



TOWN COUNCIL - HUMAN SERVICES/SENIORS/RECREATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Monday, March 06, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Town Hall - Lincoln Room - 41 South Main Street Randolph, MA
02368

DRAFT - MINUTES

In accordance with Governor Baker's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, relating to the 2020 COVID-19 emergency, the Town Council may meet remotely to avoid group congregation.

This is a hybrid meeting. The public is invited to attend this meeting remotely, via phone or computer, or in person. The Town Website will be updated on the day of the meeting with the phone and computer access instructions.

A. Call to Order - Roll Call

Councillors Present: Jesse Gordon, Katrina Huff-Larmond, Christos Alexopoulos.

Guests: Health Commissioner Gerry Cody and Community Health and Wellness
Coordinator Peggy Montlouis

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes of Human Services/Seniors/Recreation Subcommittee Meeting February 6, 2023

Roll Call Vote to Accept Meeting Minutes:

2-0-1 (Abstention: C. Alexopoulos; Absent During Vote: Clerger)

The meeting minutes of the Human Services/Seniors/Recreation Subcommittee Meeting on February 6, 2023 were accepted.

C. Public Comments

D. Old/Unfinished Business

1. Opening More Parks in the Town of Randolph (Signage Update):

The Community Preservation Committee funded signs for conservation areas that are currently not very open to the public. The Funding is going to be used to do signs thru Mark Ruffo -- I've been working with him on design -- maybe 6 or 7 or 8.

The locations of the signs for this year are: 1 at Lokitis; 2 at Blue Hills; 2 at Reservoir Walk; 2 at Old Colony Rail Trail; There may be 1 at Powers Farm Rear Niles Road (this one likely next year once the new property is settled and access to Higashi -- first on the list for next year).

[Offline Input From ConComm]: Eagle Scout project at Grove Street entrance to Powers Farm "don't feed the waterfowl" sign to be replaced by donation.

2. Report from Board of Recreation on "Park Survey" and OSRP

At this Subcommittee's last meeting, we called for a "park survey" to assess what the people of Randolph wanted to do with parks and recreation/conservation areas; what they currently do for parks; and how they would like to allocate resources for parks.

I went to the Board of Recreation who developed the Park Survey (with Liz LaRose--
<https://bit.ly/RandolphParks>)



The plan is to place yard signs around town with that URL as a QR code, and paper versions at the RICC, library, etc. There is a model for yard signs is what Brockton and Avon are doing at the DW Fields (The Conservation Commission will provide guidelines too).

- Any feedback shortly, please, and we'll get this going (TBD send as an email to members)

D. New Business

1. Board of Health Ticketing for Health Violations

Councillor Gordon provided a summary of trash ticketing versus health criminal court

violations and how we can do health violation ticketing too. The Board of Health (BOH) currently tickets several housing complexes every week or so. There were 46 tickets to Rosemont in 2022 for trash overflow violations at particular trash bins which are in the outdoor common property. For individual apartments, the BOH does a complaint and issues an Order with a deadline. If it's not remedied, they can go to criminal court. That has been the process but at what point where the Order letter is sent, there could be municipal tickets issued too.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: We want to make sure that people understand what we can ticket for. Some things that are not working we have no authority to do anything about. But we want to do everything within our power to do. We can't fix screen doors or windows or garbage

disposals but we do have authority over something. The Town Manager and the Board of Health have taken action on this to address living conditions.

Councillor Gordon: Mold, rodent, and insect infestation are within the Board of Health's Authority. What else is within the Board of Health's authority to enforce?

Health Commissioner Cody: Yes, any appliances are included for those that are required under the State Sanitary Code. That includes heat, hot water, and anything structural elements that make a building livable. Nothing cosmetic - there are minimum standards for human habitation. Some are the responsibility of the building owner, if we come across a hoarding situation, that is covered even though it's not the property owner doing it.

Councillor Gordon: Do door locks have higher priority? I saw in documents on jessegordon.com/trash (which are redacted for private addresses).

Health Commissioner Cody: It is 21 days or 28 days for violations; 1 day for door locks.

Joe Burke of Hills Street: Appliances were mentioned. How old can they be?

Health Commissioner Cody: No number of years. It's based on whether or not it operates. If it operates, it's okay. If a light is out, that needs repair. "Repaired or replaced" are terms we use. There is no number of months.

Joe Herosy: We appreciate what the Board of Health has done but the focus has been on screens and bulbs. We have evidence of greater health code violations. Ceiling collapses, pipe leaks, rodent feces. We wrote a letter and took pictures.

Councillor Gordon: We're here to listen to the whole of the issue; all here have seen the letter and pictures and it is also on jessegorodn.com/trash.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: We're working on solutions and moving forward - not as saviors but to see what we can do together.

Gladys McClain: What about shootings? The cops aren't doing anything. If our doors can be locked especially.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: What can be done about doors not locking?

Health Commissioner Cody: Yes, locks are a high priority.

Paul Foos: We're organizers all around the South Shore and have seen appalling things but Randolph is most disturbing in terms of scale. Like organized criminal health violations. Sticklers in government look to the letter of the law and say "My job is limited to this only." We don't want to hear "I can't do this." That's enabling criminal behavior. It's not my job to look for criminal violations, I'm just a guy who lives in Brockton.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: We're here to go forward. This is number one on the agenda because we're all concerned with this issue.

Councillor Gordon: Mr. Cody, what is possible in addressing these issues?

Health Commissioner Cody: Broken locks are something we can address. It's on our list at the

courthouse and we won't let that go. Rugs not cooperating with doors we understand is a problem.

Councillor Clerger: When you are there on site, can you include collapsing ceilings? Isn't heat a health issue?

Health Commissioner Cody: Yes, that includes structural elements from burst pipes. Yes, heat counts under the State Sanitary Code.

Councillor Gordon: What else can we do? Courts are slow.

Cody: Court is our primary method but the rules are \$25 then \$100 then \$100 is the highest increment.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: I heard we can ticket up to \$500 per day?

Councillor Gordon: What about the frequency of ticketing? Per apartment, per violation, per Board of Health visit?

Cody: We could, but we use courts and so do all towns because their fines are much higher. Tickets could get their attention, but that's not common practice.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: How long does the court process take?

Health Commissioner COdy: 15-35 days.

Councillor Gordon: So the method is to send an Order letter with specifics. Then it has to expire for 24 days, then we go to court. But could ticket at that point?

Health Commissioner Cody: Yes we'd need a policy for that so it's consistent.

Sandy Cohen of Bittersweet Lane: What about these same perpetrators in other towns? Some owners with the same pattern of misbehavior and disrespect. Against out-of-state companies? No one should be living with mice or rats. Fining is a mere pittance.

Councillor Gordon: Do we ever look across towns?

Health Commissioner Cody: We do that with restaurants but it's trickier with apartment complexes since they have different names everywhere.

Gladys McClain, Rosemont Square: On safety, I'm disabled and have health issues and breathing problems. I understand from Katrina there are limits on what you can do. How many violations do they have to have for things to get done?

Councillor Gordon: And do they look at all violations from Greystar or Waterton?

Health Commissioner Cody: Yes we present all at once with individual letters. We were in court today and the next hearing date is April 3, 2023.

Joe Herosy: On Sandy Cohen's comments, Waterton Corporation has billions in assets. The CEO blocks rent control and any kind of regulations. As organizers, we spend a lot of time talking to tenants. Yes, we want to increase fines daily until things are fixed. Like rodents at building 1400 at Rosemont, many units there have signatures for full building extermination. If

they don't do that, we'd like to see them fined.

Health Commissioner Cody: I've heard the concerns of Building 14000 and sent an order to correct that the same day. MD Weaver is their representative to do "pest exclusion" 3 days per week. Up to 20 apartments with traps and poison. That is their integrated pest management plan.

Sandy Cohen of Bittersweet Lane: Needs to be done building-wide -- doesn't work on one apt at a time. ISP isn't working.

Councillor Gordon: Are there the same players elsewhere? Like Waterton?

Paul Foos: Yes, Waterton is elsewhere. 14 Thompson Drive owner is all over and a slumlord. They have too much wiggle room -- we go back and see that there's nothing done when they promise an exterminator is coming. Gladys has cold air blowing in her apt -- we'd like to get a restraining order -- Gladys is the most vocal and many are afraid to raise the issues.

Health Commissioner Cody: We do spend a lot of time on Order to Correct letters -- so people can use them in court. Tenants can file in court too.

Councillor Gordon: How can a Tenants Union find those?

Health Commissioner Cody: They're sent to each tenant and they can gather them. We don't post them publicly because it contains their name, address, etc.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: Could you as a Tenants Union do that?

Paul Foos:- We're willing to file a class action lawsuit. The whole system is set up to keep individuals separate.

Joe Herosy: It's hard to get tenants to take action because they're afraid of getting evicted. We do have 100 people signed up and 200 at Rosemont. And we're going to Canton court and plan to file a civil complaint "pro se". Gladys is our test case. Waterton sees the whole thing as a cash cow -- we need to go after them on money.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: Governor's initiative? or ACLU?

Joe Herosy: 18 civil rights complaints were filed. We went to the Attorney General. Many people at Rosemont feel they're being targeted

Councillor Gordon: Could Tenant Union be empowered to see all collectively?

Peggy Montlouis: You cannot do it collectively, it has to be done individually.

Building Commissioner Cody: The Board of Health is meeting Wednesday, March 28 at 6 PM in the Lincoln Room.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: The group can go to court together - it was great gathering voices as done here at TC and the previous times with 6 people. Bringing that energy to the court would be great.

Peggy Montlouis: Witnesses can show up and maybe be heard. It's powerful if they show up even if the Clerk Magistrate doesn't get to hear them.

Councillor Gordon: What can be made public on the Board of Health website? Excel list of 46 tickets to Rosemont? Court dates?

Cody: Yes, we'll check on both of those

2. Shuttle Van Petition

Town Attorney rejected the existing petition on several grounds listed below. She just doesn't see that it's legal and will say so if introduced to the Town Council as-is. I met with transit experts from the Coalition for Social Justice to try to understand why anyone would think it's not legal -- much to my surprise, they concurred. There were several issues that they saw -- the use of the word "public transit" was unacceptable because that meant setting up a new RTA. The use of the word "bus" instead of "shuttle van" is also unacceptable because that makes it compete with the MBTA (it's ok to say "shuttle bus" as long as it's physically a van and not a full-size bus). The use of full-size buses is disallowed, because only the MBTA can use full-size buses (that's what defines an RTA -- it's a monopoly on the use of full-size buses).

It also cannot have "hailing stops" or "facultative stops" -- the van cannot stop if someone hails it, but must instead stop only at pre-determined bus stops. We can have a lot of bus stops, but they have to be defined.

Also, specific housing complexes shouldn't be in the petition, since having them there means they would go into the Town Council vote and then on the ballot (all three must have verbatim exactly the same text). I think the new petition could have a second page of an "info sheet" which includes a proposed map and details of how it would work.

The Town Attorney drafted a version that meets all of the criteria for legality -- it no longer sets up an RTA, but a shuttle van service that either the Town runs, or hires a service provider to run. I ran through a couple of versions to make it stronger -- but please comment and we can go back with anything else. The Town Attorney is in fact the sole arbiter on whether it's allowed on the November ballot. The Town Attorney initially wrote a weaker version only calling for a feasibility study, but I added the "shall seek funding" part so it's automatic.

Only having a feasibility study would require another fight to implement it -- sure, it'd pass, but it just postpones the real fight -- and that fight would end up the same -- go to the public ballot - - but would delay until November 2024 because the feasibility study would take most of this year. I think it's a better strategy to go to the voters this November.

3. Holiday Lights

Councillor Gordon: The Town Manager allocated \$40,000 and Town Council voted approval. I'd like interested residents to put together a "price list" and where appropriate items can be purchased. I checked with the maker of the giant Menorah in Braintree and Stoughton and spoke to a rabbi. They said they get custom-made for about \$2000 to \$3000, and he would come at the appropriate time and "bless it" appropriately (for free).

Councillor Gordon: Sandy Cohen and Kathleen Crogan-Camara raised issues at the Town Council meeting and I'd like to ask them to come up with a price list with Councilor Huff-Larmond who has expressed interest too. Ms. Cohen, Ms. Crogan-Camara, and Councillor Huff-Larmond all agreed to meet for the task.

Ms. Crogan Camara raised the issue regarding spiral lights on lamp posts in Crawford Square; Councilor Burgess raised the issue of extending the lights to North Randolph; at issue, there is how many lamp posts are there on North Main Street so how far north can be purchased for \$40,000?

Sandy Cohen had a discussion with Councillor Huff-Larmond on the cost of giant Menorah and Kinara.

Councillor Gordon: Menorah and Kinara count as lights?

Councillor Huff-Larmond: We're dividing up the money in a culturally sensitive way - but unclear if those count-- Jesse will ask Town Manager for clarification.

Ms. Crogan-Camara input through Jesse: Lunar New Year item also?

Councillor Huff-Larmond: It was a rabbit this year and the next year will need a new light because it's different every year.

Councillor Clerger: Could Haitian Flag Day be included?

Councillor Huff-Larmond: This is for holiday lights. I think that would have to be separately funded. What about funding through Cultural Council if the Menorah and Kinara aren't funded within the \$40,000?

Director of Community Programs Liz LaRosee: Cultural Council meeting is in September and wouldn't allocate until after Xmas so that'd be for 2024.

D. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 PM. All voted unanimously to adjourn.