

**Minutes
Board of Selectmen
January 22, 2024
Cotter Room
6:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Kevin Donovan, Chair, Tim Chapin, Kevin DiMarzio, Suzanne Djusberg, Scott Lambiase, Town Manager

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence: Kathleen Creighton passed away recently after a long illness. She served on the Conservation Commission for many years. Kathy was a member of the Community Preservation Committee, the By-Law Review Committee, as well as the Charter Review Committee. She will be deeply missed by her family and friends.

Public Announcements:

Mr. DiMarzio – Commented on the previous meeting and what took place during the appointment process. It was unprecedented and not what this Board is about. For anyone who has reservations about coming before this Board, that kind of behavior will not be tolerated, nor will it happen again and asked the public to accept the Board's sincere apologies. It is a unified Board, committed to holding professional standards and giving a respectful and professional experience.

Action/Discussion Items:

1. **Letter of resignation to the Board of Selectmen received from Alex Hagerty, effective immediately.** Mr. Donovan thanked Alex for his three years on the Board of Health as well as his three years of service on the Board of Selectmen.
2. **Vacancy on Board of Selectmen.** The Board has consulted Town Counsel because the resignation fell ten days outside of Charter 3.2 - a vacancy occurring three months immediately preceding an Annual Town Election shall be filled by special election. Town Counsel felt it would be a waste of resources to hold a special election since this seat is already on the ballot for the Annual Town Election. Papers are available at the Town Clerk's office and are due back on March 11th.

3. **Reorganization of the Board.** The meeting was turned over to the Town Manager to conduct nominations for Chairman. Ms. Djusberg nominated Mr. Donovan as Chair, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio. There were no other nominations. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Donovan requested nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Djusberg nominated Mr. Chapin, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio, unanimous.
4. **Meeting with Abington Affordable Housing Trust and Griffin Dairy Committee to discuss the potential of parceling off a portion of land currently part of Griffin Farm for construction of an affordable housing unit.** Ken Coyle, Chair of Affordable Housing Trust, explained the Trust's goals. There is a need for more affordable housing in Abington, and one of their priorities is to educate people about what that is. The median price of a single family house in Abington was \$525,000, and a household would need to earn approximately \$190,000/year to afford that. The median household income in Abington is \$115,000/year.

South Shore Habitat for Humanity has asked about available property. The Gliniewicz Way property has been mentioned as a possible location by the Town Manager. A parcel on Griffin Dairy was mentioned by someone on the Trust. Noreen Brown, Director of Project Development, SSHH, explained their houses are listed on the subsidized housing inventory of DHCD and sell at no more than 80% of market rate. The homes are typically under \$260,000. A deed restriction would be issued by the DHCD and would be affordable in perpetuity. Mr. Coyle – wondered about a lot on Pattison or Charles Street.

Carolyn Bates, Chair, Griffin Dairy Farm Committee (GDFC) – the Griffin Dairy Farm Committee has overseen and maintained the property since 2011. They haven't given an annual update since the pandemic. They have deliberated, voted and written a letter to deny any request to build on any portion of the property to the Selectmen and Affordable Housing Trust to convey their thoughts. The original committee stated that open space has a value that is impossible to put a price tag on. The Committee hopes that the Board will retain this property for open space and recreation as it was originally intended.

Terry Maze, GDFC, Missions & Accomplishments – OCPC has provided recommendations that they have followed. The Committee did the prep work for the multi purpose playing field and redid the locations of the bridges to not impact the locations of the playing fields. Fields have been cleared of debris. Trees around the property are being maintained. Fields are being mowed. Grass and flowers have

been planted and maintained. Walking paths have been constructed. Seating areas have been created. Fencing has been added. They are leasing to two growers to use for hay and corn. Constructed parking lots on Pattison and Plymouth Streets and expansion of the Community Garden. They met with several solar companies without a feasible solution at this time. They have welcomed food trucks, held two community yard sales and are partnering with Abington Celebrates this spring, and had a story book trail with the Library along their walking trail. She asked that the Board not infringe on the dedication and commitment of the Committee by changing the use of this property and limiting its ability to provide open space for generations to come.

Rich Hanna, GDFC – The Committee does 90% of the maintenance up there. They cut trees, the lawn, dig holes, move stones, work on the fence. John Stone is great when they need him. Scott has been tremendous. The well out front has been filled. The volunteers have put in over 1,500 hours this year. Last year it was over 2,000 hours. They have three rider mowers and do all the maintenance on them.

Lurane Ryerson, GDFC – When they gave a presentation at the Senior Center, , people told them they had no idea what was happening at Griffin Dairy. All the work was done by volunteers between 2011-2017. They were donated five rider mowers during that time. A dumpster for the general cleanup, the use of a backhoe to move the shed and move large limbs to the burn pile, the use of a rototiller for the Community Garden, trash bags, the mowing of fields, tree planting, as well as yearly flowers and the kiosk built by the Eagle Scouts, Christmas trees, six benches, flagpole, little free library and three picnic benches – were all donations to the Committee.

In 2017 the town voted in the CPA and the Griffin Farm Committee voted on projects that needed financial help – walkways, bridges, surveying the property line, designated wetlands, fencing and explained the process of obtaining funds through the CPA. Total funding received for these projects totaled \$240,000. It is her opinion that to take any of this property would be a huge injustice to the Committee and the many volunteers as well as the CPA and the voters and hopes the Board of Selectmen has a better understanding of why the Committee wrote the letter.

Marianne Pappaceno, GDFC – She has seen the immense amount of work to Griffin Dairy Farm for recreation and open space and feels it should be kept this way. It nourishes the mind, body and soul.

Bill Davis, volunteer – has had a vision of whiffle ball or kick ball fields where they were thinking of putting the house in the parking area. We're lucky we have GDF and it should stay a park.

Rich Hanna – submitted a letter from Ann Reilly, who has been very helpful over the years, and is against the mover for housing in this area. Suggested looking into other vacant town-owned land.

Mr. Donovan – read Article that went to Town Meeting to purchase land ... “for public purposes including open space and recreation and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to do everything necessary and desirable to purchase and improve the land for said purposes.” He is not in favor of taking any part of the parking lot. He mentioned property at the end of Charles Street to the right and Gliniewicz Way was also mentioned.

Amanda Zompetti – GDF wouldn't be ruined because one or two houses were built there. It is hard to find good homes in this community. We can't keep saying “no” to housing.

Ms. Djusberg – felt the end of Charles Street would be a good alternative. Mr. DiMarzio wondered if that would affect the sports fields. No. Mr. Hanna thought it might be a conservation area. Ms. Djusberg – the GDFC has done an amazing job and should be commended for the work they have done.

Mr. Chapin – land was fought for and voted on for open space and recreation. The GDFC has done an amazing job up there with not a lot of funds and not a lot of volunteers and are making that vision come true. If nothing had been done there, maybe he would think differently, but he would not vote to put any housing on the property they are working so hard to maintain.

Mr. Coyle read recommendations from when he was on the Finance Committee – it was voted for public purposes including open space and recreation and could use the proceeds from selling portions of it to pay down outstanding principal. Mr. DiMarzio was still torn either way, and it would still have to go to Town Meeting.

Mr. Donovan – have the Town Manager look at Gliniewicz Way or any other parcels that come up. Ann Reilly – Gliniewicz Way had been discussed as a possible

relocation for the basketball courts by the Police Station and didn't think it would be a good location for a young family across from senior housing. Mr. Donovan – basketball court could be relocated to Arnold Park.

Discussion continued, pros and cons. Motion by Mr. Chapin to deny the request, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio. Vote was 2-2 with Mr. Chapin and Mr. DiMarzio against and Ms. Djusberg and Mr. Donovan for. Mr. Donovan suggested the Town Manager look into the end of Charles Street by the old sewer bed to make a determination and/or Gliniewicz Way. He's not sure if sewerage has taken care of the issue of it being wet.

5. **Discussion on opening Pattison Street parking area for Rail Trail parking.** There are sidewalks either way to the rail trail. It was closed a while back. It could be used in conjunction with signage to the rail trail. Motion by Mr. DiMarzio to authorize the opening, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.
6. **Vote to approve the closing of roadways and the use of the North and Center Schools for the Saint Patrick's Day Parade on Sunday, March 17, 2024.** Motion by Mr. Chapin to authorize in conjunction with the Police Chief to close any side roads that he feels necessary to accommodate the parade, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio, unanimous.
7. **Approval of Minutes:** October 23, 2023 – motion by Mr. Chapin, seconded by Mr. DiMarzio, unanimous. November 13, 2023 – motion by Mr. DiMarzio, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.
8. **Town Manager Report:**
 - Hancock Street is still being monitored. They have increased enforcement and will continue to do that for more information.
 - They are currently working with IT on finding a new hosting platform for the website with Wayne, Samantha Linehan and Toni Moquin. It will be a much more user friendly process on both ends to access and update information. It will have a mobile app by late spring.
 - The Annual Town Meeting is April 1st at the Abington High School.
 - The Warrant will close on February 12th. Contact him with any questions or concerns about filing a citizen's petition.

- Governor Healey addressed the MMA and expressed she will support the local municipalities – 2% to government unrestricted aid, 3% to Chapter 70 school funding. There is additional Chapter 90 money.
 - Representatives from the South Shore Vocational Technical High School will be here January 25th to go over the construction project estimated at \$256M-\$300M. Abington's estimate is between \$30-\$40M. One member of the Board has been invited to be an informal liaison for the project. Mr. Donovan would like a presentation before the Board if Mr. Lambiase would request that and invite the Finance Committee to that meeting.
 - Marianne Pappaceno, re Hancock Street – why has this taken so long? Mr. Chapin – according to the law they had to keep it at 40 because it wasn't thickly settled technically. At the last Town Meeting, we now have the option of going 30-35. They are just doing a little more research.
9. Motion by Mr. DiMarzio to enter into Executive Session in accordance with MGL c30A, Sec. 21 to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, and to discuss contract negotiations with non-union personnel if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares and will re-enter into open session for possible vote, seconded by Ms. Djusberg. Roll call vote: Ms. Djusberg, aye; Mr. DiMarzio, aye; Mr. Chapin, aye; Mr. Donovan, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hurst