

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the twentieth day of February 2024 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Michael Geary at 6:45 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Michael Geary, Scott Bill Hirst, Sharon Davis, Robert Burns; Town Manager Brian Rosso, Solicitor Stephen Sypole and Town Clerk Marita Murray. Stephen Moffitt, Jr. was absent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER: RIGL SEC. 42-46-5(A)(2) – TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION. LR-6A OWNER, LLC ET AL V. TOWN OF HOPKINTON PLANNING BOARD, WC-2023-0451.

POLL VOTE:

IN FAVOR: Geary, Hirst, Davis, Burns

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Geary, Hirst, Davis, Burns

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Council President Geary reported that a vote was taken in Executive Session, and pursuant to RIGL sec. 42-46-4(b) any votes taken will not be disclosed at this time.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Geary, Hirst, Davis, Burns

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Councilors Hirst, Burns, Davis and Geary announced they were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

RI 250TH COMMISSION

This matter was scheduled for a presentation by Lauren Fogarty, Program Coordinator for the RI 250th Commission and Rob Rock, Deputy Secretary of State to promote the creation of local 250th committees ahead of the 250th anniversary of the founding of our country.

Rob Rock, Deputy Secretary of State was present on behalf of Secretary of State Amore and the RI 250th Commission. In 2026, the country and the state will be embarking on the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In 2021 the General Assembly created the Rhode Island 250th Commission, which is chaired by the Secretary of State and currently has 30 members. The Commission is tasked with increasing civic awareness and engagement about the American revolution; also making economic development a priority and anything to do with the revolution. One of the ideas that the Commission had was to visit the 39 cities and towns to see if they would be willing to create local 250th Committees to help establish events in the individual towns to celebrate the anniversary. This is the thirty-fifth Council that they have been before, all of which have agreed to participate in some way. If Hopkinton wished to participate in the celebration, the RI Secretary of State's Office and the 250th Commission will assist in any way they can. Mr. Rock noted that he had brought copies of three documents, the originals of which were housed in the State Archives, and if the Town wished have an event he could bring the originals. The documents he brought were the Act that incorporated the Town of

Hopkinton in 1757, the list of men that were eligible to bear arms in 1777, and the Votes of the Freemen from 1790. These were all signed by residents from Hopkinton. These copies would be available at the Town Clerk’s office for anyone to view. Councilor Davis asked what the Votes of the Freemen was and Mr. Rock explained that this document was signed by Town Clerk Caleb Potter. The document stated that at the town meeting held in Hopkinton on the 11th day of February 1790, it was voted that Mr. John Brown and Colonel Jeff Rawson, of the delegates of the freemen of the town and the state convention to be held in South Kingstown and in Hopkinton, with respect to the State of Rhode Island on the first Monday of March. This was signed by Town Clerk Caleb Potter. Councilor Hirst noted that he was the fifth great grandson of Caleb Potter. He explained that freemen were the founders of Hopkinton and there were certain criteria that needed to be met, such as being a land owner. Councilor Davis asked Mr. Rock if they had to let him know if they were participating and he asked the Council to let him know and they will assist however they can.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ORDER

There were no changes to the agenda order.

CONSENT AGENDA

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BURNS TO APPROVE MONTHLY REPORT: TOWN CLERK; SET MARCH 4, 2024, AS A HEARING DATE FOR A MULTI-EVENT PERMIT FILED BY ASHAWAY PINES RV RESORT; APPORVE ABATEMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE TAX ASSESSOR.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Burns, Davis, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Town Manager Rosso asked that the Council move up the matter under Unfinished Business as Interim Planner Ashley Sweet was present via Zoom; however, had another meeting to attend.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

This matter was scheduled to discuss, consider and possibly vote regarding the notification of staff members who are required to participate in the Technical Review Committee.

Ashley Sweet, Interim Town Planner, was present via zoom. She noted that the Planning Board had adopted the rules of procedure for the Technical Review Committee. They wished a directive or notification come from the Town Council to the members of the Technical Review Committee, so that they can this process and have everyone ready to go when an application comes in. Councilor Hirst was worried about this Committee having a quorum. Mr. Rosso did not believe that would be an issue as many of the members were town staff and the meeting would be held during normal business hours. They were just asking that a directive be sent to the staff that this was a meeting that they would have to participate in once a month to make sure they provide the Planning Board with the assistance they need.

Cecil Wayles of Hopkinton Hill Road, and Planning Board member, felt the committee was straight forward. The Planner was now required to decide some things that used to go before the Planning Board. This Committee was a buffer to obtain guidance for the Planner. Mr. Rosso noted that the Committee will not only consist of town employees and this directive was aimed at town staff.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BURNS TO ALLOW THE TOWN MANAGER TO NOTIFY TOWN STAFF WHO WILL BE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

NEW BUSINESS

RI League of Cities and Towns

This matter was scheduled to introduce David Bodah, new Associate Director and Ernie Almonte, Executive Director of the RI League of Cities and Towns.

David Bodah was present via zoom. He advised that this was his fifth week at the League and was impressed with how the League operates. He noted that he had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Rosso at a luncheon at the State House with Governor McKee. They heard what the Governor's priorities were and they were given the opportunity to share the issues that were affecting the towns. Mr. Bodah explained that the RI League of Cities and Towns represents all thirty-nine cities and towns across the state. Their guiding principles were no un-funded mandates, to honor home rule, respect managerial rights of the towns, and no one size fits all. He noted that since he joined the League he has reviewed over 1,200 bills that have come through the General Assembly. Once the legislation session is over, they would like to visit the Council in person. There are seven legislative priority areas that were voted on by the membership that consist of housing, land use, fiscal responsibility, and education, among others. The lines of communication are always open and they should call him any time. He noted that Councilor Hirst had sent him a question as to the percentage of the budget that went towards education for all of the cities and towns. This was not information that the League had but he would try to track that down. Councilor Davis asked Mr. Bodah if he was in opposition to HB 7062 related to Accessory Dwelling Units. He felt the League was in general support of any option that would help the housing issues; however, they would need more details of what this will mean for the cities and towns. Mr. Bodah explained that he had a call with the Planners last week. They were concerned not only about the legislation that was passed last year, but the ADU bill in its current form. They are waiting to see what the Senate version of the bill will look like, and then the House and Senate will have to come to an agreement. Councilor Davis noted the Council would be sending a Resolution in Opposition of H 7062. Mr. Bodah explained that the League reviews every bill that is presented, through their guiding principles, then they compare it to the legislative priorities. Thereafter they have a legislative committee which reviews each bill and determines whether they should support or oppose the bill. He sends out a legislative update every week and the Board weighs in on the proposed bill. As of now, the League is in general support of

ADU's but they are waiting to see the Senate version, before coming to a definitive decision.

Peddlers and Solicitor License Fees

This was scheduled to discuss, consider, and possible vote to set a date for a public hearing to amend the fees for Peddlers and Solicitors licenses.

Councilor Burns questioned why there was no time limit for the peddling of jewelry and Town Clerk Marita Murray noted that it was typically for one year. It was agreed that this would be added into the ordinance.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BURNS TO SET MARCH 18, 2024 AS THE PUBLIC HEARING DATE TO AMEND THE FEES FOR PEDDLERS AND SOLICITOR'S LICENSES.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Hana Lane

This was scheduled to discuss, consider, and possibly vote to set a date for a public hearing to discuss the acceptance of Hana Lane as a town road.

Councilor Hirst advised that residents felt that because they were taxpayers, they were entitled to have the town take care of their road, but it did not work this way. For a road to be serviced, it has to be accepted into the town's road system. Mr. Rosso noted that Mr. Caswell from the Public Works Department will be in attendance at the public hearing. Solicitor Sypole noted that the Council would send this to the Planning Board to ask for their recommendation.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HIRST TO SET MAY 6, 2024, FOR A PUBLIC HEARING TO DISCUSS THE ACCEPTANCE OF HANA LANE AS A TOWN ROAD.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Resolution Opposing H 7062 - Accessory Dwelling Units

This was scheduled to discuss, consider, and possibly vote to approve a Resolution Opposing House Bill 7062 regarding Accessory Dwelling Units.

Councilor Geary felt that mandates should not be a one size fits all; something that works in Providence may not work in Hopkinton. Councilor Hirst wished a copy of this Resolution be sent to the RI League of Cities and Towns.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION OPPOSING HOUSE BILL 7062 REGARDING ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS.

IN FAVOR: Hirst, Davis, Burns, Geary

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT

Municipal Resilience Grant Award

Mr. Rosso advised that the town was awarded \$1.3 Million Dollars in funding to repair the culvert and bridge on Collins Road from the Municipal Resilience Action Grant Program. They worked closely with DPW, Crossman Engineering, Save the Bay and Wood Pawcatuck Water Shed to establish a list of culverts that met the criteria for this grant. Public Works went through the list to identify their highest priority and they prioritized the bridge on Collins Road, which is a one-lane bridge on a two-laned road. Mr. Rosso explained that they would be widening the bridge and fixing the culvert under the bridge. This is a box culvert on one end and a pipe on the other which does not allow for proper flow. They were also awarded funding to fix an additional culvert on the other side of Collins Road that is not draining properly and causing some flooding. Mr. Rosso indicated that they received forty-one applications which totaled \$51 Million Dollars, and there was only \$12 Million Dollars to allocate. Hopkinton received the largest allocation of all of the municipalities that applied. There is a 20%

match or approximately \$300,000, but there will be some in kind portion of it since Public Works will be doing some of the work. He is currently working on plans to help fund this project. Councilor Burns asked when they were planning to start this project and Mr. Rosso noted that they only recently received notification, so it would not be done this year. Councilor Geary asked how many culverts and bridges needed to be addressed and Mr. Rosso did not know.

Update regarding Public Works well

Mr. Rosso noted that the new Public Works well has been installed and the Animal Control facility is also hooked up. It was completely done with ARPA funds.

Councilor Burns questioned what the status was for the Animal Control facility addition and repairs. Mr. Rosso explained that they ran into an issue with the setbacks since they were so close to the property line and Al DiOrio was conducting a survey to get a better sense of where the property line was. They are getting closer to the final draft of the plans and should have the final design blueprints in approximately a month. Councilor Burns asked Mr. Rosso to provide an update on his meeting with Superintendent Gina Picard regarding the demolition of the 1904 building and the monument. Mr. Rosso explained that it was an internal meeting with staff to establish a timeline with Chariho to let them know when the 1904 building would be coming down. They are preparing bid documents with Hoffman Engineering and Crossman and needed those details to complete them. They needed to know when they could start the project and when it needed to be completed. There were also questions within the bid documents as far as what they were going to do with the foundation. Councilor Geary felt that Councilor Burns was asking if Gina Picard and staff understand that no matter how the bond vote went, the 1904 building will be coming down and there will be a memorial. Mr. Rosso noted that they were aware that there had to be a memorial site and the town also has obligations due to the funding source. When they received permission from the RI Historic Preservation Commission to take down the building, one of the stipulations was that there had to be a memorial site. They will know more around May 8, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Moreau of Old Depot Road wished to thank the Town Council for his appointment to the Economic Development Commission. He also wished to thank Attorney Sypole, who had given the commission help regarding future projects and recommendations. Also, Tuesday, February 27, 2024, will be the last Charter Commission Committee meeting, and if the Council had suggestions, they should let them know. Lastly, he brought up the town hall expansion which was supposed to cost approximately \$2.8 Million Dollars, noting that he is concerned with cost overruns. He was concerned that if they went ahead with the expansion, would they ever see Phase II. He asked that the Council reconsider the purchase of the B2B building. In the long run, he felt that the purchase of that building would be cheaper than it will be to add the expansion and renovate the town hall.

Etta Zasloff also thanked the Town Council for appointing her to the Economic Development Commission. Part of what they are doing is trying to survey what is currently going on in the town with regard to empty buildings, available land and looking at the whole picture of the town. She noted that she became aware of the B2B building and was amazed at how nice the building was and wanted the town to consider it. Lastly, she wished to know how much ARPA funds the town received and how they were spending it. It was noted that Mr. Rosso could provide her with an accounting.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO ADJOURN.

SO VOTED

Marita D. Murray

Town Clerk

Sydney Fernandes

Deputy Town Clerk