



**Town of Amherst
Town Council Meeting
Monday, September 23, 2019
Town Room, Town Hall
4 Boltwood Avenue**

Minutes

Complete video is available online (beginning at 43:30): <https://amherstmedia.org/content/amherst-town-council-september-23-2019>

1. Call to order and declaration of a quorum

President Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m.

Councilors present: Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, DeAngelis, DuMont, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, Steinberg, Swartz.

Councilors absent: None

Councilors participating remotely: None

Others present: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek, Economic Development Director Geoff Kravitz, Clerk of the Council Athena O’Keeffe.

President Griesemer announced audio and video recording by Amherst Media.

2. Announcements

3. Hearings

4. General Public Comment

5. Proclamations and Commemorations

6. Presentations and Discussion

a. Downtown Parking Recommendations

Downtown Parking Working Group Chair Christine Gray Mullen spoke about the lead up to this report and work that has been done prior to this report.

Economic Development Director Geoff Kravitz spoke about the work of staff and committee members to create a cohesive, flexible and convenient parking system.

Matt Smith, principal at Nelson Nygaard and Jason Novsam, associate at Nelson Nygaard presented the report, and spoke about current parking as it exists now, changes to regulations from 2016 to 2019, utilization of public and private parking space, current parking management structure, rate structure and payment technologies. M. Smith and J. Novsam spoke about the following goals and various strategies to achieve those goals: management structure that is efficient and responsive management structure; create a system that provides convenient predictable and flexible parking for all downtown residents, workers, and visitors; maximize use of existing, underused private parking, for public use before making high cost municipal parking capital investments; move to a more user-friendly, accessible and predictable parking permit program; utilize parking technology that enhances parking availability, system performance, and convenience; implement programs that make parking in Downtown Amherst more inviting and convenient to customers; improve wayfinding and signage to intuitively guide visitors to, from, and between parking and downtown attractions and amenities; add new parking facilities when utilization regularly surpasses 85%.

Questions from the Council:

Councilor Steinberg asked about the parking benefit district, difference between that and the transportation enterprise fund (TEF), changes in Amherst may not be feasible, as the TEF helps fund busses. Councilor Steinberg noted comments in response to a Gazette article about parking in Northampton, which appears to have some of the same issues that Amherst is facing. Councilor Steinberg asked if construction of a parking garage will cost as much as \$40,000 per space to build, will building a parking structure ever make sense financially. M. Smith responded that signage is a problem, the proximity of free parking mere blocks from businesses is not well advertised. Parking structure is costly and may never make up the cost. Maintenance of a parking structure is big too. Investing in a parking garage as a first solution is not typically the best option.

Councilor Schreiber asked about private developers building parking. Parking is a public utility, downtown is low density, but in order to make downtown more dense, concentrating parking into a structure for the future does make sense. Councilor Schreiber noted that parking on the actual common is a point of contention, and recommended striking increasing parking on the common from the report.

Councilor Pam noted the underutilized private parking, and recommended removal of special permits except for residents.

Councilor Bahl-Milne smart use of the spaces is good, given alternate modes of transportation. Councilor Bahl-Milne asked how economic vitality changed when a garage was built. J. Novsam responded that their study did not find that there was insufficient parking today, but still hitting 85% utilization during some periods, and recommended that the Town try shared parking agreements first.

Councilor Schoen asked about uniform enforcement hours, and asked why not end enforcement at 6:00 p.m. rather than 8:00 p.m., asked about the amount of permits issued, and underutilization of reserved

spaces in parking garage during the evening and weekend. J. Novsam responded that the 8:00 p.m. recommendation stems from weekday and weekend peaks during that time, in order to effectively deal with that, the recommendation is to enforce meters during that time.

Councilor Hanneke asked to clarify the purpose for regulating parking in Town, noted the conflicting purpose of Town Center permit, asked if there should be a permit for evening or overnight parking. Councilor Hanneke expressed concern about license plate reader adoption and privacy, and the removal of meters that make quick stops convenient.

Councilor Brewer asked to correct inaccuracies in the report, specifically that the BID does not provide free parking and the use of dual meter/permit areas. Councilor Brewer stated that meter feeding is an issue, and employee safety is an issue if we ask employees to walk several blocks in the dark. The long-term lease on the lower level of the Boltwood garage was implemented because people living downtown wanted a place to park overnight. Councilor Brewer asked how the recommended position pays for itself given the salary is \$50-100,000/year.

Councilor DuMont asked about solar canopies over parking lots and how that affects the number of spaces in each lot, and consideration for electric vehicles.

Public Comment:

Barbara Pearson, an Amherst downtown resident, commented that students and faculty park downtown because it is less expensive than parking on campus.

Gabrielle Gould, Executive Director of the Amherst Business Improvement District (BID), commented that there is a perception that parking is an issue in the downtown. The report does not take future projects into account, such as Amherst Cinema adding screens, or building a performing arts shell on the common. A parking garage is a solution, and the Amherst BID is working at founding a 501c3 to manage a potential garage.

President Griesemer thanked staff, the Downtown Parking Working Group, and the consultants for their work.

7. Action Items

a. Writer's Walk Signs in the Public Way

Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek spoke about the Amherst literary trails, the Historical Commission moved forward with a writer's walk to honor writers who lived in the community. The request is to approve installation of 12 signs in the public way. Town Meeting approved CPA funds for the signs in 2010. The Design Review Board and the Department of Public Works reviewed the locations. Each sign includes biographical information and other writer's walk destinations.

Councilor Hanneke asked about space for a vehicle to pull off the road to read the signs in the two locations outside the downtown.

Councilor Schreiber asked about the inclusion of one writer who is still living, and about the possibility of adding additional authors in the future.

Councilor Bahl-Milne asked about promotion. D. Ziomek responded that the Town will publicize the signs once they are installed.

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Bahl-Milne, to authorize the Town Manager to install historic interpretive Writers Walk signs in the approximate style and content that are of similar scale and design as shown on the (a) “Wayfinding System: Fabrication Specs May 2018” prepared by Seth Gregory Design, (b) “Amherst Historical Wayfinding Panels Proof July 29, 2019” prepared by Seth Gregory Design, and the approximate locations in the right-of-way shown on (c) “Writers Walk Sign Locations 04-01-19.pdf” in the right of way at the approximate locations associated with the following properties:

1. 118 Sunset Avenue
2. 43 Sunset Avenue
3. 219 Amity Street
4. 259 Lincoln Avenue
5. 46 Main Street
6. 280 Main Street
7. 90 Spring Street
8. 97 Spring Street
9. 30 Boltwood Avenue
10. 249 South Pleasant Street
11. 850 Belchertown Road (142 Harkness Road)
12. 170 Market Hill Road

D. Ziomek stated that the concerns brought up will be brought to the Historical Commission.

Councilor Brewer noted the need to address maintenance costs. Councilor Ross noted that one sign will be placed in front of a fraternity house.

VOTED unanimously to authorize the Town Manager to install historic interpretive Writers Walk signs in the approximate style and content that are of similar scale and design as shown on the (a) “Wayfinding System: Fabrication Specs May 2018” prepared by Seth Gregory Design, (b) “Amherst Historical Wayfinding Panels Proof July 29, 2019” prepared by Seth Gregory Design, and the approximate locations in the right-of-way shown on (c) “Writers Walk Sign Locations 04-01-19.pdf” in the right of way at the approximate locations associated with the following properties:

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b. Policy on the Publication of Candidate Statements

Councilor Hanneke introduced the policy. Governance, Organization, and Legislation met two weeks ago, and made changes to the recommended policy to address ADA issues. Councilor Hanneke recommended further changes; the URL should be clickable for ADA compliance, submitting statements via a fillable PDF rather than a web form, changes to modify the disclaimer viewable at all times, and modified deadlines for adoption of the policy applicable to this upcoming election. The goal would be to send the URL to candidates tomorrow.

MOTION: Councilor Hanneke moved, second by Councilor Ross, to approve the “Policy on the Publication of Candidate Statements on the Town Bulletin Board in accordance with Charter Section 7.6” recommended by the Governance, Organization, and Legislation Committee report dated September 18, 2019, as amended by the document titled “7.b. Policy on the Publication of Candidate Statements DRAFT - GOL Revisions 9-11-19 - Proposed Additional Changes” and further to modify the deadlines in said policy for the purposes of the 2019 local Town election only as follows: the Town Clerk shall email the URL for submitting Candidate Statements to all individuals who filed nomination papers no later than 5 pm on September 24, 2019; the deadline to submit Candidate Statements for inclusion in the first publishing of the Statements by the Town shall be 5 pm on October 7, 2019; and the Town shall publish Candidate Statements submitted by the October 7th deadline no later than 5 pm on October 10, 2019.

VOTED unanimously to approve the “Policy on the Publication of Candidate Statements on the Town Bulletin Board in accordance with Charter Section 7.6” recommended by the Governance, Organization, and Legislation Committee report dated September 18, 2019, as amended by the document titled “7.b. Policy on the Publication of Candidate Statements DRAFT - GOL Revisions 9-11-19 - Proposed Additional Changes” and further to modify the deadlines in said policy for the purposes of the 2019 local Town election only as follows: the Town Clerk shall email the URL for submitting Candidate Statements to all individuals who filed nomination papers no later than 5 pm on September 24, 2019; the deadline to submit Candidate Statements for inclusion in the first publishing of the Statements by the Town shall be 5 pm on October 7, 2019; and the Town shall publish Candidate Statements submitted by the October 7th deadline no later than 5 pm on October 10, 2019.

c. Amendments to Rules of Procedure Rule 8

Postponed to next meeting.

8. Appointments

a. Confirmation of Town Manager Appointments [Charter, Sec. 2.11(b)]

(1) Registrar of Voters

Councilor Ross stated that the Outreach, Communications, and Appointments Committee reviewed the appointments and voted to recommend the appointments.

MOTION: Councilor Ross moved, second by Councilor Ryan, to approve the following Town Manager appointments to the Board of Registrars of Voters, effective immediately, as recommended by the Outreach, Communications, and Appointments Committee verbal report of September 23, 2019:

- For a three-year term to expire June 30, 2022:

- Demetria Shabazz
- For a two-year term to expire June 30, 2021:
 - Jacqueline Gardner

VOTED unanimously to approve the following Town Manager appointments to the Board of Registrars of Voters, effective immediately, as recommended by the Outreach, Communications, and Appointments Committee verbal report of September 23, 2019:

- For a three-year term to expire June 30, 2022:
 - Demetria Shabazz
- For a two-year term to expire June 30, 2021:
 - Jacqueline Gardner

9. Committee Reports

- a. **Audit Committee** – Councilor De Angelis stated that there is no report.
- b. **Bylaw Review Committee** – Councilor De Angelis stated that a final version of the bylaws will be ready to present to the Council by November 1.
- c. **Community Resources Committee** – Councilor Schreiber stated that the committee will meet this Wednesday.
- d. **Council Goals Ad Hoc Committee** – President Griesemer stated that there has been no meeting since the last meeting.
- e. **Finance Committee** – Councilor Steinberg stated that the committee will meet tomorrow.
- f. **Governance, Organization, and Legislation Committee** – Councilor Hanneke stated that there is nothing additional to report.
- g. **Outreach, Communications, and Appointments Committee** – Councilor Ross stated the committee provided a written report, and will be looking at and reconsidering the process to appoint Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Non-voting members of the Finance Committee to have a separate CAF that applicants fill out and be automatically distributed to all Town Councilors. The committee will come forward with recommended revisions to the CAF for Council appointments.
- h. **Percent for Art Bylaw Ad Hoc Committee** – Councilor Schoen reported that the committee held their first meeting today, reviewed the Town Meeting version of the bylaw and discussed what could and could not be done with the bylaw. The committee will meet again October 8.

10. Approval of Minutes

- a. **September 5, 2019 Special Council Fin Com JCPC**
- b. **September 9, 2019**
- c. **September 17, 2019 Special Town Council Meeting**
- d. **September 17, 2019 Town Council School Committee**

Councilor Bahl-Milne added to the September 5 minutes: “Councilor Bahl-Milne inquired about grants for net zero schools and libraries; when buying assets, process should include cost of maintaining assets.” Councilor Bahl-Milne added to the September 17 minutes: “According to the Pilot study report for electric buses in Amherst, Cambridge, and Concord, the actual energy use and cost of maintenance was higher than expected. There were other factors in the report like training the bus drivers that require a plan

to systematically switch over to electric buses. This report helped me make my decision to go ahead with current purchase.”

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Hanneke, to approve the September 5, 2019 minutes as amended, the September 9, 2019 minutes as presented, the September 17, 2019 5:30 pm minutes as amended, and the September 17, 2019 6:00 pm Town Council meeting minutes, as presented.

VOTED 10-0-3 (Councilors Bahl-Milne, De Angelis, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, and Steinberg voted Yes; Councilors Brewer, DuMont, and Swartz Abstained) to approve the September 5, 2019 minutes as amended, the September 9, 2019 minutes as presented, the September 17, 2019 5:30 pm minutes as amended, and the September 17, 2019 6:00 pm Town Council meeting minutes, as presented.

11. Town Manager Report

Town Manager Paul Bockelman that he is open to suggestions for a special guest for the upcoming Cup o’ Joe with the Town Manager. P. Bockelman stated that the entire front door structure with wood surround will be removed, rehabilitated and replaced in the next few months; a temporary door will be installed while the historic door is rehabilitated. Minute takers have been hired for School Committee and Council Committees. The BID Block Party was a success, the Council was well represented and Senior Center, Ranked Choice Voting Committee, Community Participation Officers, and Energy and Climate Action Committee were all represented at the event. There will be an update regarding the Kendrick Park grant in the near future.

Councilor Steinberg asked about repairs to the steps leading to the front door of Town Hall. P. Bockelman stated that the cost to replace the steps was significantly higher than expected, so those repairs will not be completed this year.

12. Town Council Comments

President Griesemer provided a recap of the Council retreat, spoke about Council Goals, the Town Manager’s goals, and liaisons.

Councilor Hanneke if we can plan ahead when consultants are seeking community input such as for playground design or parking questions and bring charts that can be interactive and add dots to the chart to indicate preferences to large community events like the Block Party or First Night celebration.

Councilor Brewer recognized the work of the Governance, Organization, and Legislation Committee in laying out the changes to the rules and making it user-friendly.

13. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the President 48 Hours in Advance

a. President Appointments [Charter, Sec. 2.2(b)]

(1) Community Resources Committee

President Griesemer announced the appointment of Councilor Hanneke to the Community Resources Committee.

b. Council Goals Ad Hoc Committee Amendment

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Hanneke, to amend the measure adopted on March 4, 2019 that stated "To form an Ad Hoc Committee to Assist the President in Establishing Council Goals." to now state: "To create an Ad hoc Committee for the purpose of developing Town Manager and Council Goals for review and adoption by the Town Council."

Councilor DuMont asked how the Outreach, Communications, and Appointments Committee would be involved in the Town Manager evaluation process. President Griesemer responded that after the Council establishes the Town Manager's goals, the Council would determine how OCA could be involved in the evaluation process.

VOTED 12-0-1 (Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, Steinberg and Swartz voted Yes; Councilor DuMont Abstained) to amend the measure adopted on March 4, 2019 that stated "To form an Ad Hoc Committee to Assist the President in Establishing Council Goals." to now state: "To create an Ad hoc Committee for the purpose of developing Town Manager and Council Goals for review and adoption by the Town Council."

14. Executive Session

- a. Approval of executive session minutes of June 17, 2019, August 19, 2019, and August 26, 2019 and release of executive session minutes of January 28, 2019, April 22, 2019, June 17, 2019, August 19, 2019 and August 26, 2019 - *M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) "[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements" ("Purpose 7"); Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(g)(1).*

MOTION: President Griesemer moved, second by Councilor Hanneke that the Town Council meet in executive session for the purpose pursuant to the provisions of MGL c.30A, sec. 21(a)(7): To approve the executive session minutes of: June 17, 2019, August 19, 2019, and August 26, 2019 and to release the executive session minutes of: January 28, 2019, April 22, 2019, June 17, 2019, August 19, 2019, and August 26, 2019. The Council will not reconvene in open session.

VOTED BY ROLL CALL unanimously to enter executive session for the purpose pursuant to the provisions of MGL c.30A, sec. 21(a)(7): To approve the executive session minutes of: June 17, 2019, August 19, 2019, and August 26, 2019 and to release the executive session minutes of: January 28, 2019, April 22, 2019, June 17, 2019, August 19, 2019, and August 26, 2019.

The Council entered executive session at 9:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Athena O'Keeffe
Clerk to the Council

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

- 0. 09-23-2019 FINAL Town Council Agenda - Regular Council Meeting
- 0. 09-23-2019 FINAL Town Council Agenda - Regular Council Meeting
- 6.a. Amherst FINAL Report 091119
- 6.a. Amherst_ImplementationMatrix - 9-11-19
- 6.a. Appendix A_KeyIssues_Report
- 6.a. Appendix B_Future Conditions Assessment
- 6.a. Appendix C_Parking Job Description
- 6.a. Appendix D_Access Demand Management
- 6.a. BID Response to Downtown Parking Study_Comments
- 6.a. Chamber ParkingEnforcementLetter9.3.19
- 6.a. Forum number 2 Public Comments
- 7.a. Amherst-Wayfinding-HistoricalPanel-May2018
- 7.a. Amherst-WritersWalk-v2-Proof-29Jul2019
- 7.a. Writers Walk Sign location 04-01-19
- 7.a. Writers Walk Signs Right of Way Request Memo
- 7.b. 7.c. 9.f. 2019-09-18 GOL Report to Town Council - FINAL
- 7.b. candidate statement form and webpage DRAFT
- 7.b. Policy on the Publication of Candidate Statements DRAFT - GOL Revisions 9-11-19
- 7.b. Policy on the Publication of Candidate Statements DRAFT - GOL Revisions 9-11-19 - Proposed Additional Changes
- 7.b. Slides for Draft Policy on Candidate Statements - 2019-09-23 TC Meeting
- 7.c. Council Rules of Procedure-revised 2019-09-09 - Proposed 2019-09-11 GOL Revisions to Rule 8
- 7.c. Proposed Revisions to Town Council Rules of Procedure - Slides for 2019-09-23 TC Meeting
- 8. Registrar of Voters Appointments - 09-18-2019
- 9.g. 2019-09-23 OCA Report to Town Council
- 10.a. 9-5-19 Special Council Meeting Finance Committee Joint Capital Planning Committee rev 9-19-19
- 10.a. 9-5-19 Special Council Meeting Finance Committee Joint Capital Planning Committee rev 9-23-19
- 10.b. 09-09-2019 DRAFT Town Council Minutes 09-19-2019
- 10.b. 09-09-2019 DRAFT Town Council Minutes rev 9-23-19
- 10.c. 09-17-2019 DRAFT Special Town Council Minutes School Bus 09-19-2019
- 10.c. 09-17-2019 DRAFT Special Town Council Minutes School Bus rev 9-23-19
- 10.d. 09-17-19 Joint ASC and Town Council Minutes rev 9-23-19
- 10.d. 9.17.19 Joint ASC and Town Council Minutes
- 11. Town Manager Report 09-23-2019
- 13. Memo to regarding appointment to CRC 9-23-19
- Draft Motions for Town Council 09-23-2019
- Draft Motions for Town Council 09-23-2019 rev. 9-23-19