

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at the Town Hall Board of Selectmen Room. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Duval. Present from the Board of Selectmen were Members Blanchard, Nowak and Rosenberg. *Vice Chair Hoyt was absent.* Also present were Town Administrator Green, Town Counsel St. John III, Administrative Assistant Dunlap, Brian Rhodes from iBerkshires, and Peter Gentile from NBCTC.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes for the *October 27, 2021 Workshop and November 3, 2021 Meeting* were submitted for approval. *Motion made by Member Blanchard to waive reading and approve the minutes for the October 27, 2021 workshop and November 3, 2021 Meetings as submitted, second by Member Rosenberg. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

PUBLIC COMMENT: *There were no comments from the public.*

NEW BUSINESS

Facility Use Request: Town Common, Adams Holly Days, Sunday, November 28, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Chairman Duval read a letter from the Adams Community Bank regarding the request to use the Town Common for Adams Holly Days. *At 7:07 p.m. Member Nowak joined the meeting.* Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve use of the Town Common by the Adams Community bank from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for Adams Holly Days, second by Member Rosenberg. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.

Forest Legacy Program Support Letter: *Member Nowak* explained the Forest Legacy Program and read the criteria involved with the program. *Chairman Duval* read the proposed support letter aloud. *Member Nowak* advised there are grants available from this program. *Member Rosenberg* asked to have a paragraph added to include what membership receive by being in the program. *Member Nowak* read aloud the parameters to be included in the letter. *Chairman Duval* inquired whether Ms. Nystrom understood the program parameters. *Member Rosenberg* advised if it is outlined in the letter it shows what parameters the Board is supporting. *Motion made by Member Rosenberg to approve the letter as amended, second by Member Nowak with the request that the letter be held until the amendment is added. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

Annual Parking Enforcement Suspension for Holiday Season: *Chairman Duval* reviewed that annually the Board of Selectmen discuss the allowance of suspension of parking fees for the holiday season. Parking meters would be covered with burlap bags during this time, but the overnight winter parking ban is still in effect. It was suggested to including the Thanksgiving Holiday. *Motion made by Member Blanchard to suspend parking meter collection from November 25, 2021 until January 3, 2022, second by Member Rosenberg. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed.*

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Town Administrator: *Town Administrator Green* reported there was an incident at Specialty Minerals, and read aloud a letter of notification of the change in color of Hoosac River. He advised that on November 16th MassDEP received notification of a release into the river, and that the river was turning white from the discharge location at Specialty Minerals. Specialty Minerals shut down operation until separation ponds could settle, from the identified release of Calcium Carbonate, which is often consumed by humans and animals. He noted that MassDEP kept the Town and Mass Fish & Wildlife informed. pH and solids are being monitored and are well within tolerance, so there is no risk to the ecosystem. Sampling was taken immediately and continued updates to any impacts to the environment will be given. He noted that there was no significant impact, and the Plant responded accordingly. MassDEP will be on site for a couple days, and effluent is now clear. Chairman Duval, Dr. Rhoads of the Board of Health, Emergency Management Director and Forest Wardens Chief Kleiner, North Adams Mayor Bernard, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Specialty Minerals Plant Manager Steve Thompson, and MassDEP were praised for their response, and the event was determined not to be a threat and under control. *Chairman Duval* noted this was a full group of safety and leadership from both communities of Adams and North Adams that assembled in collaboration to review the information and work out solutions. The cause of the release was not clear, but it has stopped. It could be mechanical or from a variety of issues, and is still being reviewed. It was reported that the white color made it to Williamstown. It was noted it is unclear whether Specialty Minerals will be fined, but MassDEP issued an order this afternoon for them to cease operations until testing shows results within permit limits. *Chairman Duval* requested Town Administrator Green provide results to the Board once MassDEP completes their investigation. *Town Administrator Green* announced that the Adams Holiday Home Decorating Contest is coming back this year. Contest entry begins on Monday, November 22, 2021 to Friday December 3, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. December 10th and 11th there will be judging and winners will be announced on December 15th. If there are questions, people are asked to call 743-8300 x176 or x177. Entry is free and a map will be created and posted on December 8th for people to vote on the online application. Decorations are the exterior of homes and windows only and judging will take place from the street. Prizes will be gift cards from Adams Hometown Market for \$75, \$50 and \$25, and winners will be announced in a press release. The Events Committee was thanked for putting on this event, and Adams Hometown Market was thanked for being a good neighbor since coming to the community. It was noted that there is work being done in the back of the old mill on Hoosac Street and it was clarified that this is preliminary work for demolition. The 5 Hoosac Street and 7 Hoosac Street spinning mills were explained as having a development team that are building 100-120 housing units, including market rate housing in some areas. There will be mixed use in other areas, which will be determined. *Member Nowak* inquired how tax returns came in this year, and how the Town is doing financially with parking meter funds. Tax return information will be reported from the Tax Collector. Parking Meters on average, since the Parking/Animal Control Officer position started in January 2020 range from \$300 to \$500. The Visitors Center lot could also become a revenue generator. It was noted that the DPW trained the Animal/Parking Control Officer how to do some meter maintenance and to change batteries. *Chairman Duval* advised that the Memorial School School developer is putting in apartments there, and Park Street has work going on with other apartments. Developers are working with the Town Administrator for the 5 Hoosac Street and 7 Hoosac Street buildings to include housing and a restaurant. He explained that there are businesses and organizations that hire people with higher education and have new employees coming to this area that are looking for housing, as well as allowing people to work from home due to the pandemic. He pointed out the benefits of

Adams being a great place to raise a family and live where people have a good quality of life, but the housing stock in Adams is older and there needs to be new housing. He explained that building apartments will attract individuals who are employees of neighboring communities and Adams looking for a nice apartment close to the downtown. Pittsfield, North Adams and Adams are working hard on providing this option. Adams citizens downsizing when selling their home also have this as a natural move. Many young people and couples cannot afford a home now and new apartments will give them options. He emphasized that this is the reason Adams is looking to build affordable housing with nice apartments, and which will also help create our downtown.

Town Counsel: *Town Counsel St. John III* advised he provided additional information to Clerk John Harrington of the Land Court two weeks ago regarding the MJD matter. He reported that last week he followed up with a request for an affidavit from the Tax Collector and she will provide him with that signed affidavit shortly. He advised he has examined the bylaws and minutes of the Adams Arts Advisory Board regarding their partnership with the Town to develop a cultural district, and will discuss his findings with the Town Administrator next week.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS: *Member Rosenberg* advised he attended the Board of Health meeting this morning, and requested a workshop of the Board of Selectmen to discuss the uptick on Covid cases and the order issued. He advised it would be on how Covid spreads, tracking it and how to manage it so the business community is not blind-sided. He noted it would be a proactive program to handle how the Town is getting ahead of the crisis and not behind it and to improve the process on how it is dealt with. It was explained that if the Board of Health Chair requests an agenda item it should be discussed first with the Town Administrator. The challenge of protecting businesses and public health was briefly discussed and noted as being worked on. *Member Rosenberg* reported that discussion was about enforcement. Voluntary compliance is the best form, which requires public relations and communications. *Member Nowak* noted that early on in the pandemic numbers were updated very well but they haven't been updated well lately. He noted cases are being seen in the school systems and numbers are going up. He asked Town Administrator Green to continue to update the Board as he did a great job from the beginning. *Town Administrator Green* advised in the beginning the Board of Health could not meet but now the Board of Health is managing it. He pointed out that Adams is proportionally consistent with other areas and Dr. Rhoads or Code Enforcement Officer Blaisdell can come in with updates. He explained that he just learned that the tracking had been done by the state before and the burden has been transitioned to the municipalities. It was noted that the higher numbers were found in household clusters, and the majority of cases are in unvaccinated individuals. He emphasized it is still important to wash hands frequently and wear a mask. It was suggested that if Member Rosenberg attends the Board of Health meetings he could report out the case numbers to the Board of Selectmen in his report. *Chairman Duval* advised he has a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting next week. Since the President signed the infrastructure bill he will ask at that meeting what the impact will be on the community. It was explained that this may provide funds for wastewater, but funds are also hoped for bridges and roads as well as broadband to help people working from home. Old lead and wooden piping in the community have been routed out over time and have been a factor for this community.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER: *Member Nowak* wished everyone and their loved ones a happy Thanksgiving. *Member Rosenberg* wished everyone a happy holiday season and noted his first few months of being a Selectmen have been a joy.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

6.) *To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body;*

- 8 Weber Street, Adams
- 15-17 Elm Street, Adams
- 69 Park Street

Town Administrator Green announced that both 8 Weber Street and 15-17 Elm Street are not ready to go forward so this evening will only cover 69 Park Street.

At 8:07 p.m. Motion made by Member Blanchard to go into Executive Session for Reason #6 as read aloud for 69 Park Street, second by Member Rosenberg. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Duval, Members Blanchard, Nowak and Rosenberg. Motion passed.

At 8:16 p.m. Motion made by Member Rosenberg to come out of Executive Session, second by Member Blanchard. Roll Call Vote: Chairman Duval, Members Blanchard, Nowak and Rosenberg. Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Member Blanchard to adjourn, second by Member Rosenberg. Vote: unanimous. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

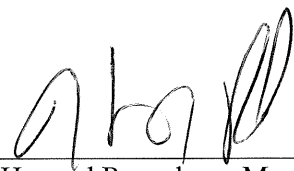
Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah J. Dunlap, Recording Secretary



Joseph Nowak, Member

John Duval, Chair



Howard Rosenberg, Member



Richard Blanchard, Member