

**Stoneham Select Board  
Open Meeting  
Tuesday, February 11, 2025  
7:00 p.m.**

**Open Session**

**Members Present:** Raymie Parker – Chair, Timothy Waitkevitch – Vice Chair, Heidi Bilbo – Clerk, George Seibold

**Also Present:** Town Administrator Dennis Sheehan

**Document List:** Notice of Hearing for Site Plan 467-469 Main Street; Department Review for 467-469 Main Street; Application and application materials for Site Plan 467-469 Main Street; Notice of Hearing 450 Main Street (Class II); Application materials for 450 Motors; Special Once Day License application for St. Patrick School; Email from Chief O'Connor dated 2/3/25; Minutes dated 1/21/25; Minutes dated 1/28/25; Application of Christa Crewdson; Application of Claudia Prodero-Arnoff; Draft Public Building and Property Naming Policy

**Agenda Item 1: Call to Order:** Parker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a unanimous vote.

**Agenda Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance**

**Agenda Item 4: Citizens' Comments** Amanda Saperseras requested that the Select Board take action to vote on an amount, the wording of the ballot question, and the date of the election so that all groups have transparent information. Ryan Foreman, 12 Windsor Road, urged the Board to move the process forward and select a large enough number to move the town forward. Karlie Dalton, 40 Lynnfells Parkway, requested that the town send out a flyer to the residents. Erin Kennedy, 2 Congress Street, requested that the ballot question be structured as a yes/no question with one dollar amount. She expressed her concern that the vote could be split if there is more than one dollar amount listed on the ballot.

**Agenda Item 4: Site Plan Review – 467-469 Main Street** Waitkevitch read the hearing notice. Charles Houghton appeared for the petitioner stating that he has been before the Board of Appeals and Planning Board. The petitioner is looking to add a third unit to the space and all construction will be within the existing footprint. Houghton stated that his client agrees to all of the requirements listed on the department review. Bilbo asked whether the space would remain commercial. Houghton stated that the space would remain commercial.

Bilbo moved to approve the site plan for 467-469 Main Street. Seibold seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker  
Timothy Waitkevitch  
Heidi Bilbo  
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

Seibold requested a point of personal privilege. He stated that the Board has reviewed a total of 50 site plans since 2016, with only one denial, which was remanded and approved. He stated that the Board is elected to review safety issues and serve as a second set of eyes on a project.

Seibold left the hearing room.

**Agenda Item 5: Class II License – 450 Main Street** Waitkevitch read the notice of hearing. Dana Marek detailed the classic car dealership that he was seeking to open at 450 Main Street. Kilbride stated that she spoke with the Building Inspector who stated that Marek could not have cars on the site until he completed inspections. Kilbride stated that an abutter asked whether there would be electric cars or batteries on site. Marek answered that there would not be either on site. Bilbo asked if there would be automotive repair and Marek answered that there would be no repairs performed on site.

Waitkevitch moved to approve the Class II license. Bilbo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker  
Timothy Waitkevitch  
Heidi Bilbo

Motion Passes (3-0)

Seibold returned to the hearing room.

Bilbo moved to enter into Liquor Licensing Authority and return to the Select Board. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker  
Timothy Waitkevitch  
Heidi Bilbo  
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

**Agenda Item 6: Special One Day License – Saint Patrick School – 3/15/25** Lindsey Renauld appeared for St. Patrick’s School stating that the school is hosting a 21+ gala on 3/15/25 to raise funds for the school and that they are expecting about 175 people. Bilbo moved to approve the special one day license. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker  
Timothy Waitkevitch  
Heidi Bilbo  
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

Seibold moved to exit Liquor Licensing Authority and return to the Select Board. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker  
Timothy Waitkevitch  
Heidi Bilbo  
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

**Agenda Item 7: Approve Minutes** Bilbo moved to approve the minutes of 1/21/25 1/28/25. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. Voted unanimously.

**Agenda Item 8: Appointment to Cultural Council: Christa Crewden; Claudia Pedro-Arnoff** Seibold moved to appoint Christa Crewden and Claudia Pedro-Arnoff to the Cultural Council. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. Voted unanimously.

**Agenda Item 9: Override Discussion/Ballot Question** Parker stated that the Board is at the point where it needs to make a decision for the community. She stated that the decision that must be made is the decision to maintain property values, invest in our resources, and our schools. She stated that the Select Board is elected to be leaders and take action.

Sheehan stated that he has served as Town Administrator for 6 years and this is the most difficult decision that has been before this Board. He stated that the plan has always been to listen to the Boards, allow feedback from the community, and take public comment seriously. He stated that even if an override passes there will still need to be cuts made. He stated that the dollar figure to restore the school department is \$2,567,401 and the number needed on the Town side by DPW, Fire and Police is approximately \$2 million. Sheehan stated that is we add in all of

the needs by both the Town and School side the Town would need roughly \$14.6 million. He stated that the needs are endless and this number could be higher.

Bilbo clarified that the \$14.6 covers personnel for Fire, Police, and DPW, but does not cover a new fire station. She asked whether the new staff would save on overtime. Sheehan stated that the staffing will bring us back to workable numbers but will not remove the need for overtime all together. He stated that some of the savings will not be realized because the override is restoring staffing and services.

Seibold stated that he is strongly against adding deputy chiefs and would prefer the staffing to be added as patrol officers and bodies at DPW.

Waitkevitch stated that we need to add both line officers and command staff. He stated that it is important for both chiefs to have seconds in command and that some of those duties are critical management duties. Seibold stated that he is concerned with the large number of housing units coming on line. Bilbo stated that she would like to see deputy chiefs and that both chiefs requested a deputy in their list of staffing needs. Parker stated that the Board is here to make a bottom line decision and if the override passes, the department heads will make decisions and restructure as needed. She stated that the number that is chosen has to get the Town where it needs to be.

Bilbo proposed a \$13 million override. Seibold stated that he would rather see \$12.5 million stating that we are a bedroom community and unfortunately the residents will need to shoulder the burden. Parker stated that the \$9.1 million figure is level funding and she feels that is off the table. She stated that the town side has needs. Waitkevitch stated that the town needs and the school needs add up to \$14.6 million. He stated that the town side has been gasping and making the school side its priority. He stated that he would like to emphasize an equitable restoration on the town side with a number that will give everyone space to restore and grow. Waitkevitch stated that \$13 million seems reasonable and he would like to see a yes no question.

Seibold stated that \$13 is a reasonable number and those that are opposed to the override have not given any feedback or solutions. Parker stated that the \$7 million is APRPA funding saved the town and allowed us to do a lot of extras. Sheehan stated that the FY21 budget saved us as well because the town was very conservative.

John Cummings asked how the town's tax rate compares with surrounding communities. Sheehan stated that we are truly mid-range.

Ryan Foreman thanked the Board for its time and its effort. He stated that it seems like \$13 million is just a number that has been selected rather than having any support. He stated that the \$14.6 million is about an extra \$20/month and there may not be another chance to bring to town up to where it needs to be.

Parker stated that she has heard from neighbors that this will be difficult on a lot of families. She stated that the demographic of this town has changed, but there will be those for whom this is a hardship.

John Cummings stated that there is a perception that the deficit is based on mismanagement, but the override still only gets us close to the rate of surrounding communities. Sheehan stated that inflation, special education, health insurance increase compound year over year and there has never been an override.

Mary Shannon Thomas stated that the increase in taxes will matter to many families and she would like to get it correct. Jessica Zeigler stated that it will be hard on many if the override passes and it will be hard on many if it doesn't pass. Amanda Saperseris urged the Board to go with the higher number so that the town does not have to do this again.

Waitkevitch stated that the risk of the override failing gets higher with the larger numbers. A \$1700 tax bill is frightening. Bilbo stated that the override is not the silver bullet and we have to keep looking at other avenues for revenue such as filling vacant store fronts.

Ryan Foreman stated that filling the storefronts is not going to increase revenue and what is happening with the override could be lightning in a bottle. He urged the Board to choose the \$14.6 million figure. Bilbo stated that there is an impact to empty buildings – we need to fill the buildings, have a walkable downtown, have retail options for residents – it will make a difference.

Nick Snow stated that there is no objective data to support the contention that any number lower than \$14.6 million will pass. He stated that the 5 year forecast projects a deficit and the \$14.6 million is supported by the need assessment completed by the town and school.

Waitkevitch stated that this solution seals with an imminent problem. We live in a bedroom community and our revenue only comes from new growth or an override. This is also a zoning discussion because we need to figure out where this community wants new growth to go.

Parker stated that she does not want to come back here and that she is inclined to go with \$14.6 million. Bilbo stated that she has concerns that it will not pass. Waitkevitch stated that it will take a lot of work to get this passed. Seibold stated that he is concerned that 2.5% over \$14.6 year over year will be a lot for some families.

Waitkevitch moved to place the following question on the ballot with minor modifications to be made by Town Counsel: “Shall the Town of Stoneham be allowed to assess an additional \$14,600,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding public safety, education, public works and general government expenses for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025?” Bilbo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker  
Timothy Waitkevitch  
Heidi Bilbo  
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

Bilbo moved to request that the Town Clerk place the question on the ballot for the 4/1/25 municipal election. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker  
Timothy Waitkevitch  
Heidi Bilbo  
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

**Agenda Item 10: Building Naming Policy** Seibold stated that he would like to see any proceeds from this project, placed in the capital fund for the maintenance of the specific building at issue. Parker stated that she likes the idea of either the capital or facilities accounts. Sheehan stated that municipal finance law requires that the money be placed in the general fund unless otherwise allocated at Town Meeting.

**Agenda Item 11: High School Building Project Update** Sheehan showed updated photographs of the high school building project including field and stadium work.

**Agenda Item 12: Town Administrator's Report** Sheehan stated that there is an ongoing conversation with the Capital Committee regarding any modest requests to be made at Town Meeting. He stated the the MWRA is releasing its preliminary rates this week. Sheehan stated that Mass DOT has completed 28% of the Friendly's intersection.

**Agenda Item 13: Non-Deliberative Announcements and Scheduling** Seibold stated that it is nice to see business owners shoveling their sidewalks. He stated that the auditorium is starting to show wear and need of repair. Parker announced the on Thursday the Select Board will be meeting at 1:00 to review a request for a liquor license for the 300<sup>th</sup> Committee.

**Agenda Item 14: Adjourn** Seibold moved to adjourn. Bilbo seconded the motion. Voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dava Feltch Kilbride, Office Manager