

Palmer Town Council

Town Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 8, 2014

1. Roll Call

The Palmer Town Council Meeting of Monday, August 11, 2014 was called to order at 6:30 pm. Present were Town Manager Charles Blanchard, Robert Lavoie, Matt Lovell, Barbara Barry, Mary Salzmann, Donald Blais and Andrew Golas recording minutes. Jason Polonsky and Philip Hebert were not present for roll call.

2. Consent of the Agenda Order

Motion to accept the agenda as amended by D. Blais, seconded by M. Lovell. Motion passed 5-0.

3. Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2014 – Motion to accept the minutes of August 11, 2014 as submitted by D. Blais, seconded by M. Lovell. Motion passed 4-0-1.

4. Visitors Comments (for items not on the agenda)

None

5. New Business

1. 2nd Reading - Medical Marijuana Zoning Ordinance

Motion to waive the full reading of the Medical Marijuana Zoning Ordinance by D. Blais, seconded by M. Lovell. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Public Hearing – Medical Marijuana Zoning Ordinance

The public hearing was opened by B. Barry at 6:33 P.M. Reece Jones of 37 East Palmer Park Drive addressed the council regarding the proposed ordinance. He stated that he opposed any regulated marijuana use in town and suggested that the zoning regulations should not allow for the establishment of any medical marijuana facility. Nelson Pease of 38 Pearl Street addressed the council regarding the ordinance. He stated that he is opposed to a dispensary opening up in town and that marijuana is a gateway drug to other drugs such as heroine.

B. Barry asked Planning Board Chairmen Michael Marciniac and Town Planner Linda Leduc to comment on why the ordinance is being established. M. Marciniac stated that under the Massachusetts General Law allowing the establishment of Medical Marijuana cultivation centers and dispensaries, individual towns cannot opt out of the provisions of the law. All towns can do is to establish zoning regulations to site where the proposed facilities can be placed. If zoning regulations are not established, then a medical marijuana cultivation center or dispensary may be placed anywhere in town. L. Leduc

stated that under the proposed regulation, a medical marijuana facility cannot be built within 500 ft. of a residential structure.

N. Pease asked if there was any way that the town could opt out of the state law allowing the medical marijuana facilities. C. Blanchard stated that the Attorney General's office has made it clear that individual cities and towns cannot opt out of allowing medical marijuana facilities but are able to site where they are allowed to go. L. Leduc stated that any application that the Town receives would still be subject to applying for a special permit. R. Jones asked how the 500ft buffer was established. L. Leduc stated that the 500 foot buffer was an accepted limit by the Department of Public Health. Dwight Reim of 14 Quaboag Street stated that he would not be in favor of any marijuana use in town.

The public hearing closed at 6:50pm.

3. FY13 Audit Review – Tom Scanlon

Town Auditor Tom Scanlon and Finance Director John Kuzmiski addressed the council regarding the FY13 Audit. T. Scanlon stated that the Town received an unmodified opinion which is the best a town can receive. He outline the eight findings from FY13 Audit which included improving the year end reporting, review of the chart of accounts, the timeliness of bank deposits, review of deficit accounts, review of health insurance accounts, the Library's compensated absences, GASB 65 & 68 as well as the establishment of an OPEB trust fund. B. Barry asked when FY14 would be closed out. J. Kuzmiski stated that the process has been drawn out without a full time Treasurer.

6. Old Business

1. Net School Spending Referendum

Motion to accept the phase-in toward inclusion of retiree health insurance costs in net school spending compliance calculations, as specified in Section 260 of Chapter 165 of the Acts of 2014 for the Palmer School District by M. Salzmann, seconded by D. Blais. Motion passed 5-0.

7. Subcommittee Reports

D. Blais stated that the Open Space and Recreation Committee had held a public meeting on the proposed plan and would be submitting it to the state for approval. He also reported that the Police Station Building Committee was working on close out of the last items on the project.

8. Town Manager's Report

C. Blanchard reported that the intermunicipal agreement with Monson for a shared Animal Control Officer had been approved by Monson. He also stated that Architectural Insights had been contracted to do a space evaluation of the town hall and provide a plan to renovate the existing space. C. Blanchard stated the town would be part of a Municipal Technology Assistance Pilot program being conducted by the Mass Broadband Institute. The town is also participating in roundtables to discuss the possibility of establishing a western Massachusetts

mosquito control district. Finally, he stated that the Community Development Department held a public hearing to discuss the proposed CDBG Economic Development area in Palmer.

B. Barry asked that a detailed report on the status of the roads being dug up be prepared for the next meeting. She also mentioned that the fence had been removed from the Four Corners Cemetery and confirmed that the work was done by the DPW and that the fence would be scrapped.

9. Miscellaneous Correspondence

None

10. Councilor Roundtable

M. Salzmann stated that the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony would be held Thursday at the CMS War Memorial. The rain location for the event would be the CMS Auditorium.

R. Lavoie encouraged everyone to vote at the primary this Tuesday. He also gave his support for the high school sports programs.

D. Blais thanked Palmer Events Planning for holding Celebrate Palmer Day. He also encouraged everyone to vote at the primary.

B. Barry stated that the Recreation Department would be holding a concert on Friday, September 12th in Depot Park at 6:00pm.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by M. Salzmann, seconded by R. Lavoie. Motion passed 5-0 at 7:45 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Andrew M. Golas