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BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND SEWER COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

December 2, 2013
Francis Faulkner Hearing Room
7:00 p.m.

Present: Ms. Adachi, Mr. Gowing, Ms. Green, Mr. Clough, Mr. Sonner, Town Manager Ledoux, Recording Secretary; Christine Joyce. The meeting was televised.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS

Arleen Martino presented a warning of immediate collapse of our economy if we do not restore the Glass-Steagall Law. She urged the Board to support House Bill 129, which will restore the 1933 Glass-Steagall law, and to send a letter to Niki Tsongas asking her to cosign HR 129.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE & OPERATIONAL MINUTE

Mr. Ledoux – He received the recommendation for the designer of the Kelly's Corner project and has selected the Cecil group. They are now working out a contract with them to move forward. He also reported on a scam over the phone that has impacted some Acton residents in which the caller implies that the homeowner owed money to the government and would be subject to arrest if they didn't pay immediately. The Police Chief is looking at this issue. He will be meeting with town staff and the owners of the Local Table to discuss the running of free meals programs for folks in need.

Ms. Adachi – The 495 Metro West Partnership gave Doug Halley an award for his work in the public sector and particularly with the cross connect program. The Town Manager will present his budget at our next meeting on the 16th.

PUBLIC HEARINGS & APPOINTMENTS

NSTAR ELECTRIC – CONSTRUCT CONDUITS AND MANHOLES – MONROE DRIVE

Mr. Sonner - Moved to approve. Mr. Gowing - second UNANIMOUS VOTE.

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Carol Leipner-Srebnick, Chairman of the Board of Assessors and Brian McMullen, Assistant Assessor, presented the FY14 Tax Class hearing. For the past 10 years we have selected a uniform tax rate without shifting any additional burdens to the commercial base. We have also chosen not to adopt an open space discount, a residential exemption, or a small business exemption. They presented a slide show of the materials to assist the Board of Selectmen in making votes on the 4 options.

Mr. Gowing asked if there were any significant changes from last year that might affect our decision. Mr. McMullen said there were not.

Mr. Clough asked about the average residential valuation as presented in our materials. Mr. McMullen said they are actual numbers but since they include all residential properties, it's not the average value of a single family home.

Mr. Sonner commented that he saw no compelling reason to change our classifications.

Mr. McMullen said that he wanted to add that we have an excess levy capacity of approximately $441,000 that will be given back to the citizens because of higher than estimated new growth numbers.

SELECTMAN'S DECISIONS/MOTIONS ON TAX CLASSIFICATION

1. **ADOPT A RESIDENTIAL FACTOR: Mr. Sonner - Moved to adopt (A) – Uniform Rate Mr. Clough - second. UNANIMOUS VOTE**

   A. I move to adopt a residential factor of 1.0 which Results in a "Uniform Rate"

2. **ADOPT AN OPEN SPACE DISCOUNT: Mr. Sonner - Moved not to grant (B) an Open Space Discount Mr. Gowing – second UNANIMOUS VOTE**

   B. I move not to grant an "Open Space Discount".

3 **ADOPT A RESIDENTIAL EXEMPTION: Mr. Sonner - Moved not to adopt (B) Residential Exemption– Ms. Green second UNANIMOUS VOTE**

   B. I move not to adopt a "Residential Exemption".

4. **ADOPT A SMALL COMMERCIAL EXEMPTION: Mr. Sonner - Moved not to adopt (B) - Mr. Clough - second UNANIMOUS VOTE**

   B. I move not to adopt a "Small Commercial Exemption".

TOWN WIDE SURVEY RESULTS PRESENTATION

UMASS Lowell students that reviewed the results of the Town Wide Survey presented their information to the board. They presented a slide show of the results obtained from the respondents. They reviewed the rating of town services and programs. It was noted that the residents are overall very happy with the town.

Mr. Gowing asked about where we stood as compared to other communities. The professor leading the students said we have similar ratings to Andover, the only other comparable town that they've done the research for.

Mr. Clough asked about surveying the Business Community. The professor said that they can look into that.

Ms. Green asked that the study be posted on our Web Page.

GREEN ACTON ZERO WASTE

Susan Jenk and Jim Snyder Grant, members of Green Acton and it's Zero Waste subcommittee, presented on their work toward having Acton becoming a Zero Waste town. They presented a slide show on their efforts. They are asking the Town Manager to authorize $15,000 for zero waste efforts including better signs at the transfer station recycling center and to build a drop swap shed. They are also asking for support of a grant application for assistance on exploring additional waste reduction opportunities. Mr. Ledoux said he was more comfortable with recommending $20,000-25,000 be spent from the enterprise fund for zero waste activities.

Mr. Sonner thanked them for their work and said he would like us to publicize our recycling rate on the web site and at the Transfer Station in order to get feedback and so people better understand where we stand compared to other towns in the state.

Mr. Clough thanked them and asked if they had factored in prevailing wage issues for the drop-swap shed. The Town Manager said he wasn't sure it would fall under prevailing wage but wanted a cushion just in case it does. Mr. Clough asked if our recycling rates were so low because we don't have curbside pickup. Mr. Snyder-Grant and Ms. Jenck said that many towns have been successful in reducing their waste by implementing pay as you throw curbside pick-up and that the SMART grant would help us explore that option.

Mr. Gowing thanked them and asked if they had visited other towns' drop-swap sheds. They have.

Ms. Green thanked them and suggested that they work with students from the high school on more ways to improve the town's recycling efforts and to reduce waste in town buildings.

Ms. Adachi noted that the Natural Resources director had concerns with their proposal to place recycling bins at the town's recreation fields. She also said that she would be interested to hear how other towns manage their drop-swap sheds.

The Board discussed the efforts and plans for the future. They asked about the location of the shed and it not being in the way, and not adding to the congestion. The Town will look into the disposal of computer equipment.

Pat Clifford – Asked questions about the shed inside the transfer station and how they would use if they were not dropping trash off.

Pat talked Friends of the Libraries and would urged Green Acton to work with them on book recycling.

Mr. Sonner – Moved to ask the Town Manager to spend up to $25,000 from the Enterprise fund on solid waste reduction programs, to direct the Town Manager to ask staff to apply for a Smart Grant, and to ask the Board of Health to require the private haulers to report their waste the same way Acton does to the state. Mr. Gowing – second UNANIMOUS

SELECTMEN'S BUSINESS

KNOX TRAIL UPDATE DISCUSSION

Ms. Adachi updated the Board on the status of the Knox Trail parcel. She noted she and the Town Manager prepared the letter from the Board to the Concord Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Clough spoke about the traffic at that location. The EDC talked about the assumption of 40 to 50 buses and their potential impact on the other business owners on Knox Trail. They concluded that it wouldn't have a huge impact. Mr. Sonner will attend Concord's Town Meeting to ensure our point of view is understood and that the letters about Acton's concerns that went to the Concord Board of Selectmen are shared with the voters. Mr. Ledoux said he could attend as a Concord resident and read the letter from Acton to the Town Meeting. Mr. Ledoux said he would like the Water District to be represented and speak about the potential effects as well.

ACHC – HOME RULE PETITION TO ALLOW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS AND REVISON TO H3609 – AUDIT REQUIREMENT

Ms. Adachi discussed the amendment to our bylaws passed at our last town meeting, which would change the audit requirements for the ACHC from 1 year to 3 years. She felt that the legislature, which has to pass the home rule petition approving our bylaw change, did not understand it and won't let the bill go through so the ACHC voted to eliminate the change in the audit process but to keep the portion that allows associate members.

Mr. Gowing asked if the change was adopted at Town Meeting, does it have to go to Town Meeting again? Mr. Ledoux thought it would be okay with just a vote form the BOS.

Mr. Sonner wanted to address this change and hopes that we try again in the future. Mr. Ledoux said they are looking at including the ACHC under the town's audit.

Mr. Clough – Moved to accept request and to recommend the revised bill. Mr. Sonner – second UNANIMOUS.

SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

Mr. Sonner – No report

Mr. Clough – EDC discussed the issue of a mixed use property that went to all commercial without going through proper town channels. The CPC has scheduled their appointments with all of the applicants.

Ms. Adachi – The ABCC is meeting tonight and is going through their grant applications. The ACHC is recommending renting the Morrison Farm house to a small family and they also recommend using a property Management Company for the house and not including it in our affordable housing stock. . The Acton Housing Authority is looking for an architect for the 27 Concord Road roof replacement. WRAC is wrapping up their work on their draft by-law. The Diversity group met on the 21st and discussed some of the big issues that came out of an earlier meeting.

Mr. Gowing – **COA-** they are instituting a new sign up plan for the exercise programs this quarter utilizing phone input only. This is a reaction to the complaints that were received during the September sign up session. They voted unanimously to write a letter of support to the COD regarding the Arboretum trail currently coming before the CPA. **Acton TV** – held their annual open house which was attended by about 45 people. Rafie Lopez (Sal Lopez's son) was cited as volunteer of the year. **Cemetery commission** – the commission reviewed an Eagle Scout project proposed for one of the cemeteries (the permanent location to retire flags). They discussed the loss of one of the trustees who recently passed away. And they are in the process of evaluating handicap access to the chapel. **TAC** – a citizen letter prompted the discussion regarding the number of metered parking spaces at the Acton train station. They voted on a response to the citizen explaining how the process works. **Health Insurance Trust** – approved the annual audit. They are awaiting some additional numbers (by January, 2014) to help set rates (in February) for the upcoming year. **HDC** - Acton 2020 came before the HDC to discuss how best to integrate the two plans. They also discussed (but did not vote) on a letter of support to the CPC for the painting of the town hall.

Ms. Green – The COD met and elected new officers and a divided up their duties. They also extended their meetings to 3 hours. The School Committees met and accepted a $450,000 Grant for Leary Track, All five elementary schools in Acton received the Healthier US School Challenge Award. Only 6% of schools in the nation receive this award and it's a big deal that each elementary school in the district was recognized. The Superintendent search is progressing and they are starting to receive applications.

CONSENT

Mr. Sonner - Moved to approve the Consent Items – Ms. Green - second. UNANIMOUS VOTE

Christine Joyce Recording Secty	Clerk Date