

**Palmer Town Council
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 11, 2016**

1. Roll Call

The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, January 11, 2016 was called to order at 6:30 pm By Town Council President Barbara Barry. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard, Councilors Robert Lavoie, Barbara Barry, Lorinda Baker, Mary Salzmann, Karl Williams and Donald Blais. Absent was councilor Philip Hebert.

2. Visitors Comments

Helena Naglack and Henry Naglack of 50 Elizabeth Street stated that they wanted to discuss correspondence from Town Manager regarding door to door sales information. Helena Naglack stated that she would like the town to pursue further regulations for door to door salesmen. C. Blanchard outlined how background checks are currently performed by the Police Department on registered solicitors. C. Blanchard outlined the processes that other communities with stricter guidelines use. B. Barry requested that the Council review the policies in other communities governing door to door solicitors.

3. Meeting Minutes

a) December 14, 2015 - *Motion to approve the minutes of December 14, 2015 as submitted L. Baker, seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 6-0.*

4. Old Business

a) 2nd Reading – Park Street Zone Change – Parcels west of East Palmer Park Drive

Ordinance 2016-03, a proposal to change the zoning of nine contiguous parcels west of East Palmer Park Drive on Park Street from General Business to Highway Business was read by R. Lavoie.

b) 6:30 pm - Public Hearing - Park Street Zone Change – Parcels west of East Palmer Park Drive

Public Hearing on the zone change of nine contiguous parcels west of East Palmer Park Drive on Park Street from General Business to Highway Business was opened at 6:52 PM.

Atty. Jim Bregainas addressed the council representing Mark Baldyga who presented the zone change petition. He stated that the current use in the area being proposed for the zone change conforms with the Highway Business zoning designation more than a General Business Zone. He J. Bregainas stated that the zone change proposal was approved unanimously by the Planning Board. K. Williams stated that he is in favor of the zone change.

The public hearing was closed at 6:57 pm.

c) 1st Reading - Adoption of MGL Chapter 58 §8C

Motion to waive the reading of MGL Chapter 58 §8C by D. Blais, seconded by R. Lavoie. Motion passed 6-0.

C. Blanchard gave an overview of the proposed ordinance and changes that were made from the proposal presented at the December 14th meeting. C. Blanchard stated the ordinance would allow the town to forgive the taxes on properties that were placed in receivership which would be redeveloped as affordable housing. C. Blanchard explained that the town would only be able to abate a portion of the taxes owed. He clarified that according to the Department of Revenue, if the affordable housing was lost during the 20 year period, then the abated amount would need to be repaid but the town may decide to modify the amount owed to the town based on the conditions of the change.

B. Barry stated that she feels the abated amount plus interest and penalties should be repaid if the property is taken out of affordable housing. C. Blanchard explained that the benefits to the town by following the receivership process and forgiving taxes would outweigh adding penalties and fees on top of recovering all abated taxes. M. Salzmann stated that she is concerned that if the full amount of the penalties were added to the property once it is taken out of affordable housing, the owner may walk away and the property would become a liability to the town. B. Barry stated that the compliance portion of the proposed ordinance only applies to Mix Use properties. Discussion continued on how the ordinance would affect single family houses.

The Town Council would like to receive additional information on how an affordable housing use with a 45 year deed restriction could be non-compliant with the proposed ordinance. L. Baker stated that she feels the minimum penalties cover the ability of the town to levy heavier penalties against delinquent property owners.

5. New Business

a) Library Municipal Appropriation Requirement Discussion

Library Director Ben Hood addressed the Town Council regarding the proposed letter they would like to jointly send with the Town Council to the State Board of Library Commissioners to consider recalculating the municipal appropriation requirement. D. Blais thanked B. Hood for bringing the letter forward and hopes the state acts upon the request. M. Salzmann asked if there were any other concerns presented by the Library Board of Trustees. B. Hood stated that the proposal to petition for the readjustment was going to bring the letter to the Board of Trustees to ask for their support as well. B. Hood submitted a budget breakdown from the previous 10 years.

b) 300th Anniversary Committee Appointment – Bonnie McCloud

L. Baker stated that due to personal issues, Bonnie McCloud would not be able to serve on the committee

c) Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation – Melissa Fales

Melissa Fales of the Quabog CDC addressed the Town Council regarding the Three Rivers Art Community Knowledge initiative. She highlighted some of the initiatives already taking place on Main Street Three Rivers. They hope to place more art exhibits in the next year to expand the program. M. Fales stated that donations to the program are eligible for up to a 50% tax credit.

M. Fales stated that there will be a Valentine's Day dance at AMVETS to raise funds for the program and for the 300th Anniversary Committee. Sheila Cutty of the Quaboag CDC stated that individuals interested in the program can apply for mini grants to the Quaboag CDC

d) Dog Pound Inter-Municipal Agreement

Motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Dog Pound Inter-municipal Agreement by M. Salzmann, seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 6-0.

e) Town Hall Renovation Presentation – Architectural Insights

Bob Haveles of Architectural Insights presented the proposed town hall renovation plan. Proposed upgrades include relocation of departments, improvements to customer service areas and cosmetic upgrades. B. Haveles highlighted existing conditions and the proposed floor plan. B. Haveles presented the base bid and alternate proposals the town will be going forward with. He also noted some of the improvements that need to be made to the cupola. Discussion continued on whether the design should be contemporary or transitional. Discussion continued on what improvements should be made to the meeting room. The Town Council collectively stated their disappointment that the Town Hall Meeting Room was not proposed to increase in size and did not call for any changes other than basic cosmetic upgrades.

6. Subcommittee Reports

300th Anniversary Committee - L. Baker stated that there was a good turnout for the Christmas Tree bonfire and would like to turn that into an annual event. She also thanked the Three Rivers Fire Department and Ladies Auxiliary for their assistance putting on the event. L. Baker stated that the committee is accruing funds to go toward the parade. She is also in discussion with multiple businesses looking to make donations. The 300th Anniversary Committee will be co-sponsoring the Valentine's Day dance at AMVETS.

Ordinance Committee – D. Blais stated that the committee is still considering revisions to the shoveling sidewalk requirements.

7. Town Manager's Report

C. Blanchard stated that the Pavement Management Plan completed by the PVPC has been completed and a copy will to be given to the Town Council. C. Blanchard reported that an RFP for Municipal Solid Waste collection has been sent out and will be reviewed to determine if it will be feasible for the Town of Palmer. C. Blanchard stated that the Green Community Grant Report had been distributed to the Town Council. He also stated that Atty. Ksieniewicz is still working on the title of the Bergeron property.

8. Misc. Correspondence

B. Barry stated that the Tablets for each councilor need to be updated. She also stated that the next Town Council Meeting has been moved to February 16th. She is currently working to try to bring Senator Anne Gobi and Representative Todd Smola to next Town Council meeting. She would like to schedule a Town Council work session for February 22nd at 6:30 pm.

9. Councilor's Roundtable

D. Blais stated that he would like to bring in new school superintendent to a Town Council Meeting. B. Barry stated that she will be meeting with the Superintendent, then will schedule a meeting with the Town Council. D. Blais stated that he will be attending the MMA conference. He also stated that he will be giving a talk about Eleanor Roosevelt.

R. Lavoie thanked everyone involved in the Town Hall Renovation Plan. He also provided a list of programs available at the Library.

10. Adjournment of Formal Session

Motion to adjourn by M. Salzmann, seconded by K. Williams. Motion passed 6-0 at 9:30 pm.