

STOCKBRIDGE SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 10, 2019
6:30 p.m.
TOWN OFFICES, 50 MAIN STREET

Present:

Terry Flynn, Chuck Cardillo, Roxanne McCaffrey and Mark Webber
The Finance Committee and Planning Board were in attendance.

Call to Order:

Terry called the meeting to order.

Agenda:

The first order of business was with the Finance Committee and Jay Bikofsky said that minutes from the September 24th were circulated. Jim made a motion to approve the minutes; all were in favor.

Next, Terry made a motion that the Board approve the minutes from the previous meeting (9/19 and 9/26). Roxanne seconded; all were in favor.

Terry announced that they have received two valuable reports; the Road Safety Audit and the Diagnostic Report, both which are on the website.

Terry announce that there will be a test of Coded Red on October 15th at 10 a.m.

Next Terry made a motion that the Board appoint Mark Webber as the alternate to Rest of River Committee. Roxanne seconded; all were in favor.

Terry announced that the weekend trash pickup will end on October 15th. Trash will be picked up on the week days until next season.

Next discussion on Revitalization began. Terry read the following:

In recent years, townspeople have raised a wide range of opinions and ideas about revitalizing the town. Of all our boards and committees, the Select Board, the Planning Board, and the Finance Committee have the broadest jurisdictions, and that is why our three boards are meeting together tonight to identify some clear goals and objectives related to revitalization. To help generate discussion, I have listed a sampler of ideas and opinions below, which I have received from various people in recent months. Hopefully, the discussion we have tonight will help the Select Board decide on the next best step or steps to take: Do we work on these goals and objectives through the Select Board, the Town Administrator, the Chamber, and our other boards and committees, OR do we appoint an ad hoc committee to explore and develop a broad range of ideas, OR do we appoint an ad hoc committee with a narrow charge, such as parking, signage and walkability, OR do we appoint more than one narrowly charged ad hoc committee?

The following was also included in Terry's handout:

Most General:

Beauty; Personal Financial Security; Vibrant Social Activities; Financially Secure Community; Peaceful, Quiet living; Younger Population; Simple, More Rural Way of Life; Pleasant, safe, Outdoor Living; Thriving Commercial Activity; Character of the Town; Safe and Modern Living; Prestige
General:

Attract younger year-round residents; Provide more secure choices for an aging population;
Create more career and business opportunities; Increase town revenue; Spend efficiently;
Diversify the local tax base; Nurture & preserve the current residential tax base;
Encourage large commercial development; Preserve open space; Preserve historical entities;
Support non-profit organizations; Provide more "destinations"; Enhance transportation systems;
MORE SPECIFIC:

More restaurants, retail stores, and office space; More Affordable Housing; More parking; Better landscapes, streetscapes, lighting & signage; Free municipal Wi-Fi downtown; Town-wide broadband; Resolve 37 Interlaken; Farm rooms & meals taxes; Better use of Industrial Park; Pursue ways to enable young families to rent & buy homes; Explore revenue and other concerns involving Airbnb;

There was discussion amongst the Boards concerning the list of items.

Kate Fletcher noted that the Zoning Review would be holding a meeting on October 28th at 6:30 p.m. to review the Diagnostic report.

7:00 p.m. Tax Classification Hearing

Michael Blay, Town Assessor, began by noting that the majority of "new growth" permits this year were for residential projects which added roughly 5 million to the tax base and that overall, new construction will add roughly \$75,000 in new tax dollars. He also noted that 89-90% of the properties in Stockbridge are residential with 10-11% being commercial/industrial/personal property and that this has not changed at all in the 25 years that he has been working for the Town; in the past few years the Town has had the most residential sales ever. There were 25 sales over a two-year period 25 years ago compared to the current number of 45 sales in that same time period. Regarding real estate/abatement/collection rates: in FY19 the Town had the lowest amount of abatements filed for by the public being 12; the collection rate in Stockbridge remains extremely high, around 98% annually, and the estimated tax rate for FY20 of \$9.87 over all and valuations are increasing.

Mike stated that annually the Board of Selectmen needs to vote on whether to shift the burden the tax from the residential side to the commercial/ industrial/ personal property side. The Board of Assessors was supporting that the Select Board adopt a single tax rate; a residential factor of one instead of splitting the tax rate; estimating a proposed tax rate of \$9.87; 26 cents lower than last year.

The Board of Selectmen would also be looking at residential exemptions and a small commercial exemption. Residential exemption is for eligible single family, owner occupied homes. It would shift the tax burden onto the second home owners and the higher tax rate would apply to everyone. This creates a split tax rate and the Board of Assessors recommends a no vote on this. The Board of Assessors also recommends voting no on the small commercial exemption.

Terry made a motion that the Board vote to keep a Residential Factor of one. Roxanne seconded; all were in favor.

Terry made a motion to vote on the residential exemption. Vote: Terry: No, Chuck: No, Roxanne: No.

Terry made a motion to vote on Small Commercial Exemption. Chuck: No, Roxanne: No, Terry No.

The meeting returned to discussion on Economic Revitalization.

Doug Goudey spoke as a resident and Chamber member and stated that the Chamber is aware of issues, here to serve the Town and supports the Town in to help establish and bring in new businesses and grow the business base in Stockbridge.

Roxanne gave an overview of common needs and concerns and came up with a few goals and objectives: Preserve the historic nature and characteristic of Stockbridge while promoting economic health and diversity. Promote community activities and cohesiveness. Develop and up to date technology infrastructure. Preserve and protect historic sites and buildings. Encourage development that preserves open space while providing needed housing and employment opportunities, and providing essential goods and services for the benefit of residents and visitors. Maintain and protect the residential tax base while promoting business development without creating adverse impacts on the environment.

Roxanne questioned if a committee should be formed to engage in the activity of identifying proposals/projects, to work closely with the Select Board and other Town boards and committees and choose projects to move forward on.

Discussion continued on the different studies, boards, committees and sub-committees and their involvement and communications with each other. Chuck noted the necessity of public input. Process on the traffic study and road safety audit were discussed and it was suggested that there be Town input as it progresses. It was decided to table discussion on a committee following the Zoning Review Committee meeting on October 28th where the diagnostic report will be reviewed.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Terry adjourned the meeting.