



Board of Selectmen

Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street

Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Selectman Alan G. Whitney, Selectman John E. Carroll, Selectman Keith J. Kruckas, Selectman Tracy R. Opalinski, Town Manager Stuart B. Beckley, Clerk Mary L. Midura, Treasurer/Collector Erica Brunell

Absent: Selectman Nancy J. Talbot

Meeting Opened by Chairman Whitney

Opening Remarks, Announcements, and Agenda review by Chair

Selectman Opalinski noted the January 23, 2020 Public Forum on Complete Streets and the February 4, 2020 Public Hearing RE: High, Cottage, Prospect, School Walnut and Pulaski Streets. Selectman Opalinski requested police accident data for the February 4 Public Hearing. Selectman Kruckas noted that the DPW and Highway supervisors should be part of any decisions.

Selectman Kruckas noted the new Wood Policy, and no one should take wood without proper permission; he thanked Mr. Beckley for handling this issue.

Consent Agenda

- **Approval of January 7, 2020 Minutes**
- **Application One-Day Liquor License: St. Mary's Church Polish Plate Dinner, Saturday, February 22, 2020**

Selectman Opalinski made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Selectman Carroll seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Talbot).

Scheduled Appearances

- **Cynthia Henshaw – Tree Grant Program**

Cynthia Henshaw noted the highlights of the program:

Planting Trees for Community Health in Ware, MA

A partnership of East Quabbin Land Trust, Opacum Land Trust, the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership, The U.S. Forest Service, the Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation and Recreation and the Town of Ware

East Quabbin Land Trust, a non-profit land conservation organization based in Hardwick, Massachusetts, with our partner organizations in the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership is part of a \$252,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service State and Private Forestry Landscape Scale Restoration program to plant 2,000 trees in Southbridge and Ware. East Quabbin Land Trust will work with the Ware community to plant 1,000 trees the urban areas of Ware and the Opacum Land Trust will do the same with the Town of Southbridge. Planning for this effort will begin in the fall of 2019 with work continuing for a three-year period into 2022.

Modeled on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's *Greening the Gateway Cities Program* of urban tree planting, the goal of this project is to improve community health through the many benefits that urban tree planting provides (see

below for more information) in underserved neighborhoods of Southbridge and Ware. The 2,000 trees to be planted are being donated by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Staff from East Quabbin Land Trust will coordinate with Ware community service organizations such as Baystate Mary Lane Outpatient Center, Community Health Network Association 3 members, and others, along with departments and staff of the Town of Ware, the school district and other community members, to determine the best locations for tree planting. The goal of the project is to plant as many of the trees on residential, school, playground and park locations as possible, along with other venues that provide overall community benefits.

East Quabbin Land Trust and its community partners will work closely with the Town of Ware and the appropriate departments and personnel to ensure that the Town and the community are best served by this effort and that the broadest possible stake-holder input can be drawn upon for decisions about where trees will be planted, and which species are most appropriate to each location. The costs for planting the trees and professional forestry guidance are included in the grant, as are the cost of the trees (1 to 2-inch diameter), valued at \$140,000. **The planting of 1,000 trees in Ware will add approximately 10 acres of tree canopy to the Town once the trees mature.**

Clark University will provide environmental monitoring equipment and related technology to measure the environmental conditions (temperature and air quality) of the areas where trees are being planted and for approximately the first 10 years of their growth.

East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT.org) cares for 1,000 acres of conserved land in the region, including 200 acres on three properties in Ware. East Quabbin Land Trust will provide educational opportunities to the Ware community through its properties in conjunction with the work on this project.

The Needs & Benefits of Tree Planting in Ware:

Ware is ranked #1 in the “Asthma Capitals” of Massachusetts by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America and the town is considered an “Environmental Justice Area” by State agencies. Ware is among the highest priority areas in the Massachusetts Forest Action Plan for urban forestry.

The 2016 Baystate Mary Lane Outpatient Center Community Health Needs Assessment Final Report identified the high rates of chronic health conditions, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma and associated morbidities. Also, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) was identified as a health priority in this assessment. Vulnerable populations include children and youth, older adults, some communities of color, particularly Latinos, individuals with low income levels, those living in poverty, and those who are homeless. ***These health conditions are directly impacted by environmental conditions such as air quality, pollution, heat stress, lack of physical exercise and general quality of life issues.***

- ***Trees directly remove pollutants from the air around them, absorbing gases and pollutants through their respiration and by catching particulate matter on their leaves and branches.***
- ***Several studies show a strong correlation between increased tree cover, reduced surface temperature and improved respiratory health outcomes.***

On average in this part of Massachusetts we experience 6 days per year with temperatures over 90 degrees. Scientists predict that by the middle of this century, about 30 years from now, this area will experience 33 days a year over 90 degrees, 9 of which will be over 100 degrees. By the end of this century this part of Massachusetts will average 90 days over 90 degrees, 24 days of which will be over 100 degrees. Heat related deaths already kill more Americans every year than the combined impacts of hurricanes, tornados, floods, lightning and snow storms. During the heatwave that struck Europe in 2003 at least 20,000 people died as a result of the prolonged high temperatures.

- *Tree shaded areas can be 20 to 45 degrees cooler* than adjacent areas in direct sunlight and urban trees can *cool an urban environment up to 10%* overall through the shade effect and cooling created by their natural transpiration of water. An economic analysis for the Greening the Gateways Cities program showed that the investment in the program was paid back in energy bill savings in about 12 years and was paid back three times 22 years after planting.
- **A USDA study found that local tree planting had a 2:1 economic multiplier in the community – an economic benefit of over \$500,000 for this project.**

Other direct benefits of urban trees include:

- Absorption of urban noise.
- Reduction of the velocity of rain run-off impact through leaf-retention of rain and root absorption of storm-water, reducing street flooding and run-off of storm-water into natural water bodies.
- Improved quality of life, including mental health, for neighbors of trees.
- Attracts wildlife, primarily birds.
- In addition, this project will create 3 seasonal tree planting jobs and provide experience and references for landscaping, municipal and other jobs for participants.

For more information on this project, please contact Cynthia Henshaw,
Executive Director of East Quabbin Land Trust:
By email at chenshaw@eqlt.org or by phone at 413-477-8229.



Ms. Henshaw noted that 22 trees have been planted in Grenville Park. She has worked in cooperation with the Tree Warden and Director of Planning and Community Development. There may be an Arbor Day event. Ms. Henshaw has appeared on the cable show to let residents know of this program. The program will hire two people to coordinate the plantings. The only requirement is to commit to watering the trees for two years; approximately 15 gallons of water per week. Trees are in 10 gallon pots and are 6 feet tall; there is a variety of trees available, and an arborist will work with MDCR and Forest Service to determine the best trees per area. Residents may call 477-8229 to be placed on a list and have appointments with the arborist. Mr. Beckley questioned if trees would be available outside the designated area; Ms. Henshaw noted that some are street trees, and there will be a review in year 2 to discuss planting outside the target area.

Old Business - none

New Business

- **Treasurer's Policy**

Erica Brunell, Treasurer/Collector, presented the new policy to streamline departmental procedures. She consulted other towns and noted safety issues, timely deposits done weekly, locked vaults, and the importance of consistency.

Selectman Kruckas questioned that water department deposits should also be made in Town Hall; Mr. Beckley noted that plan is still in process. Selectman Opalinski questioned reconciliations and checks and balances; Ms. Brunell noted she consulted with the Town of Amherst, and will be consulting with Newburyport. Selectman Carroll questioned use of money orders; Ms. Brunell noted this policy addresses intake of money only. The Board requested that Ms. Brunell confirm the policy with the auditors; the Board will then approve the policy. Selectman Opalinski praised Ms. Brunell for her research and contact with other communities.

- **MMA Resolutions**

The Board discussed the proposed MMA resolutions. Selectman Opalinski and Town Manager Beckley will attend the MMA Annual conference on January 24-25, 2020.

Selectman Kruckas questioned a proposed gas tax. Mr. Beckley noted language related to regular school transportation. Chairman Whitney noted this year's receipts over state budget. Selectman Carroll noted that the resolutions throw in good points and bad.

Selectman Opalinski made the motion to support the MMA resolutions at the annual MMA conference. Selectman Kruckas seconded the motion. The vote passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 1 No (Selectman Carroll), 1 Absent (Selectman Talbot).

Comments and Concerns of Citizens

Selectman Kruckas noted that the Cannabis Committee met on January 16, and a suggestion was discussed to change the committee name to Cannabis Advisory Board. The committee would like to request a letter be sent to the State regarding the long delay in license approval; the Board noted the committee should draft the letter and bring to the Board of Selectmen for review. Selectman Opalinski noted that applicants who are non-profits would want to apply for funding; Mr. Beckley noted that the Board of Selectmen determines how 3% is spent and who receives funds. Mr. Beckley also noted an estimated \$2million in sales, 3% would go to the General Fund and 3% to impact the community.

Town Manager Report

January 23 – Public Forum, Complete Streets, Plan and Priorities

February 20 – Invitation Curaleaf tour with Cannabis advisory committee

Mr. Beckley noted the governor's budget will be announced on January 22, 2020 with an increased 2.8% possibly for education.

Personnel: The DPW assistant position will be filled by Kayleigh Goodrow, formerly the assistant in the Assessors Department.

The Town is accepting Christmas trees at Robbins Road until this Saturday, January 25. The Town has received a small grant from the MA Department of Environmental Protection to establish a mattress recycling program.

Main Street reconstruction – The Business and Civic Association met last week. There are continued concerns with timing for the project. A mitigation committee was established to work with the Town and the MassDOT personnel. A contract with the construction contractor has not been finalized yet, so the start of the project will be delayed. The anticipated full project term is expected to be approximately 500 days, so completion will carry over until 2021.

Members of the Board expressed frustration with the expectation of 500 days for completion of the Main Street project. There is no project engineer or point person until a contractor is chosen.

School Building – The town received bids for the Middle School window and door project from sub-contractors that were within the cost estimates. Final bids from the General Contractors are due Thursday. A School Building Committee meeting will be held on January 28th to recommend an award. The project is anticipated to commence in early June and be completed by mid-September.

The design of the Animal Control shelter in Warren is finalized and that project is headed out to bid. The four towns are reviewing the Inter-municipal agreement for operations as the facility moves from Palmer to Warren.


Water Treatment. The deed work and title search for the Barnes property were completed. Attorney Wojcik signed the appropriate documents for USDA. We are working with bond counsel on the remaining authorization. The DPW director and I are reviewing the current enterprise revenue numbers this week and meeting with the design engineers later in the week to review options for cost increases.

Mr. Beckley noted that USDA will work with the Town to modify the cost estimated at \$6-7million and help the Town apply for additional grants. He also noted that consumption of water has declined.

Chairman Whitney noted there will be no executive session this evening.

~~Executive Session: M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) #1 Discussion of Complaints Regarding Public Employee: Town Manager~~

Selectman Kruckas made the motion to Adjourn Regular Session at 7:48 p.m.
Selectman Opalinski seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 3 Yes, 1 No (Selectman Whitney), 1 Absent (Selectman Talbot).

Attest: 
Mary L. Midura, Executive Assistant to
Town Manager