

**Thomaston Select Board  
Workshop & Meeting Minutes  
11/22/2021**

**Board Present:** Zel Bowman-Laberge, Sandy Moore, Pete Lammert, Bill Hahn, Diane Giese, Kara George.

**Public Present:** Brian Doyle, Charlie Grover, Christine Simmonds, Joanne Richards, Daryl Hahn, John Fancy, Anson Norton

**5 p.m. Housing Workshop Notes**

- Data was provided from Maine State Housing Authority showing affordability for rentals and housing in Thomaston and the Knox County area. Sandy Moore noted that the study should include assets.
- There are 23% of Thomaston's population living under the poverty line. Currently, 60% of Thomaston students qualify for reduced meals at our local schools.
- Diane Giese noted that the workforce cannot find places to live. Many people do not have the funds to transition from renter to property owners.
- There was discussion on how to increase density and have more housing available on smaller lots. What are the best practices for getting more housing in small and limited areas?
- Joanne Richards stated that Lyman Morse is reviewing more housing for their workforce. They are considering cluster-like housing on Thatcher Street.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends expanding infrastructure off Beechwood Street to encourage more development.
- Can historic homes be condominiumized to provide more housing? Homeowners cannot afford to fix their historic homes. There are safety code standards when updating older homes for rentals.
- Zel Bowman-Laberge suggested reopening the conversation for development at the Green and having residents polled at the next Town Meeting in June.
- Charlie Grover noted that the Avesta Housing project that was proposed for the Green met many housing needs. The State of Maine is the 6<sup>th</sup> most expensive state to live in. The Green is the largest plot of land in Thomaston that was planned with high density.
- What housing programs and funds are out there? The government needs to raise the cap on income to get assistance for those in need. Housing shortages have risen in the last 2 years.
- Other challenges with housing include Airbnb's which have major impacts with short-term rentals. Properties have parking shortages as well.
- Anson Norton stated that residents felt the Town was not receiving enough money for the land from Avesta Housing for the development at the Green. It was noted that the project would have brought in \$60,000 in tax revenue each year. The sale of the land was a one-time value.
- There was discussion on using CDBG funds to assist in developing apartments.
- Zel Bowman-Laberge stated that local municipalities are joining to set up a land trust to encourage housing. It would require towns to invest money into the trust. Participants are currently seeking a non-profit status. The trust could manage tax acquired property. There is no language in the current ordinances for tax acquired property to be donated.

Approved December 13, 2021

## 6pm Select Board Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

**ACTION: Bill Hahn made the Breen motion, seconded by Pete Lammert to take the agenda out of order. VOTE: 5-0**

### New Business

**A. Confirm the Town Manager's appointment of Joseph Booth as full-time patrol officer.**

Joseph Booth decided to remain with his current employer. No action required.

**B. Consider the appointment of Shlomit Auciello to the Harbor Committee.**

Town Manager Kara George noted that the Harbor Committee members were sent the new application for review. She also spoke to Peter McCrea. The Harbor Committee is looking for new members and do not have a problem with the appointment.

**ACTION: Bill Hahn made a motion, seconded by Sandy Moore to appoint Shlomit Auciello to the Harbor Committee. VOTE: 5-0**

**C. Accept with regret the resignations of Christopher Barstow from the Recreation Committee and Jeanne Short from the Comprehensive Plan Committee.**

**ACTION: Bill Hahn made a motion, seconded by Sandy Moore to accept with regret the resignations of Christopher Barstow and Jeanne Short. VOTE: 5-0**

**D. Discuss public notice and Town Hall Streaming for board and committee meetings per the request of Chair Diane Giese.**

Diane Giese stated that the joint workshop with the Planning Board and the Comprehensive Plan Committee was not streamed for the public to watch. All workshops and meetings must be streamed except for executive sessions. Additionally, the meeting was not collaborative. The Town boards and committees need to work together cooperatively. The Town should consider a code of ethics for all the boards and committees.

**ACTION: Zel Bowman-Laberge made a motion, seconded by Pete Lammert to request Town Manager Kara George to draft a code of ethics for all town boards and committees. VOTE: 5-0**

### Approve the warrants

**ACTION: Bill Hahn made a motion, seconded by Diane Giese to approve the town warrants. VOTE: 5-0**

### Town Manager's Report (See attached)

**ACTION: Sandy Moore made a motion, seconded by Bill Hahn to cancel the December 27<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting. VOTE: 4-0-1 (Diane Giese abstained)**

The meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

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Chair Diane Giese

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Town Manager Kara George