

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2018**

Call to Order

The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, August 13, 2018 was called to order at 6:30 pm by Town Council President Barbara Barry. Councilors Lorinda Baker, Mary Salzmann, Karl Williams, Matthew Lemieux, and Michelle Sikes were present. Robert Lavoie was absent. Also present was Town Manager, Charles Blanchard.

Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2018

Motion was made to approve as amended by L.Baker seconded by K.Williams. Motion passed (6:0)

PVTA Update

Present was Paul Burns-Johnson, Town of Palmer representative for PVTA, and provided information regarding changes as their budget was cut approximately 3 million dollars, resulting in schedule changes, service reductions and increased fares. The biggest impact to Palmer is going from a fixed route service to an on demand service. Changes will take effect September 4, 2018. Information on the changes can be found at the PVTA website. It will also be posted at the Senior Center, Library and Town Hall.

6:40 Public Hearing/ Second Reading Ordinance 2019-01 Zone Change Recommendation; 1701 Park Street

M.Salzmann read public hearing notice and second reading.

Russ Baker, owner of the parcel was present and stated that he is selling the property. He stated that he cannot find a buyer for the present use. Mr. Baker stated that he was approached by John Rahkonen and with the use he proposes a zone change is necessary.

Present representing the proposed buyer of the property was Benjamin Coyle, of Bacon Wilson PC, to answer some concerns brought up by the Planning Board regarding spot zoning. He referred to Attorney Mark Beglane's letter, also of Bacon Wilson PC, to the Planning Board, dated May 29, 2018 (attached). He stated that the property has been vacant for quite some time, Industrial land is assessed higher than Highway Business land, and improvements made once the zone is changed from Highway Business to Industrial A will result in a higher value of the land and higher tax revenue. Mr. Coyle also stated that if the zone is changed, additional industrial development will be acquired and will create higher paying jobs in Palmer.

Linda Leduc, Town Planner and Economic Development Director, provided the Council with a memo dated August 9, 2018. (attached) She went over the information she provided by starting with the map showing the parcel. Ultimately she disagreed that the property will result in a public benefit, that Palmer has one tax rate so changing zone does not raise land value or increase taxes. If the zone is changed, all current uses will be non-conforming as restaurants, outdoor entertainment is not allowed in Industrial zones.

With no one else wishing to speak, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:59PM.

7:01 Public Hearing/ Second Reading Ordinance 2019-02 Temporary Moratorium on Large Scale Ground Mounted Photovoltaic Installations

M.Salzmann read the public hearing notice and Second reading.

Howard Feiff, of 14 Memory Lane, was present and stated that he would like to see a moratorium and that the Town take a closer look at the regulations.

Linda Leduc, Town Planner, provided a memo and a map to the Council. The intention of the Planning Board is to try and strengthen the ordinance. She stated that currently there are 12 approved projects, 10 built and 5 in the review process under current zoning since the Planning Board set the moratorium in motion.

M.Lemieux inquired as to whether other communities are having this problem and whether there is a cap to how many can be built. L.Leduc stated that at least 3 other communities that she is aware of are going through similar situations as they have no regulations for solar. There is no cap under the Town Ordinance thus far.

K.Williams inquired as to what happens after the project is finished as to what to do with the panels and also asked if there is consideration to who can see the panels from the street. L.Leduc stated that there is a decommissioning account set up for taking them apart if the developer does not do it. Michael Marciniec, Planning Board Chairman, stated that they are hoping to require view shed analysis in the new ordinance to properly keep the panels from view from the street or abutting properties.

With no one else wishing to speak, the Public Hearing closed at 7:13PM.

Legion Field Bleacher Update

C.Blanchard went over the two options he sent to the Council on August 1, 2018 for the replacement of the bleachers. He also contracted the Architectural Access Review Board on what would be required to bring the bleachers up to current ADA code if there was significant improvement done. The requirement would be to bring access to the first level of the existing structure. An estimate was submitted and would cost about \$25,000.00. By doing this, it would result in the removal of the first row seating as well as steps. All requirements including a wheelchair accessible ramp were calculated for an estimate of \$170,000.00. The second option would be to completely demolish the existing structure and replace it with a concrete pad, retaining wall and new aluminum bleachers would be approximately \$185,000.00. Another requirement is having the press box be handicap accessible, which would be an additional \$113,000.00. More information needs to be gathered to be sure that everything that needs to be handicapped accessible is included in the price. G.Skowronek stated that there is also a possibility of reducing the seating capacity. M.Lemieux also noted that he would like to see some more direction with a final number and answers regarding the first option.

B.Barry suggested more information a feasibility study be done to get some more concrete information on a cost for repair or replacement of the bleachers.

C.Blanchard stated that he would get information regarding the requirements for handicap accessibility for repair of the current bleachers and access to the press box. G.Skowronek will find out how many patrons typically attend games.

More information will be provided at the September meeting.

Laviolette Field Walking Trail Update

G.Skowronek stated that Sarah Sczcebak, Community Development Director, is going to be in touch with Palmer Paving regarding laying the stone dust and installation of equipment and will get back to the Council as soon as he hears from S.Szccebak. New doors for the restrooms are ordered and will be installed soon. Once installed, the inside fixtures will be installed.

First Reading: Ordinance 2019-03; Adult Use Marijuana

M.Salzman read purpose

Bill of Sale Approval for Laviolette Field Fitness Equipment

C.Blanchard explained that Quaboag Valley Community Development Center (QV CDC) & South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) received funding for the equipment but would like the Town to take ownership. C.Blanchard read Exhibit A to the Council for their approval for his signature to authorize the purchase for all pieces of equipment.

Motion was made to authorize C.Blanchard to sign the Bill of Sale by M.Lemieux. Seconded by K.Williams. Motion passed (7:0)

Vote to sign the Election Warrant for State Primary

B.Barry announced that the State Primary will be held Tuesday September 4, 2018 from the hours of 7AM-8PM.

Motion was made to sign warrant by M.Salzman. Seconded by L.Baker. Motion passed (7:0)

Council Rules Update

The Council went through some administrative errors and updates on Council Rules. The matter was continued to the September meeting.

Sub-Committee Appointments

B.Barry read the appointments and are as follows:

July 2018-June 2019

Town Manager Goals:

Lorinda Baker
Michelle Sikes
Karl Williams

Budget Sub-committee

Barbara Barry
Lorinda Baker
Matt Lemieux

Ordinance Review:

Robert Lavoie

CMS Middle School Reuse

Lorinda Baker

Mary Salzmann
Michelle Sikes

Robert Lavoie
Barbara Barry

Council Rules Review:

Matt Lemieux
Mary Salzmann
Karl Williams

Town Manager Performance Evaluation Update:

Barbara Barry
Matt Lemieux
Mary Salzmann

School Committee Liaison: (Palmer Public Schools)

Barbara Barry

Pathfinder Liaison:

Robert Lavoie

Economic Development Liaison:

Karl Williams

Green Communities Council Representative:

Michelle Sikes

PVTA Advisory Board *According to the PVTA Advisory Boards Bylaws the membership of the advisory board is made up of the Mayor or Chairman of the Town Council or Board of Selectman or their designee*

Paul Burns- Johnson

M.Salzmann inquired as to whether the school administration has officially moved out of Converse Middle School. She asked where they went and if they are officially out. C.Blanchard stated that he would find out and get back to them.

It was also stated that the Recreation Director will be the Town Coordinator with the schools for programs. B.Barry also reminded C. Blanchard that an agreement needs to be signed for responsibilities for maintenance and C.Blanchard will also find out who will be responsible for auctioning/selling unwanted furniture and materials. M.Salzmann noted that there are several memorial bricks and a stone memorial for a former principal. She inquired what would be done with them considering it will no longer be a school. B.Barry stated that it was brought up as part of the subcommittee and it was noted that it would be relocated.

Manager's Report

C.Blanchard stated that he and Sarah Szczebak, Community Development Director had a conversation with Matt Lane of SMOC of 2032 Main Street, Three Rivers, and noted that there was more damage than anticipated. More design work was required and sent out to bid. There have been a few proposals submitted. Matt Lane will attend the September meeting of the Revitalize Three Rivers Committee to bring them up to date and gather ideas for a first floor commercial tenant. He will then attend the October Town Council meeting to provide an update on the project.

L.Baker inquired as to what involvement SMOC had to do with the grant. She stated that there were 3 projects included in the grant; a roof for PHCC, the FitTrail and the SMOC house. She would like to be reassured that all the money does not go to the SMOC house only. C.Blanchard will get all of the information for next month's meeting.

C.Blanchard relayed all of the vacant voluntary positions to the Council: 2 ZBA members; 2 Conservation Commission members, and 2 PRA vacancies; although one of the appointments is a state appointment.

Councilor's Roundtable.

M.Salzmann stated that the 9/11 memorial for first responders will be held at the Police Station.

L.Baker stated that Celebrate Palmer will be August 18, 2018 from 12-8PM.

Adjournment of Formal Session

Motion was made to adjourn from formal session and enter by roll call and adjourn therefrom by M.Salzmann.

Seconded by L.Baker. M. Lemieux, yes. K.Williams, yes. L.Baker, yes. M.Sikes, yes. M.Salzmann, yes.

B.Barry yes

