



Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

**TOWN HALL, 8 PARK STREET, ADAMS, MA 01220
1st Floor, Board of Selectmen Meeting Room**

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date, the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 7:00 PM at the Adams Town Hall. Chair John Duval opened the meeting. Present: Chair John Duval, Vice-chair Christine Hoyt, Members Howard Rosenberg, Richard Blanchard, and Joseph Nowak. Also present were Jay Green, Town Administrator; Town Counsel Edmund St. John; Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary; NBCTC; Brian Rhodes, iBerkshires; Sten Spinella, Berkshire Eagle Reporter; Eammon Coughlin and Rebecca Ferguson of the Community Development Department; Gerry Garner, Building Commissioner; Greg Mitchell of the Louison House, and residents of the Town of Adams.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes from the December 21st, 2022 and January 4th, 2023 meetings were submitted for approval.

A motion was made by Member Blanchard to waive the reading of the December 21st 2022 and January 4th, 2023 and approve them as submitted. The Motion is seconded by Vice-Chair Hoyt.

Discussion: Member Nowak pointed out two typographical errors that needed correction.

The motion to approve was amended to in order to include member Nowak's updates.

The motion passes unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: *None*

OLD BUSINESS:

Review and Approve Application for Common Victualer License for Gomez Enterprises DBA McDonalds, 2 Commercial Street, Adams MA

Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary, stated that all of the paperwork and payments are in order.

Motion from Vice-chair Hoyt to approve the Common Victualer License for Gomez Enterprises DBA McDonalds, 2 Commercial Street, Adams Ma. The motion is seconded by Member Blanchard. The motion passes unanimously.

RECEIVED-POSTED
23 FEB - 2 PM 12:44
TOWN CLERK
ADAMS MASS.

Review and Approve Renewal of Inn Holder's License for Mount Royal Inn, 99 Howland Ave, Adams MA. Jay Green, Town Administrator invited Gerry Garner, Building Inspector, to speak regarding his experience in the building.

Mr. Garner observed a significant amount of damage. As of 7pm on 1/17 Chief Pansecchi signed off on the fire inspection. Mr. Garner needs to do one more inspection to confirm that the illegal office in room number five is no longer active and to make sure that other parts of the inspection pass re-inspection.

Vice-chair Hoyt stated that she is not inclined to take this license off the table due to the fact that Mr. Bokhari is not present, as he requested.

Member Blanchard stated that he does not feel inclined to take the license off of the table due to Mr. Bokhari's absence.

Member Nowak stated that he is also frustrated with how the lack of Mr. Bokhari's steps forward with this.

A cellphone belonging to a member of the audience loudly announced that a recording had begun.

Member Nowak notified the chairman that this was happening. *Chairman Duval* asked the individual to identify himself due to the requirements of Mass General Law.

Greg Mitchell from the Louison House stated that he is recording the meeting in order to share with Kathy Keeser,

Vice-chair Hoyt stated that this was the third recording or Zoom meeting that a member of the Louison House has tapped without appropriately notifying the Chair, which must be done according to Mass General Law. Town Counsel corroborated the validity of this statement.

Chairman Duval asked what the Board's pleasure was.

Member Nowak stated that he was displeased with an email that he received from the Town Administrator sent following the board's decision to cease the injunction at the Mt. Royal Inn.

Town Counsel and *Chairman Duval* agreed that a judge would not be able to make an informed decision on the matter because the Mt. Royal Inn had an inspection schedule and without an inspection showing imminent danger, there was no way a judge could decide. Due to the nature of the inn lacking an inspection, a judge cannot make a correct decision.

Town Counsel clarified that the injunction process has not been stopped, but because he wanted to make sure that all ducks are clearly in a row.

Jay Green stated that there was no process that stopped, no decision that was wrong, but the Town decided to be thoughtful and reasonable moving forward.

Mr. Syed Bokhari joined the meeting at 7:16pm. Chairman Duval recapped the update from Gerry Garner.

Syed Bokhari stated that room number 5 is now empty. This room was previously being used as an office by the Louison House staff.

Gerry Garner came back up to the microphone. Gerry stated that all he needs is an appointment to do a final inspection.

Mr. Bokhari stated that currently, there are no guests in the motel and it will be roughly a month until the Inn is operable again.

Chairman Duval asked Mr. Bokhari to contact the building inspector to conduct the final inspection. Mr. Bokhari agreed that he is ready for Mr. Garner to do the final inspection.

Member Nowak requested that all communication that happens between Mr. Bokhari and Mr. Garner be in writing.

Member Nowak asked if the Louison House contract was still active. Mr. Bokhari stated that the contract has been abandoned.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ratification of Cara Farrell as Shared Services HR Director: *Jay Green* read his ratification letter for Cara Farrell. This is a shared services position with the Town of Williamstown and City of North Adams.

Chairman Duval asked how the shared HR Director would work in the different Towns regarding time spent, days, etc.

Jay Green clarified that each community will try to share the position equally in year one. In year two, the time spent will be proportional to the amount of money put in by each community, which is determined by size of the community. Cara is doing some work in North Adams and Adams regarding updating the personnel rules and regulations.

Jay stated that all communities have tangentially agreed that if a community has a time sensitive issue, then Ms. Farrell may be asked to handle it, even if it is not a town's "day".

Member Rosenberg requested that Ms. Farrell report out her observations to the board.

Jay stated that this will be obvious when she is working to update the Rules and Regs. She may find some items that are archaic, and those updates will ultimately be presented to the board for them to either vote for or against for adoption.

Vice-chair Hoyt: Welcome, Cara!

Member Nowak asked who was a part of the selection process. Jay clarified who all was present and Cara stated that she also met with Mayor Macksey and Kathy Eade in North Adams.

Member Nowak stated that he was concerned that there was no job description. Jay clarified that there was certainly a job description and job posting. *Member Nowak* asked why he didn't see it and Jay clarified that job descriptions do not go before the Board of Selectmen. *Member Nowak* is welcome to view the job description, all he has to do is request it.

Member Nowak asked how long Cara was at the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Cara stated that she was at BRPC for 13 months.

Vice-chair Hoyt made the motion to ratify the appointment of Cara Farrell as the Shared Services HR Director for the Towns of Adams and Williamstown and the City of North Adams at a combined salary of \$62,000 annually. The Motion is seconded by Member Blanchard. The motion passes unanimously.

Ratification of Steven Skrocki as Transfer Station Attendant: Jay Green read his ratification letter for Steven Skrocki.

Motion made by Vice-chair Hoyt to ratify Steve Skrocki as the Transfer Station Attendant at a rate of \$16 an hour. The motion was seconded by Member Blanchard.

Member Nowak observed that the last attendant was great because he really double checked everything. Jay agreed. We learned that most people didn't like the window permit as a sticker for the car. In the time the last attendant started and when he left, the Town brought in an additional \$4000 from folks not having permits. The transfer station still carries a \$60,000-line item in the budget that is carried by the tax rate. The goal is to have the transfer station become self-sustaining based on the fees collected from permits and bag tags. When it becomes self-sustaining, that line item will no longer be on the tax payers.

The last transfer station attendant left because of the way he was treated by the public.

The motion passes unanimously.

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Community Development Block Grant Program: Eammon Coughlin stated that this is a very important funding source for the town. It allows two staff members to be present at Town Hall in order to continue to do important work on CDBG activities.

The application is due in March, so we are about 6 weeks out. Staff salaries are in the grant application and are funded as administration and program delivery line items. Currently, Eammon is looking for housing funding as well, which means 10 units over the two-year period.

The bathrooms at the memorial school are not eligible to be a use of the funding. There is a bit of a scramble to use the money for another construction project, which currently looks like it may be Albert street, Victory, Pleasant, and Randall street for a total sidewalk replacement as well as a mill

and fill pavement project. On the 15th of February, Eammon would like to hold a public hearing wherein he will have significantly more information regarding the costs, funding, and salary program.

The guidance that Eammon would like from the board is whether or not to include a request for design funding for the Coal and Grain Building.

Member Nowak stated that he would like to see the CDBG money earmarked for the old Mobile station. Almost all of the environmental work is done, but we are attempting to have our own DPW do the demolition work. The blue house near the old Cumberland farms would benefit from the use of CDBG funds.

Eammon stated that each property must be classified as contributing to blight or not. Eammon stated that he did inquire with DHCD about using funding for demolition. DHCD stated that there are no applications in the competitive grant rounds, which we are, that are for demolition. It is implied that demolition is not a particularly strong application basis.

Chairman Duval clarified that there was no action taken this meeting. Eammon stated that the meeting on the 15th will require action and that it will be vitally important to have a quorum for that public hearing.

Discussion of Coal and Grain Building at 1 Cook Street, Adams MA

Eammon stated that he did invite members of the historical commission to be present for this discussion however it does not appear that anyone attended.

Eammon stated that the Coal and Grain building was built in the late 1800s/ early 1900s and abuts the Rail Trail.

The funds have been secured to build a new pocket park in the area. In the initial plans, integrating the buildings was explored (the Barn and the Grain Elevator).

We used approximately \$26,000 of CD engineering funds to do the study on the rehabilitation of the buildings and incorporation of design. After a study, it was decided that it would be more beneficial to create more park in the space where the barn is.

In regards to the coal and grain elevator, the building is in a state of disrepair. The south side of the building is lacking structural support holding it to the ground. The report notes that structural failure is impending. There is also a large hole in the roof. Based on the conversation and report with the architect, there would be 90-100 thousand needed in engineering funds to see what will be needed to stabilize the building. The cost of actually stabilizing the building, (replace footings, repair the roof, stabilize the floors, and ensure that the building will not fall) would be around 700K if only the tallest part is done. If the office space is done as well, the cost will be over a million dollars. Even if the money is spent on stabilization, this will not make the building habitable. It would not be able to be used as a display place for the Historical commission nor would it be usable as bathrooms or any other facility for the park.

Unless there is a major Town Meeting appropriation of funds, CDBG is really the only source of grant funding that would be available. The building does not qualify for historic preservation

funding, of which only 1 million dollars is awarded state-wide

Chairman Duval noted that the Town has a lot of projects happening right now. It may be time to come to the hard decision that we cannot do absolutely everything.

Member Rosenberg asked if there were any local charitable groups that may want to buy it for a dollar or someone creative individuals who may wish to buy it for very little funds. Jay green stated that a right of access is needed for the parcels where the dog park will go

Member Blanchard stated that there are also easement issues with the home next to it.

Member Nowak reflected on how unique the building is and stated that it is important to our town's history. He also stated that there are a lot of stonewalls that are falling down. Eammon stated that part of the park design is to repair those walls and to integrate them into the design.

Chairman Duval stated that as much as he would like to save it and has always loved it, what is the cost of stabilizing the Tower? Eammon stated that it would be 700-735 thousand dollars, if the administrative offices were to be stabilized it would be over a million dollars to effectively make it a monument.

Vice-chair Hoyt asked if this means that less money would be put toward other projects like sidewalk replacement and street paving.

The estimate is based on a preliminary estimate by the architect and he stated that once a closer look is taken, it is nearly impossible that those numbers would go down. The final decision is three or four weeks away.

A recess was called at 8:18pm due to a loss of power on Park Street.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:22pm

Chairman Duval asked if there are any suggestions from the Board.

Vice-Chair Hoyt asked what specific guidance Eammon was looking for. Eammon stated that he is looking for guidance on whether or not to use roughly 100k for designs to stabilize coal and grain. If the 100k is not put into Coal and Grain, then it would be used for sidewalks, roads, and housing rehab.

Member Rosenberg is inclined not to include design funding for Coal and Grain.

Vice-chair Hoyt is inclined not to include design funding for Coal and Grain.

Chairman Duval asked if the Community Development department is willing to research other options and contact congressman Neil's office. Eammon said that he is willing to do that.

Member Blanchard said that we should wait and *member Nowak* said he has no comment at this time.

Eammon stated that he will continue to move forward with the CDGB application.

Chairman Duval stated that we should return to this subject at a later point in time. *Eammon* stated that he is more than willing to talk with the Town Administrator and his administrative assistant to make it a workshop at a later date in time.

Member Nowak asked what areas are considered to be slum and blight areas. *Eammon* stated that the map has some interesting boundaries and that he would be more than willing to share it with the board.

Member Rosenberg asked if the Coal and Grain building would affect the Park. In an ideal world, the Coal and Grain building would be used as part of the park. Unfortunately, with the new numbers and new information that has come to light, it seems less and less likely that this will happen.

Rebecca Ferguson, Assistant Director of Community Development, stated that these building may be worse after the park goes in and could potentially represent a safety issue in the future.

Member Rosenberg stated that from a practical standpoint, it seems like the building should come down.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

Member Rosenberg: None

Vice-chair Hoyt: None

Chairman Duval: None

Member Blanchard: None

Member Nowak: The Agricultural Commission is up and running. *Chairman Duval* asked who was elected as roles, Megan Bantle is the recording Secretary. Natasha Bordeaux is the vice-chair and Sonia McWhirt is the Chair.

Chairman Duval said that he and the Town Administrator will meet with the Chair moving forward.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER

Member Rosenberg stated that the Greylock Glen is a wonderful resource for the Town and the project represents a really positive funding source for the Town. Outdoor recreation is a growing economic field and the Town really serves to gain from this.

Vice-Chair Hoyt stated that the Greylock Glen has not reached the end of the public process. There is still site-plan review when the public will be able to come forward and speak. Community members that have come forward and talked about how exciting it is that this project is moving forward.

Member Nowak stated that the Town got itself into a little bit of trouble because there was a lack of transparency with the public and now the Town is going to need to backtrack a bit. *Member Nowak* stated that there is a lack of transparency in this town. *Vice-chair Hoyt* stated that there is no lack of

transparency. The RFP was out there far in advance. One of the individuals who stated that there is a lack of transparency and wrote a letter, was actually present for the meeting.

Member Nowak stated that selection should have happened during a recoded session and not during a workshop. *Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary* clarified that the meeting was recorded and televised. It is available online if anyone would like the opportunity to view it.

Chairman Duval stated that folks are welcome to come to the Select Board meetings to learn more about the Glen Project and to voice their opinions in a productive public forum.

Chairman Duval stated that the Board will go into executive session and resume only to vote to adjourn.


A motion was made by Member Blanchard to go into Executive Session. The motion is seconded by Vice-chair Hoyt. A roll-call vote was done in order to move into Executive Session, Member Rosenberg, yes; Vice-chair Hoyt, yes; Chairman Duval, yes; Member Blanchard, yes; Member Nowak, yes.

A recess was called at 8:47. The Board moved into Executive Session at 8:50pm with Adjournment being the only agenda item discussed after the Executive Session.

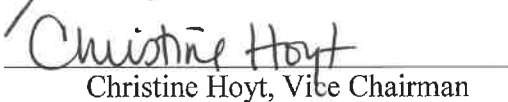
ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Member Blanchard to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Vice-chair Hoyt. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:46pm


Respectfully Submitted by Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary.



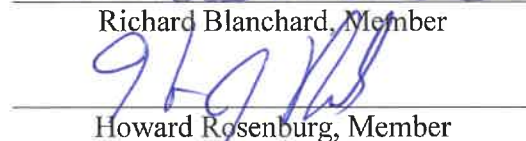
Joseph Nowak, Member



Christine Hoyt, Vice Chairman



Richard Blanchard, Member



Howard Rosenberg, Member

John Duval, Chairman