

**Stoneham Select Board
Open Meeting
Tuesday, February 25, 2025
7:00 p.m.**

Open Session

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

Also Present: Town Administrator Dennis Sheehan

Document List: Notice of Hearing for Site Plan Rockville Park; Department Review for Rockville Park; Application and application materials for Site Plan Rockville Park; Notice of Meeting for 490 William Street; Department Review for 490 William Street; Application and application materials for Site Plan for 490 William Street; Minutes dated 2/11/25 and 2/13/25; 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 3: Citizens' Comments Abby Shaw, 41 Gould Street, stated that she believed those who were voting yes on the override would still vote yes even at a higher number.

Carol Feke stated that she is inclined to vote yes on the override, but would like a lower number closer to the level funded number. She stated that it would be more marketable and less impactful on the residents.

Agenda Item 4: Site Plan Review – Rockville Park Waitkevitch read the notice of hearing. Attorney Charles Houghton appeared for the petitioner, Sanco Builders, who requested site plan review to construct a three-story, multi-family 46 unit building with underground parking at Rockville Park. Houghton stated that he had been before all departments, but that Conservation has an upcoming site visit on the property.

Bilbo stated that DPW mentioned that there is some sewer detail missing from the plan. Houghton stated that the plan is not complete, but that it will come off of Summit, to Glendale, to Rockville. Houghton stated that he is in agreement with DPW's assessment of the sewer line grade. Parker stated that the Board should be the last review and that she is inclined to approve the site plan subject to Conservation completing its review and approval.

Seibold moved to approve the site plan for Rockville Park subject to the Conservation Commission and DPW completing their reviews and approvals. Bilbo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold
David Pignone

Motion Passes (5-0)

Agenda Item 5: Site Plan Review – 490 William Street Waitkevitch read the notice of meeting. Sheehan stated that this is a meeting not a hearing. He continued that the property use as a sober home and educational facility is covered by the Dover Amendment and the use cannot be denied. The Select Board can only comment on health and safety issues. Houghton appeared for the petitioner, Unicorn Realty Trust. Houghton stated that the building inspector thought that the Board and the abutters should be made aware of the project. He stated that there will be no changes to the outside of the building and the inside of the building will be altered to meet building and fire code. He stated that his client is hoping to open in April and that there will be 10 clients in the house to begin. Houghton stated that there will be no on-street parking and if there is need for more parking, spaced will be added with the assistance of department heads.

Seibold stated that the building was purchased by the owner in November and it should not be before the Board because it is under the Dover amendment. He stated that the zoning bylaw does not trigger site plan. He stated that that he would like to move that the proposed use is protected and site plan review is not required. Houghton stated that the use is exempt under c 40A, sec. 3. Sheehan stated that other towns definitely review Dover properties and we have done so in the past. He stated that Houghton and Town Counsel Galvin agreed to the review for safety purposes.

Houghton stated that he and his client agree that a review of safety issues is appropriate, but that the use is exempt. He stated that he is not seeking a vote and that there is no appeal period.

Owner, Tim McDonald, stated that the program will be a faith based program and that none of the participants will be on Saboxin or Methadone. He stated that he is planning on an open house for the neighbors,

Parker stated that this matter may not technically need to be before the Board for use issues, but that it is a good policy to review safety and code issues. Bilbo stated that she is thrilled that the owner wants to maintain the property and bring it new meaning. Waitkevitch stated that he is happy that there is a group looking out for people and it is a beautiful setting. Parker asked if Houghton's client agrees with the items listed on the department review. Houghton agreed and stated that if there is a need for more parking he will let the town know and handle it internally.

Waitkevitch stated that as the town moves forward with zoning review it should create a balanced process to review Dover properties for safety and code concerns.

Michelle Perry, 35 Gould Street, stated that she would like to applaud the McDonald family for working to pay it forward.

Marcia Wengen asked if the owners would consider maintaining the porch and grounds and keeping the name Arnold House. McDonald stated that the grounds and porch will be maintained, but that the house is going to be named for his brother. Wengen asked if there could be a plaque inside the house acknowledging the history of the Arnold House. McDonald agreed.

Steve Kent voiced his support of the project stating that he owns a sober house in Melrose and the residents are there to get better and the parking is not an issue at his house because not everyone owns a car.

David Rizzo, 3 Dewitt Road, stated that is concerned that there are children in the neighborhood. Tom McDonald stated that all residents will be in the house voluntarily and that they must be good neighbors. He stated that it is vital to living a sober life. He stated that there will be no congregating and no parking of the street.

Sheehan reminded those present that the Dover Amendment allows this use, by right, anywhere in town.

Anna Rizzo, 3 Dewitt Road, asked about occupancy and drug testing. Tom McDonald answered that there would be random testing, constant supervision, written policies, very little down time, and a curfew. Michael McDonald stated that there will be a liaison between the neighborhood and the house. Parker suggested a neighborhood meeting. Perry stated that this is not a half way house and none of the residents will be there on a court order.

Sheehan again reiterated that this review was not a use review and that he appreciated the owners answering questions. Parker stated that there is no denying the project and that the review is only about safety and parking.

Seibold moved to accept the use and any additional parking needs will be handled by the Police Chief or the Town Administrator and that there will be no appeal period. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold
David Pignone

Motion Passes (5-0)

Agenda Item 6: Approve Minutes Bilbo moved to approve the minutes from 2/11/25. 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) with Pignone abstaining

Seibold moved to approve the minutes from 2/13/25. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold
David Pignone

Motion Passes (5-0)

Agenda Item 7: Building Naming Policy – Third Reading Parker stated that this is the 3rd reading of this policy and the only outstanding item seems to be the fee and we can leave that to the discretion of the Town Administrator on a case by case basis. Bilbo stated that something should be added to describe what is included. Parker stated that it can be a case by case basis because each project is different. Waitkevitch suggested a schedule of fees and then if it is a unique project it can be case by case. Sheehan stated that he will come up with a fee schedule and Galvin stated that keeping it discretionary is very important because it gives the most flexibility for the value of each project. Seibold moved to approve the policy with the added language that the fee will be determined at the discretion of the Town Administrator. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold
David Pignone

Motion Passes (5-0)

Agenda Item 8: High School Building Project Update Sheehan stated that there was a lot of inside and foundation work completed during the February school break.

Agenda Item 9: TA Budget Review/Override Sheehan stated that the Town has been working on a non-override and an override scenario. The non-override scenario has a 3.5% increase on both Town and school sides as well as shared expenses. The budget proposed for the override has the budget going all the way up to the levy limit in the first year and taking what is unused to put in stabilization and the smooth upcoming trash fee increases. Sheehan also stated that the Board could also choose to not collect up to the levy limit and just increase the budget by \$9 million in the first year – that would raise average taxes by \$1100. He continued that in years 2 and 3 we can increase toward the levy limit if necessary. Sheehan stated that it will not change the ballot question, it changes what the Town chooses to collect within the levy limit.

Waitkevitch stated that this method is like creating a ceiling, but we do not need to tax up to it. The increased limit allows flexibility though year four. He stated that he is supportive of asking for what the departments need, but is also glad to have an option.

Bilbo stated that the flexibility would allow the ability to smooth what we are spending each year. Parker stated that she has received phone calls regarding concerns for our senior population and many phone calls in favor and against the override. She stated that \$14.6 million is where we need to be, but that the phased option helps her process the numbers better.

Seibold stated that the feedback that he is receiving is that the \$14.6 million increase is too high. He stated that it was difficult for him to vote the high number at the last meeting. He stated that we do not need top heavy administrators, he would like to see charter school funding changed, and to try to bring businesses into the square.

Sheehan stated that the trash contract is about to change and he is hoping to subsidize it and smooth it further for the residents.

Parker asked for the list of what would be lost if the override does not pass. Sheehan stated 2 patrol officers, 2 DPW mechanics, 1 DPW worker, 1 traffic director, 1 assistant building inspector, 1 recreation salary, preventive outreach salary, supplies and services, and consultant services. Sheehan stated that we have lost \$925,000 on the town side in the last few years. Seibold stated that the cuts on the Town side could be harsh because so many of them are not legally required. Parker stated that we could lose the library and the senior center. Waitkevitch stated that the Town is \$925,000 in the hole and the school is \$3.5 million in the hole. He said the Town side will be harsh because the departments are so small.

Bilbo stated that if we go back to the \$9.6 million number then we have to start having the hard conversations again next year because we will be behind for next fiscal year as well. She

stated that her responsibility is to tell residents what is needed to make the town run. She said let's do this correctly.

Pignone stated that the Boards have done their due diligence and there is legitimacy behind the numbers. He stated that if we don't do this we are on a steep decline. He stated that he supports the spread out amount so that people can feel comfortable.

Carol Feke stated that the \$9.1 million may be too low, but the \$14 million is too high. She stated that the Town cannot do everything because residents cannot afford it. Amanda Saperseris stated that the Town's residents are going to pay one way or another. She said that if we don't do this now the Town will crumble. Tess Field stated that the lack of a strong school system will cause residents to move. Ryan Foreman stated that we are on the precipice of a catastrophic collapse or we have the chance to turn this around. He stated that he has done a deep dive and there is no evidence of corruption or mismanagement. He stated that when the Board makes waffling statements it brings distrust. He stated that he would like bullet points as to what the override represents.

Parker stated that every Board member has clearly stated their support for the override. She stated that as an elected member of the Board her job is to bring information to residents. She said that she is for the override, but she is concerned for some residents. Bilbo stated that there is no guarantee as to where department priorities will stay. She is for the override but there is no way to deliver a list of certainties. Seibold stated that he is for the \$9.1 million because he represents the entire town and many resident cannot afford the \$14 million.

Foreman stated that the \$9.1 million number is being misused because it does no account for all needs and services that are coming. Bianca Hoffman stated that she is concerned about the lack of information that the residents have been given. Parker asked Sheehan to do a robocall to direct residents to the website. Todd Ficus stated that the Board needs a unified message. Seibold stated that he is all for the \$14.6 million, but his job is represent all residents and some cannot afford the higher figure. Martha Buckley stated that we want a safe town with good schools, a library, and a senior center. Jay MacNeill asked for an updated capital enrichment list.

Agenda Item 10: Town Administrator's Report Sheehan offered no report at this time.

Agenda Item 11: Non-Deliberative Announcements and Scheduling Bilbo stated that the candidate forum will be held on 3/4/25.

Agenda Item 12: Adjourn Bilbo moved to adjourn. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold
David Pignone

Motion Passes (5-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Dava Feltch Kilbride, Office Manager