

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Town Hall Council Chambers

Zoom # 863 1712 6659

May 1, 2023, Monday

Present: Arthur Mathews, President
Michael Molisse, Vice President
John Abbott, Councilor
Lisa Belmarsh, Councilor
Pascale Burga, Councilor
Kenneth DiFazio, Councilor
Fred Happel, Councilor
Christopher Heffernan, Councilor
Gary MacDougall, Councilor
Greg Shanahan, Councilor

Absent: Maureen Kiely, Councilor

Also Present: Kathleen Deree, Town Clerk
Richard McLeod, Town Solicitor
Brian Connolly, Town Auditor
Ted Langill, Chief of Staff
James Malary, Director of Municipal Finance

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

President Mathews called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Town Clerk Kathleen Deree called the roll, with Councilor Kiely absent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Burga announced the upcoming Health & Wellness fair on Saturday, May 6, 2023, 10 AM to 1 PM at the Chapman Middle School.

Vice President Molisse motioned to take Item 8 out of order and Councilor Burga seconded the motion. At Councilor Abbott's request, President Mathews explained why the agenda order was changed. Unanimously voted.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR, TOWN OFFICERS AND TOWN BOARDS

23 081- Reserve Fund for Town Clerk Expenses

On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, James Malary requested that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$23,505 from the FY23 Reserve Fund to the following Town Clerk line items for the

purpose of funding increased expenses due to collective bargaining agreements, election mandates, to mail a notification of voting location move.

Misc. Expenditures -	\$4,105
Town Clerk Salaries -	\$4,200
Elections/Registrars Salaries-	\$7,650
Elections/Registrars Overtime-	\$7,550

Vice President Molisse motioned to refer the measure to the Budget/Management Committee and was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 082- Borrowing for Road/Sidewalk Improvements

On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, James Malary requested that the Town of Weymouth appropriate the sum of \$2,000,000 to pay costs associated with repairing and reconstructing Town roads and sidewalks, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto, and that to meet this appropriation, the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, §7(1), or pursuant to any other enabling authority, and that the Mayor is authorized to contract for and expend any grants, aid, or gifts available for this project; and that the Mayor is authorized to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out this project. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Any premium received by the town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote, in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

This measure requires a legal notice, public hearing and a two-thirds vote of all members of the Town Council in accordance with M.G.L.O. c.44 §1.

Vice President Molisse motioned to refer the measure to the Budget/Management Committee and was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 083- MWRA Water Application

On behalf of Mayor Hedlund, James Malary requested that the Town of Weymouth apply for admission to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Water System and that the Mayor take all necessary steps for the Town to secure a permanent connection to the MWRA system.

Once engineering and design is complete and the regulatory permits are secured, any construction funding request will be submitted to Town Council, pending the approval of Weymouth's application by the MWRA.

Vice President Molisse motioned to refer the measure to the Budget/Management Committee and was seconded by Councilor Burga. President Mathews added that the subject will be discussed at Wednesday's Public Works meeting. Further information will also be available at the Annual Town Meeting on May 15th. Unanimously voted.

The meeting reverted back to agenda order.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

23 022- Zoning and Land Use by-Laws and Map for South Weymouth Naval Air Station, as Amended

Vice President Molisse motioned to open the public hearing on the measure and was seconded by Councilor Burga. This was advertised on April 15, and April 22, 2023. Unanimously voted.

There were several presenters. John Twohig, NE Development introduced them and ran a slide presentation, focused on the zoning, but providing additional context where needed. It is a joint venture. Principals Ricardo Dumond, Bob Taylor, Jeff Dirk, Tim Sullivan were introduced. It touched on the intent, timeline and process, vision, zoning- the key parts, and studies. NE Development as a company was introduced. It is based in Boston. Originally, it spotlighted regional shopping building, such as Simon Malls, and evolved. One of its projects, University Station, has many similarities to Union Point – it was also a failed project that wasn't moving forward. It has residential, a supermarket (Wegmans), medical office, hotels, offices, etc.; a 2nd project- Cambridgeside (the old Galleria mall) likewise has a mix- life sciences, lab space, retail and residential, offices, etc. The company left the regional shopping market 20 years ago. Brookfield is a very large, well-resourced company, not based in New England, whose specialty is master plan communities. They had a joint venture in Summerville, SC similar to the base, but larger. They will focus attention on land ownership, coordination with Navy, reset the plan, and zoning changes. Land ownership – it is a foreclosing lender- some land was still owned and controlled by LStar. They secured it last October through an eminent domain taking. The US Coast Guard land was auctioned off. They put the site back together, as required by MEPA. Coordination with the Navy is critically important. Payments are due the Navy for the next 7 years. Navy agreed on March 15th that all payments go through escrow, allowing for the base to be developed. Redevelopment plan was presented as a narrative that discusses what will be done, and basis of focus submitted to the SRA.

Ricardo Dumond explained the goal is to get to the vision to form a new community. He briefly reviewed history of the site. Before the base, the land was typical coastal New England; forestation, streams, two drainage basins. In the 1940's the base developed. The land was opened up, leveled to create runways; drastic change. In its 3rd era- in the 1990's- redevelopment of the base began into a new community of some type. The goal is to build a residential community with several developers, and with a cohesive vision. There are currently 1200 residents, but no guiding idea. What should it be for this site? Repairs are needed. A big goal is to connect north and south open spaces, with a great meadow, and turn runways into greenspaces. It features drainage conduits, a T stop along western boundary. He showed a slide of the aerial view of proposed greenway. Townhouses out from greens, then single family, homes, a town center

south of turn hangar, with retail, grocery, shops enabling viability, higher density housing.

Tim Sullivan NE Development, focused on the framework to match the vision. Today's existing zoning is not being changed. This is overlay zoning. Zoning is the way to implement- map – with existing zoning already developed, into one consolidated open space district, consolidated mixed-use zoning for development. The technical stuff stays same. Land use plan- open, completed, developable areas. Current zoning map is inconsistent with development. In the new map, all existing stays the same, but with more consistency and simplicity. ART 7a- are the rules of the road for developing, and encourages a mix of uses. It's a master plan that is supported. Allowed uses and all subject to design review by SRA, prohibited uses, affordable housing, 10%, signage plan, design & performance standards all subject to review. Master development plan, supported by all of the tech studies.

He briefly touched on technical- map- water, sewer, stormwater. There are different routes MWRA can take to feed the base, in the MEPA certificate that they are required to study. They will not develop incrementally- if they can't solve for the water, sewer, etc., they will not move forward. It must be solved. They've met with department heads and SRA about sewer improvements. The plan is to get from 400 gpd to less than 100 with rebuild. Stormwater- they are designing a system that will lessen peak flows that will solve issues. 70+ intersections are also part of the MEPA file that must be studied and improved. The current MassDOT permit allows specific trip numbers per day. All permits have to be redone. They require traffic studies. They will plan differently than LStar; a plan that is actually conceivable and doable. They already identified traffic at 30 intersections that need work. Fiscally, they hired RKG, which is nationally known and have asked them to do a study to determine what is the best analysis for what could exist? What is it today and what could it be in future. Go back and study different residential/commercial models. Realistically, it must net new benefits to the community. All of this will help stabilize the base, and address the deficiencies there today to create an open space that makes sense. The base supports the 2nd largest box turtle habitat. They plan to address zoning first in order to know what can go forward, whether the community will support the program, and if it can solve the infrastructure issues and meet the MBTA requirements.

President Mathews asked his colleagues for their questions.

Councilor Abbott, who represents the district in which the base is sited, urged they listen to the current residents' concerns and comments.

Councilor Shanahan asked why not overlay over entire base? The response was that the zoning is a mess. As Mr. Luongo noted, there are so many things that were done with the zoning- it needs tremendous clarity today. If they create an article 7A, it will simplify and make it financeable. They debated for months, but it's too confusing. Councilor Shanahan asked what sort of protection does the town doesn't have against future development that's too heavily marketed to the commercial? The response was that what is grossly missing is a town center; a clearly identified commercial space. To guarantee it fails, identify what you can't predict. Nothing in the zoning dictates this. Councilor Shanahan responded they he looks forward to holding the developer to "promises" made.

Councilor Burga asked which of their other projects is this most like? The response was University Station, Westwood, from a developer standpoint, although smaller, that shows how you can create a mixed-use development. Union Station is a destination.

Councilor DiFazio asked why is the new zoning first, and do they have a new plan development agreement in place. The response was they have a plan, but they are not able to present the ability to build out without the infrastructure. Until there is community support, you can't file for permits. They have them, but they must be amended. So, how can they move forward?

Councilor DiFazio heard mention having a master core development as of March – has it been voted? The response was that the SRA voted a redevelopment plan. It will be filed and followed up with the zoning.

Councilor Happel noted the open space buffer does not show a buffer where it meets Route 18? The response was that land was owned by Coast Guard. They are working on the plan and will present a revision that extends the buffer. Councilor Happel asked has the public safety study been done, or is there a plan? The response was that the fire department is interested in it; it's a work in progress- what are the needs and what the plan and form will be in as yet are unknown.

Councilor Heffernan- noted that housing stock legislation was enacted for communities that host MBTA. Weymouth's commuter rail station hasn't been improved since 1997 and was not built to withstand the number who will be using it. Has any discussion taken place with the Healy administration? The response was the group will meet with MBTA as part of the MEPA progress. They will look at additional trains, trips. They expect dialog to create funding- to be utilized here. Councilor Heffernan also noted the average cost of the pass is \$400/month and he asked if there is any thought to lessen fees? The response was that it has not traditionally where the focus has been; rather any fund would be used for capital improvement.

Councilor Belmarsh asked for process next steps- will there be other opportunities to ask questions? President Mathews responded that he doesn't answer on behalf of the mayor. The Ordinance Committee's focus at their next meeting will be going through the materials provided. The council public comment will end when the public hearing closes. The Planning Board also meets on the proposal at their meeting and public hearing on May 9th.

Councilor MacDougall noted that the proponents say this won't move forward without a water and sewer plan. One of the other might be better option. Aquaria- desalinization plant – is that an opportunity? The response was that they will explore as part of the MEPA certificate. It is a solution that works for the base and emergency connections, but not necessarily the rest of Weymouth. MWRA has more than enough water, but it's how to get it here. Councilor MacDougall also pointed out that the reuse plan calls for more units than the enabling legislation and asked will they have to amend? The response was, yes- it refers to plans and zoning that do not exist.

Councilor DiFazio pointed out that cannabis is not allowed in Weymouth, per the Code of Ordinances. How will the subject be addressed if any of the other communities do allow it. Mayor Hedlund responded that he will defer to the residents first. Having meeting on the 15th.

President Mathews asked if there were any questions or comments from the public, to which there was the following:

Mary Akoury- Faring Way- chair of their resident council- representing 200 citizens support the plan and urged the council to take action prior to their summer recess. She pointed out the recreational opportunities the base offers, and the revenue they stand to lose without development. This is a developer with a vision, a comprehensive plan, source of revenue and the ability to address the same issues as the town.

Bill Thettinger 110 Trotter Rd.- base residents are all Weymouth residents and taxpayers. As a resident of the Woodstone Crossing Town Homes, he reported they all share enthusiasm for the developer.

Barbara Good, 25 Stonehaven Way- 3 year resident. There is a need for walkable amenities for folks. They would love to see moderate sized grocery, coffee shop, a gathering space. She supports the proposal.

Heidi Anderson, Southfield Neighborhood Association board with two other board members- This is an active community. They provided a signed petition in support of the proposal signed by close to 700 other residents. She explained the mission of the association. She urged they don't delay.

Linda Rubin, 18 Dorset Park Lane-She urged they vote in favor without delay.

David Rubin, Vice Chair Southfield Redevelopment Authority- reported the SRA has been discussing this since 2.5 years ago – this team vastly more qualified than others. Honest and lived up to that commitment. Urge TC to support as first step in collaboratively effecting change.

David Fahey 6 Dorset Park Ln.- don't want delays. There is abandoned building vandalism, dumping, and partying on the runway, that will be mitigated by this development moving forward. He urged they pass this as soon as possible.

Larry Cole, Faring Way- urged support of the plan. It will address the housing crisis, is not a plan being built in anyone's yard, and increase greenways. It will not proceed unless the undertaking is financially sound. By solving the water issue for all through MWRA, it will allow the town water bodies for recreational use. He also suggested it would be a great place to site a VA medical facility.

John Kramer, Woodstone Crossing- spoke on the aspect of trust and that is needed. They have been through the LSTAR plan and this group is straightforward and honest. These are the folks who should be doing it.

Julian Freedy 70 Trotter Road- reported he is the only one here who has worked with this developer to build Staples international headquarters, and vouched for them as the right choice.

Trish Pries 15 Woodbine- there no permanent water supply. MWRA is the preferred source, as

reported back in 2007. Where is the herring run consideration in the plan? They want to see the documentation behind the MWRA timeline and process, and appears to be far longer than 5 years estimated. The housing cannot be continued to be developed without the permanent water solution put in place. She urged they get water first, then talk about the base development. He urged they not move ahead at this time.

Kathy Swain, 134 Mill Street- base residents are entitled to receive all the services Weymouth has to offer. She asked who wrote the 150-pg document. John Twohig responded that much of the zoning is existing. New article 7A was drafted working with counsel for SRA and a group. Ms. Swain requested the town council hire consultant to review the document. She also addressed the residents who are frustrated with Town Council and residents of the base. Questions on water are still unanswered. Residents were informed through water bills that MWRA was under consideration. Residents were not brought on board.

Alyson Dossett, 56 Belmont Street- water infrastructure deficits contributing to unaccounted water, and it has not been resolved. Timeline of MWRA hookup was told to be 4 years, but the documentation appears it is closer to 10 years. Mayor has already overused water here that affects Union Point. They tried to impose a moratorium that was denied. Another resident suggested the town have something in place to protect the residents, such as a bond.

Vidi Nayak- architect on the base and prior member of Weymouth Planning Board- In mixed land use zoning- what type of industrial commercial uses will be allowed? The response was it could include retail, hotel, office building, biopharma manufacturing industry who have all expressed interest.

George Berg 74 Summer Street, Chair Weymouth Chamber of Commerce, water is a regional problem to solve. Base is already zoned- this is an opportunity to simplify the zoning. Listened to one after another developer, and this is the first time to see overwhelming support. This is the opportunity to set the zoning right.

George Savage, Faring Way- Each presentation by developer, has impressed him more and more impressed. Ride down Delahunt Drive- it's a wasteland of overgrown runways. Will it remain a blight on Weymouth forever? Development in Plymouth was a boon for the taxes there, and he is confident with Brookfield's projections, it will be here also.

Joyce Hagland, 25 Stonehaven- and representing the Eventide. This group is radically different. She was part of the first wave of development on the base. This is the right developer at the right time. She urged support

Linda DeAngelo- president of the Back River Watershed Assoc- thanked the public officers. Everyone has concerns with the project. She thanked the town for taking the initiative in the MWRA application. It will determine the success of the project.

Patty Hickey 19 Thistle Lane, lifelong Weymouth resident and living on the base since 2011. These developers have listened to the residents. She She fully supports the zoning

Daniel Wolginoff, 74 Park View Street- representing the families of 67 kids living there. This is a win-win for the residents and Weymouth overall. It's a great plan. This is the right developer to engage with; they have the case studies, and take their time.

Philip Anderson, 2 Dorset Park Lane (Zoom)- sentimental, retired USMC Colonel- the base is hallowed ground to those who served in WWII and beyond. There is no greater tribute to them than to finish the redevelopment.

Ed Block, 8 Stonehaven Drive (Zoom)- was totally unaware of unaccounted water use and it needs to be addressed. The developer has a proven track record. There will be meetings, and people will work together to get it done.

"Save Gorillas" Trotter Road- the base needs more police presence with the dirt bikes driving on the sidewalks. It has been a wasteland for a long time.

Eric Phaneuf, 17 Thistle- fully support the rezoning plan as outlined by the master developer.

Councilor Abbott motioned to close the public hearing and was seconded by Councilor MacDougall.

Councilor Abbott reported that they heard from a broad section, it was advertised, and they asked to move it forward. Councilor Belmarsh noted there are still a lot of questions and she asked they consider holding it open. Councilor Burga support closing. There is still sufficient time for the public to comment. Councilor DiFazio pointed out what remains is a highly technical review of the zoning and he supported closing it. Vice President Molisse stated he is also in favor of closing it as he believes they have heard from residents and know their intent. Councilor Shanahan agreed with the motion. The public has adequately expressed they want to move this along and he supported the motion. President Mathews said his first thought was keeping it open was beneficial but the Planning Board is holding a public hearing also, and if anyone still wanted the opportunity to speak they will have it. He will support the motion.

Unanimously voted.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Town Council is the Annual Town Meeting on May 15, 2023. At 10:00 PM; there being no further business, Vice President Molisse motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

Attachments: PPP for Measure 23 022, submitted by the proponents

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Arthur Mathews as President of the Town Council
Voted unanimously on 5 June 2023