provided an update on the 50% engineering design.

Ms. Proia provided an overview of the Charles River Climate Compact, of which Needham is a member. The regional partnership of 28 cities and towns focuses on climate resilience and was founded in 2019. In 2020, the team developed the Charles River Flood model to address stormwater flooding at a regional scale. The project identified site specific solutions to address local and regional flooding. The mission is to work collaboratively to increase climate resilience for people, and the natural ecosystems in the Charles River Watershed by taking a regional approach to implementing climate adaptation and mitigation solutions. Ms. Proia outlined the following process to identify and prioritize sites:

- Develop prioritization method: develop criteria with public input
- Collect project ideas: collect site selections from town partners and residents
- Apply methodology: identify priority projects

The Alder Brook and DeFazio Parking Lot area was identified as a priority project in spring 2024. The goal of the project specifically is to develop designs for DeFazio parking lot green stormwater infrastructure best management practices that will improve the Adler Brook watershed by reducing phosphorus load, improving water quality, reducing localized flooding. This will therefore reduce the phosphorus load in Alder Brook and ultimately in the Charles River. Ms. Queenan also outlined the outreach and engagement regarding the project thus far. The project will include grating the lot as well as the addition of a bioretention basin.

Discussion ensued regarding the primary purpose of the project to reduce phosphorus load transferred into the Charles River. The Board also asked questions about flood management in this area, resident education, and in particular the potential for flooding on Dedham Avenue to affect responses in emergencies.

7:27 p.m. Notice of Traffic Regulation: Mayo Avenue, Pinewood Road, Harris Avenue
Presenters: Carys Lustig, Director of Public Works, Justin McCullen,
Transportation Safety Committee Chair

The Transportation Safety Committee requested turn prohibition be instituted on Mayo Avenue, Pinewood Road, and Harris Avenue during Pollard Middle School student drop-off and pick-up times. Chair Justin McCullen said that this will reduce the number of vehicles that make a U-turn or left turns off Pinewood Road and Mayo Avenue between 7-8 AM and 2-3 PM. School buses will be exempt from this.

Ms. Cooley asked if there was a public hearing on this topic; Mr. McCullen responded that a resident brought this concern and it was subsequently brought to Principal Downey of Pollard after being discussed at a Transportation Safety Committee meeting. Mr. Levy asked about traffic implications, and the Board discussed signage and timing of this change.

Motion by Mr. Levy that the Board vote to approve and sign the Notice of Traffic Regulation Permit #R25-05-27 requiring that left turns be prohibited on Mayo Avenue southbound at Harris Avenue westbound between 7-8 AM and 2-3 PM; left turns be prohibited on Pinewood Road southbound at Harris Avenue westbound between 7-8 AM and 2-3 PM; left turns and U-turns be prohibited on Harris Avenue eastbound at Pinewood Road between 7-8 AM and 2-3 PM, except buses; U-turns be prohibited on Harris Avenue westbound at Pinewood Road between 7-8 AM and 2-3 PM, left turns be prohibited on Harris Avenue eastbound at Mayo Avenue northbound between 7-8 AM and 2-3 PM.

Second: Ms. Cooley.

Ms. Frail recommended that the school population receive a specific update regarding this change. Ms. Cooley added it might be helpful to add a video or interactive illustration to assist this. Given that the school year is coming to an end in the next month, the projected timeline for this change is September.

Unanimously approved 5-0.

7:40 p.m.

Approve Sale of Bond Anticipation Note

Presenters: David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance, Ellyse Glushkov, Town Treasurer/Collector, Cecilia Simchak, Assistant Director of Finance

David Davison and Ellyse Glushkov provided the Board with the results of the bond anticipation note and discussed future borrowings. The Town received five competitive bids on its bond anticipation note. The bids ranged from 3.5% to 4%. The bidder chosen has a net interest cost of 3.01%. The note is a short-term note that will mature in October, at which time there will be a partial paydown and then the balance will roll into a new debt instrument. Mr. Davison noted that Needham has maintained its AAA rating on outstanding debt and S&P Global Ratings assigned “SP-1+” short-term rating to Needham. The outlook on the long-term rating is stable.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve the motions as follows and presented in the materials.

Motion A: Move to approve the sale of \$11,126,235 3.50 percent General Obligation Bond Anticipation Notes (the “Notes”) of the Town dated June 2, 2025, and payable October 30, 2025, to Jefferies LLC at par and accrued interest, if any, plus a premium of \$22,586.25.

Motion B: Move that in connection with the marketing and sale of the Notes, the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Sale and Preliminary Official Statement dated May 14, 2025, and a final Official Statement dated May 21,

2025, each in such form as may be approved by the Town Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Motion C: Move that the Town Treasurer and the Select Board be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a significant events disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the Town, which undertaking shall be incorporated by reference in the Notes for the benefit of the holders of the Notes from time to time.

Motion D: Move that we authorize and direct the Town Treasurer to establish post issuance federal tax compliance procedures and continuing disclosure procedures in such forms as the Town Treasurer and bond counsel deem sufficient, or if such procedures are currently in place, to review and update said procedures, in order to monitor and maintain the tax-exempt status of the Notes and to comply with relevant securities laws.

Motion E: Move that any certificates or documents relating to the Notes (collectively, the “Documents”), may be executed in several counterparts, each of which shall be regarded as an original and all of which shall constitute one and the same document; delivery of an executed counterpart of a signature page to a Document by electronic mail in a “.pdf” file or by other electronic transmission shall be as effective as delivery of a manually executed counterpart signature page to such Document; and electronic signatures on any of the Documents shall be deemed original signatures for the purposes of the Documents and all matters relating thereto, having the same legal effect as original signatures.

Motion F: Move that each member of the Select Board, the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes.

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

7:57 p.m. Town Manager

Town Manager Report

- Non-Essential Outdoor Water Use Restriction: State affirmed Level 1 status for Needham; will next meet on June 9 to re-evaluate. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked the Board if they would like to address the water use restrictions given that Needham has two water sources. Ms. Fitzpatrick will add this item to the Goals list.
- The Town has sent a letter on behalf of the Housing Association to apply for housing funding for Seabeds Way.

8:09 p.m. Board Discussion

Envision Needham Center Working Group

The Select Board established the Needham Center Project Working Group on August 13, 2024 to provide input and feedback to the Department of Public Works and its consulting engineers on the design and layout of the Needham Center/Great Plain Avenue project. The Board updated the group's title to Envision Needham Center Working Group on January 21, 2025.

Ms. Dowd summarized feedback on the Envision Needham Center project thus far, including public comments heard at the public hearing and communicated outside of the hearing. She highlighted concerns such as traffic congestion, parking, bike safety, pedestrian safety, traffic diversion onto side streets, and cost. Other resident concerns included turn lanes, deliveries, beautification, and snow removal. Ms. Dowd commented that the current plan does not have broad public support and that any plan that is considered should be fully evaluated on the basis of traffic congestion, parking, bike safety, pedestrian safety, impact on side streets, cost, and economic vitality.

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board move to:

- 1. Give up the grant that requires bike lanes in Needham Center, including a 12-month pilot.**
- 2. Direct the staff, consultant, and the Envision Committee to consider at least three possible plans, to include optimal versions of our current four-lane configuration, a three-lane plan, and a two-lane plan.**
- 3. Direct staff, consultant, and committee to evaluate each plan for its impact on traffic congestion, parking, bike safety, pedestrian safety, economic vitality, and cost.**
- 4. Direct the consultant and committee to gather extensive public feedback on each of the plans.**

Second: Mr. Levy.

Board members offered their thoughts on these potential changes, especially given the work that must be completed by DPW in this area of Town. Mr. Keane commented that he would prefer to vote on this at a subsequent meeting. Board members agreed that the goal is to integrate systems that all must work together to optimize safety for all. The Board also agreed that the purpose of the Committee is to advise DPW and discussed that the Committee is large at 15 members and therefore not optimal for decision-making. Ms. Dowd expressed that decisions should be made by elected individuals and would like clarity on this specific issue with regard to the charge of the Committee. Mr. Levy also asked about what a feasible timeline would be for a pilot with these upcoming changes. Discussion concluded with the Board agreeing that they would ensure this process was thorough and deliberate with a well-rounded plan.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to discuss this topic at its next meeting on Tuesday, June 10, 2025.

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

Committee Reports

Ms. Cooley reported that the Large House Committee met. She noted that there is a public hearing on June 9 at 7 p.m. in Powers Hall with the goal of understanding the public's concerns regarding large houses.

Mr. Keane reported that the Stormwater Bylaw Working Group met and hopes to present to the Select Board in the summer and hold a public hearing in the upcoming months.

Mr. Keane also reported that Community Conversations on Race was held last week.

Ms. Dowd reported that T-CHOC met and approved expenses thus far. Town Meeting has voted additional funds for the Needham Housing Authority and the Charles River Center, and T-CHOC will ensure the expenditures align with what Town Meeting has authorized.

Ms. Frail reported that the Tree Committee discussed tree policies from both Newton and Wellesley. Representatives from these municipalities will join a future meeting to discuss further. The Committee also discussed plans for the public meeting on June 4 at 7 p.m. in Powers Hall.

8:52 p.m.

Adjourn

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to adjourn the Select Board Meeting of Tuesday, May 27, 2025.

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

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, June 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

A video recording of the May 27, 2025 Select Board meeting can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQzX2SySTXc> or at <https://www.needhamchannel.org/2025/05/needham-select-board-5-27-25/>.