

## **MINUTES OF THE PARKS & CEMETERIES COMMISSION MEETING OF NOVEMBER 19, 2019**

**PRESENT:** S. MSCISZ-CHAIRMAN, G. REHAK-COMMISSIONER, M. HOOK-COMMISSIONER, S. SHEPARD - SUPERINTENDENT, RICK COCHRANE- CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS, LYNNE BERMUDEZ- SELECTMAN, DICK GANDT-SELECTMAN AND SARAH GUIDO- RESIDENT.

**CALLED TO ORDER:** 7:34 P.M.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**SMITH MONUMENT UPDATE:** S. SHEPARD HAS MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TOPSFIELD FIRE & POLICE DEPTS., THE MEMORIAL COMPANY AND CONTRACTORS REGARDING ONGOING CONSTRUCTION OF THE MONUMENT AND FUTURE WORK. RICH COCHRANE, THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS/COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR FOR THE NORTHERN NE REGION OF THE CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS SPOKE AND EXPLAINED THAT 2020 IS THE 200<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST VISION FOR HIS CHURCH AS WELL AS THE 400<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF PILGRIMS LANDING AT PLYMOUTH ROCK. SMITH FAMILY MEMBERS WERE ON THAT FIRST MAYFLOWER TRIP. PER RICK THIS IS NOT JUST A MONUMENT, IT'S ALSO SOMETHING THAT IS CHANGING CHURCH HISTORY. THIS SHOULD BE THE FIRST STOP FOR ALL MORMON VISITORS AFTER LANDING IN THE NE AREA. RICK ALSO EXPLAINED THAT HIS FUNDRAISING EFFORTS HAVE INCLUDED MONIES FROM DONORS INCLUDING THE MARRIOTT CORP., MITT ROMNEY AND A LOCAL DELL COMPUTER EXECUTIVE AMONG OTHERS. TWO WEEKS AGO RICK MET WITH PRESIDENT BALLARD OF HIS CHURCH WHO WAS VISITING BOSTON. PRES. BALLARD INITIALLY EXPRESSED TO RICK THAT HE HAD ENVISIONED A SMALL MONUMENT DEDICATION CEREMONY ON CEMETERY GROUNDS, BUT RICK PREFERS A MUCH LARGER EVENT WHICH COULD ACCOMMODATE UP TO 4,000 PERSONS AT THE TOPSFIELD FAIRGROUNDS ARENA. RICK WOULD LIKE TO INVITE GOV. BAKER, MITT ROMNEY AND OTHER DIGNITARIES TO THE EVENT. HE WANTS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE COMMUNITY TO COORDINATE THIS EVENT, AND TO WORK OUT A PLAN TO CONTROL THINGS SUCH AS BUSES WANTING TO VISIT THE CEMETERY. THIS EVENT IF HELD AT THE FAIRGROUNDS ARENA COULD BE FILMED AND BROADCAST IN CHURCHES ALL ACROSS THE WORLD. RICK ALSO WANTED TO DISCUSS WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF EVERYONE AT THE EVENT THEN DECIDED TO TAKE BUSES TO GO AFTER THE CEMETERY AFTER THE EVENT. WOULD WE BE PREPARED FOR THIS POTENTIALLY LARGE VOLUME OF TRAFFIC?

S. MSCISZ SUGGESTED WORKING CLOSELY WITH S. SHEPARD ON ALL LOGISTICS REGARDING SAME. HE SAID THAT EVERYTHING NEEDS TO BE ORGANIZED AND HE SUGGESTED THAT THE CHURCH'S WEBSITE COULD INFORM PERSONS AS TO EXACTLY WHERE THEY SHOULD REPORT, ETC. M. HOOK SAID THAT HE LIKES THE SOUND OF THE LARGE EVENT. L. BERMUDEZ WAS ALSO VERY POSITIVE ABOUT THE EVENT CITING GOOD PUBLICITY FOR THE TOWN OF TOPSFIELD. SHE ALSO WANTED TO KNOW IF THE POLICE AND/OR FIRE DEPTS. HAD ANY CONCERNS. JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup> WAS BOOKED FOR THIS EVENT, BUT THIS DATE NEEDS TO BE CHANGED DUE CHURCH PRESIDENT BALLARD'S UNAVAILABILITY. JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> WILL MOST LIKELY BE THE NEW DATE. L. BERMUDEZ SUGGESTED THAT IT MAY BE A GOOD IDEA TO CALL THE FAIR TO PENCIL IN THE NEW DATE. RICK COCHRANE HAS ALSO SPOKEN WITH LOCAL BUSINESS PERSONS ABOUT SELLING T-SHIRTS AND/OR ROCKS WHICH COULD BE SOLD AS SOUVENIRS TO COMMEMORATE THE EVENT. G. REHAK WAS WONDERING IF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE COULD BE CREATED TO WORK WITH THE CHURCH TO COORDINATE THE LOGISTICS OF THIS EVENT. D. GANDT ASKED WHERE MOST OF THE 4,000 EXPECTED VISITORS WERE COMING FROM. RICK SAID THAT MOST OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE DRIVING TO THE EVENT FROM OUR LOCAL NEW ENGLAND AREA. L. BERMUDEZ SUGGESTED THAT THE CHURCH WORK CLOSELY WITH THE TOWN IN PLANNING THIS EVENT. AT THIS POINT RICK COCHRANE

EXITED THE MEETING. DISCUSSION CONTINUED, AND L. BERMUDEZ SUGGESTED THAT ONE KEY PERSON BE APPOINTED TO OVERSEE THIS PROJECT FROM OUR TOWN.

**OLD AND NEW BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE:** S. SHEPARD REPORTED THAT DOORS HAVE BEEN ORDERED FOR THE OLD BUILDING. HE HAS GIVEN OUR CARPENTER ALL INFORMATION REGARDING SAME. AS FOR THE NEW BUILDING, FRONT GATES ARE COMPLETE, AND THEY HAVE STARTED THE BACK PANELS. THE CHAPEL WILL BE ALL ELECTRIC WITH NO PLUMBING AND IT SHOULD BE COMPLETED TOTALLY BY THE END OF JANUARY. THEN WHAT FOLLOWS IS SPRAY FOAM INSULATION. OUR CONTRACTOR IS NOT 100% SURE WHAT HE WANTS TO DO WITH THE WALLS, THIS IS BEING LOOKED INTO. TO DATE WE HAVE SPENT APPX. \$9,000.00 ON THE HEARSE HOUSE RENOVATIONS. DISCUSSION THEN FOLLOWED REGARDING TRYING TO RETAIN THE HISTORICAL LOOK AND CONTEXT OF THIS BUILDING. S. MSCISZ INQUIRED AS TO WHAT WAS HISTORICAL WITH THE RENOVATIONS OF THE HEARSE HOUSE. S. SHEPARD SAID THAT OUR CONTRACTOR WANTS TO KEEP USING ALL NATURAL WOOD PRODUCTS, BUT HE DID CONSIDER USING OLD BEAD BOARD IN COMBINATION WITH BARN BOARD. THEY ALSO SPOKE OF WAINSCOTING WITH THE BEAD BOARD AND BARN BOARD ABOVE SAME. S. MSCISZ WANTS TO KNOW IF A REGULAR CONTRACTOR COULD CONTINUE NOW, OR, IS THERE A REASON WHY WE NEED TO CONTINUE WITH R.K. ANDERSON. S. SHEPARD REPLIED THAT OUR CONTRACTOR HAS A VERY GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR TOWN BLDG. CONTRACTOR, WHICH IS A PLUS.

**DEAD ANIMAL PICKUPS/AND ITS TRANSITION TO BOARD OF HEALTH (BOH):** S. SHEPARD SAID THAT OUR DEPT. DOES NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO PICK UP DEAD ANIMALS DURING NIGHT TIME HOURS. ALSO OUR CURRENT DEPT. EMPLOYEES ARE NOT INTERESTED IN DOING DEAD ANIMAL PICKUPS. S. MSCISZ FEELS THAT THIS WORK SHOULD BE PRIVATELY CONTRACTED OUT AS IT WAS ALWAYS PREVIOUSLY HANDLED. S. SHEPARD MENTIONED THAT THE BOH AGENT MAY PURCHASE A FREEZER FOR DEAD ANIMALS. BUT PER S. SHEPARD FREEZER SPACE COULD BECOME AN ISSUE GIVEN THE HIGH NUMBER OF LARGER ANIMALS WHICH ARE PICKED UP IN THIS TOWN. S. MSCISZ SAID THE BOH MAY ALSO WISH TO CONSIDER CONTRACTING WITH A CREMATORY, BUT THIS COULD BE COSTLY. S. MSCISZ SUGGESTED CONSIDERING CONTRACTING THIS WORK OUT TO A GIVEN INDIVIDUAL, THEN IT WOULD BE THAT CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK OUT ALL THE DETAILS OF DEAD ANIMAL DISPOSALS. PER S. SHEPARD THE INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR IS NOW ASKING THE BOH AGENT TO COME UP WITH VARIOUS OPTIONS FOR DEAD ANIMAL DISPOSAL. S. SHEPARD SAID THAT WE NEED TO ISSUE A LETTER STATING THAT WE NO LONGER WISH TO DO DEAD ANIMAL DISPOSAL IN OUR DEPT., CITING THE FACT THAT THIS WAS NOT ORIGINALLY ONE OF OUR DEPT'S FUNCTIONS. WE WERE THE ONLY TOWN DEPT. THAT STEPPED UP TO HELP OUT IN A TIME OF NEED AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE. THE P&C COMM AGREED UNANIMOUSLY TO SEND A LETTER TO THE B.O.H. WITH A DEADLINE DATE.

**TOWN LANDFILL:** OUR DEPT. IS ALWAYS IN THE LANDFILL, WHICH IS PYEBROOK PARK. WE NOTICE WHEN THERE ARE PROBLEMS SUCH AS DEPRESSIONS AND/OR A FLARE MALFUNCTION. S. SHEPARD ALSO HAS A GREAT WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH WESTON & SAMPSON ENGINEERS. S. SHEPARD SAID THAT HE WOULD RATHER SEE THE LANDFILL GO AS HARMONIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE, WITH OUR DEPT. DOING DAY TO DAY PHYSICAL OPERATIONAL WORK AND THE BOH AGENT LENDING HER KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE. S. MSCISZ AGREES THAT THIS SHOULD BE A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BOH, BUT THE REALITY IS THAT WE IN ESSENCE MAINTAIN THE GROUNDS. S. SHEPARD FEELS THAT THIS PARTNERSHIP WILL BE A POSITIVE OUTCOME FOR ALL CONCERNED REGARDING BOTH THE LANDFILL AND DEAD ANIMAL PICKUPS.

**HOLIDAY ON THE GREEN UPDATE:** G. REHAK DISCUSSED THE HOLIDAY ON THE GREEN (HOG) EVENT. SHE SAID THAT THERE IS ONE NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER. G. REHAK WILL NOT BE RETURNING TO THE COMMITTEE NEXT YEAR, AND NEITHER WILL OTHER SENIOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS. THIS YEAR WE WILL HAVE FOUR FOOD TRUCKS INCLUDING JOE'S ON A ROLL, THE SACRED COW AND KOWLOON. ALL IS GOING WELL PER GRETCHEN. GRETCHEN ALSO LEFT A MESSAGE FOR JENN COLLINS BROWN OUR FIRE CHIEF TO ADDRESS ISSUES RAISED REGARDING THE BONFIRE, SPECIFICALLY PROTECTING THE CONDITION OF PROCTOR FIELD. THE DOORS OF TOPSFIELD EVENT IS ALSO RETURNING THIS YEAR TO HOG. THERE WILL BE THREE CATEGORIES OF DOORS: RESIDENTIAL, BUSINESS AND CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12. RAY GAUTHIER (ALEXANDRIA TREE) STRUNG NEW LIGHTS ON THE MEMORY TREE. GRETCHEN ALSO THANKED STEVE SHEPARD FOR ALL OF HIS HELP. IRON TREE IS ALSO DOING WORK FOR US CONCERNING THIS EVENT. AS OF NOW THERE ARE NO NOMINATIONS FOR THE MARY ELLEN MAGEE AWARD, AND THE DEADLINE IS 11/22/19 FOR SAME. GRETCHEN ALSO RELATED THAT THE FAIR DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE HAYRIDE THIS YEAR. THEIR DECISION WAS MADE LAST MINUTE WHICH LEFT THE COMMITTEE SCRAMBLING. FORTUNATELY STEVE SHEPARD RECRUITED JRR ROSENCRANTZ WHO DONATED THEIR SERVICES TO PROVIDE THE HAYRIDE. GRETCHEN HAS ALSO PROMOTED THE BONFIRE AND THIS ENTIRE EVENT ON THE WEB.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT:** SARAH GUIDO THEN INTRODUCED HER ORGANIZATION, TOPSFIELD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP, WHICH IS A NON-PROFIT USING PRIVATE FUNDS TO HELP REVITALIZE OUR DOWNTOWN. THEY ARE SEEKING TO HELP WITH LANDSCAPING, FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS, ETC. L. BERMUDEZ ALSO ADDRESSED THE GROUP. SHE IS WITH THE DOWNTOWN RESIDENT REVITALIZATION GROUP. THEY HAVE A VISION AND GOALS WITH TIME FRAMES FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT. HER LAST WORKING SESSION IS IN DECEMBER, AFTER WHICH TIME THEY WILL SHARE THEIR PROPOSALS BEFORE THE BOARD, SPECIFICALLY THEIR VISION, MAIN GOALS AND YEARLY IMPLEMENTATION PLANS. THERE IS NO FUNDING FOR THIS WORK AS OF YET, WHICH WILL REQUIRE GOING TO TOWN MEETING. SARAH EXPLAINED THAT RESIDENTS ARE LOOKING FOR MORE SEATING AND PLACES TO ENGAGE AND GATHER TO DEVELOP A GREATER SENSE OF COMMUNITY. THE FIRST AREA THAT THEY ARE SEEKING TO DEVELOP IS AN AREA OUTSIDE OF COUNTRY FARMS. A TOWN TREE HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THIS AREA AND THEY ARE ENCOURAGING THE REMOVAL OF SIGN POSTS IN THE SAME AREA. A LETTER HAS ALSO BEEN SENT TO THE LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER BY THE TOWN BLDG INSPECTOR TO REQUEST THE REMOVAL OF A LARGE SIGN IN THIS SAME AREA. THE BUSINESS OWNER WAS GOING TO REMOVE THE SIGN BUT THEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND, SO THE MATTER MAY NOW BE ON APPEAL. S. SHEPARD SAID THAT THE BUSINESS OWNER OWNS 4-6 FT. OF LAND OUT FROM THEIR BUILDING. PER S. SHEPARD THE LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER HAS BEEN MAINTAINING THE AREA, BUT IF THEY NEGLECT SAME, THE PARKS & CEMETERIES DEPT. STEPS IN TO DO MAINTENANCE. D. GANDT WAS ALSO UNSURE WHERE THE SIDEWALK BOUNDARY WAS LOCATED. SARAH GUIDO'S IMPRESSION IS THAT THE SANTANDER BANK SIGN IS ON TOWN PROPERTY. S. SHEPARD FEELS THAT SHE IS PROBABLY CORRECT IN HER THINKING. THIS IS AN AREA WHERE SARAH WOULD LIKE TO CREATE A POTENTIAL GATHERING AREA FOR TOWN RESIDENTS. SHE ALSO SHARED A MAP CITING SOME OTHER POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CITES FOR FUTURE GATHERING AREAS INCLUDING AN AREA IN FRONT OF TOPFIELD HOUSE OF PIZZA. S. SHEPARD FEELS THAT THE TRASH BARREL IN FRONT OF THE PIZZA SHOP IS ON THE SHOP'S PROPERTY. SARAH IS WORKING ON CREATING A CERTAIN LOOK WHICH COULD BE EXTENDED

DOWN THE STREET TO THE POST OFFICE. CERTAIN TREES COULD BE PLANTED IN OTHER AREAS, ETC. SARAH ALSO SUGGESTS LOW MAINTENANCE PLANTS. THEY ARE STILL UNCERTAIN AS TO THE TYPE OF SEATING WHICH THEY WILL SUGGEST. A HEAVIER AND BIGGER BENCH WOULD BE PREFERRED PER S. SHEPARD. S. MSCISZ SUGGESTED THAT SAFETY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN CHOSING SEATING, AS LIABILITY COULD ARISE IF IMPROPER SEATING IS CHOSEN. LYNN B. ALSO SAID THAT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR ROBIN CROSBIE SAID THAT BRICK COULD BE PROBLEMATIC IN TERMS OF SHOVELING, AND PRESSED CONCRETE MAY HOLD UP BETTER. SOME AREAS OF SEATING SHOULD ALSO BE CLOSED DURING THE WINTER MONTHS. G. REHAK ADDED THAT BARRE VERMONT GRANITE IS ALSO A GREAT MATERIAL TO CONSIDER FOR OUTDOOR FURNITURE.

**TAA-HARMER FIELDS/EMERSON PARK:** PER S. SHEPARD GIVEN THE LOSS OF EMERSON FIELD, TAA HAS REQUESTED CREATION OF A VERY ROUGH DIAMOND OR TWO AT HARMER FIELD, WHICH IS LOCATED AT THE LOWER PART OF PYEBROOK PARK. THE COMMISSIONERS WERE ALSO SUPPORTIVE OF SAME! PER S. SHEPARD THESE FIELDS COULD ALSO STILL BE USED FOR LACROSSE AND FOOTBALL SINCE THE FIELDS WOULD BE CIRCLES FOR 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2<sup>ND</sup>, 3<sup>RD</sup>, HOME AND THE PITCHER'S MOUND, RATHER THAN CUT OUT DIAMONDS, THUS SAVING SPACE FOR FIELD SPORTS AS WELL.

**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA:** M. HOOK SAID THAT HE HAS BEEN WORKING WITH AN ORGANIZATION WHO ARE INVOLVED WITH THIS PROGRAM. THIS ORGANIZATION HAD INFORMED MARSHALL THAT IN THE PAST THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO DELIVER WREATHS TO OUR CEMETERY WHICH HAD BEEN PURCHASED WITH DONATED FUNDS OF TOPSFIELD RESIDENTS. THE ORGANIZATION WAS HOPING THAT THIS POLICY COULD CHANGE AS THEY CANNOT STORE LARGE NUMBERS OF WREATHS, AND THE RESULT WAS THAT THE OVERFLOW OF WREATHS PURCHASED BY TOPSFIELD RESIDENTS WERE BEING SENT OUT OF STATE TO ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY. THESE WREATHS ARE PLACED ON THE GRAVES OF VETERANS BY VOLUNTEERS. S.SHEPARD RESPONDED THAT WE HAVE WORKED WITH WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA IN THE PAST, AND HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY ISSUE WITH US ACCEPTING WREATHS. NO ONE EVER APPROACHED HIM WITH THIS ISSUE. G. REHAK SAID THAT 12/14/19 IS THE DATE SET FOR DELIVERY OF THE WREATHS. M. HOOK THEN DISCUSSED THE NEED FOR A MAP OF VETERANS' GRAVE LOCATIONS IN THE CEMETERY WHICH WOULD MAKE WREATH PLACEMENT MUCH EASIER. S. SHEPARD OFFERED A MAP GIVEN TO THE CEMETERY BY EAGLE SCOUTS WHICH LISTED ALL VETERAN GRAVES BY GPS COORDINATES. S. SHEPARD ADDED THAT WE COULD ACCEPT DELIVERY OF 200 WREATHS BUT SAID THAT THEY WOULD NEED TO BE STORED OUTSIDE. D. GANDT COMMENTED THAT IN THE PAST 20 WREATHS HAD BEEN PUT IN THE CEMETERY BY THE AMERICAN LEGION.

**VOTE#11-1-19:** G. REHAK MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE PARKS & CEMETERIES COMMISSION MEETING OF OCTOBER 15, 2019 AS WRITTEN. M.HOOK SECONDED THE MOTION AND ALL VOTED IN FAVOR OF SAME.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITH THE NEXT MEETING TO TAKE PLACE ON DEC. 10, 2019.

**\*ATTACHMENTS:** TOPSFIELD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE LANDSCAPING AT 20-24 MAIN ST. TOPSFIELD