

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the twenty second day of February 2022 A.D. the said hybrid meeting (in person and remote) was called to order by Town Council President Stephen Moffitt, Jr. at 6:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Stephen Moffitt, Jr., Sharon Davis, Robert Marvel; Scott Bill Hirst, Michael Geary; Town Manager Brian Rosso; Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin; Town Solicitor Stephen Sypole participated remotely.

6:00 P.M. WORKSHOP

At 6:00 P.M. the Council resumed a workshop to continue review and discussion of draft Town Council Bylaws.

Solicitor Sypole noted that at the last meeting he had been asked to look into the duties and responsibilities of the Town Sergeant. He noted that the Town Clerk had provided an email of prior Town Solicitor Patricia Buckley's opinion in that regard. After review of that email, he felt that Section 120, paragraph (A) should note that the Police Chief or police officer should serve as the sergeant at arms, upon the request of the Council or Town Manager. Councilor Davis read a portion of Attorney Buckley's opinion which concluded that the Town Sergeant has only two duties and no others: (1) service of process such as writs and summonses within the county to the extent that this is otherwise allowed by law, Section 45-16-4, and (2) removal and confinement of disorderly persons from the Financial Town Assembly at the direction of the Town Moderator, Section 45-3-19. There was discussion on how to revise Section 120 and it was decided that this section would be entirely removed from the Bylaws. Regarding Section 121(A), sign-in sheets, there was discussion on who should be signing in and it was determined that there should be a generic sign-in sheets for participants at a hearing. Solicitor Sypole wished to point out in Section 123(A)(1) it states: "No ordinance shall be prepared by the Town Solicitor for presentation to the Town Council, unless ordered by a majority vote of the Town Council." He noted that this is not how they have been operating and he has been requested to draft

ordinances without a vote of the Council. He questioned whether this should remain in the Bylaws or be stricken. Councilor Geary felt the Council should be made aware of any ordinances being considered and they should vote on it before it went to the Solicitor. Town Manager Rosso advised that there were times when a department head wished to rework or update the ordinances that pertain to his/her department and may work on that and then send it to the Council to be put on the agenda. It was agreed to leave this paragraph as is. Councilor Davis questioned page 16, subparagraph (4)(b) under Voting Procedures and it was agreed to leave this paragraph as is. In section (C), Publication and Distribution of Ordinances, Town Clerk Cook-Martin noted that not many people read the newspaper and it was very expensive to publish something in the newspaper. She questioned if this could be changed to posting on the town's website. Councilor Hirst asked the Solicitor to determine what the legal criteria of publishing something was and was it required to be published in a newspaper. Solicitor Sypole noted that this section was not based on state law, explaining that if the Council was to pass a zoning ordinance amendment the procedures that they would have to follow are spelled out in state law; however, if they passed a street numbering ordinance he did not believe there was any requirement to publish that and this was just a courtesy to make everyone aware of any new ordinance that went into effect and he felt it could just be posted to the website. Mrs. Cook-Martin suggested the word "published" be changed to "posted." Councilor Davis noted that on page 18, the section numbers will need to be renumbered due to Section 120 being deleted. She also noted in section (2) Legal Opinions, after Town Council they should add in *by a majority vote* after Town Council which was agreed to by all. Councilor Davis also questioned if Section 126 was needed and it was agreed that this should be stricken. She also asked why Section 128 on page 19 was needed and Solicitor Sypole noted that this could be used for something as simple as taking the agenda out of order. Councilor Geary proposed that after the next election, all elected officials be sworn in together so that residents could see who their elected officials are.

The revisions made to the bylaws will be incorporated into the draft and the updated version will be distributed to the Town Council. The Council set March 21, 2022 as the date to consider adoption of the Town Council Bylaws.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR DAVIS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO CLOSE THE WORKSHOP ON TOWN COUNCIL BYLAWS.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

The Council recessed at 6:30 PM and at 7:00 PM the meeting was called to order with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the Flag.

HEARINGS

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 17 ARTICLE II

The Council opened a hearing on proposed amendments to Chapter 17 – Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Hopkinton, as amended, specifically amendments to Division 4 – Building Numbers and Street Names and to add a Division 5 - Official Street Map, introduced and sponsored by Councilor Robert Marvel.

The purpose of the proposed amendments to Division 4. – Building Numbers and Street Names would provide a means of locating residential, business and/or other structures for expedient emergency response by fire, police rescue & other emergency services; establish a property location that will serve as E911 locator and/or mail delivery locator; provide property owners and the Town with a systematic and accurate means of identifying and locating property; assist in proper delivery of utilities and other delivery services.

The purpose of the proposed amendments to Division 5. - Would create an official street map establishing definitions; to further the orderly layout and use of land; to stabilize the location of real property boundary lines; to ensure property legal

descriptions; to facilitate adequate provisions for transportation; and, to facilitate the further subdivision of larger tracts into smaller parcels of land.

Present: Chief of Police David Palmer; Deputy Zoning Official Sherri Desjardin; Public Works Director David Caswell; Town Planner James Lamphere. Attending remotely: Senior Planning Clerk Talia Jalette.

Deputy Zoning Official Sherri Desjardins was present and noted that they had started this project in 2006 but it had to be put on hold. They resurrected this as one of their goals while William McGarry was the Town Manager and due to calls they were receiving from emergency responders who were unable to locate properties. Ms. Desjardins indicated that she had spoken with the former Police Chief and had ridden around town with police officers noting how many houses were marked and how many were not. Councilor Hirst noted that in Sec. 17-132, it states that fines shall begin to accrue ten days after a written notice of violation is received by the owner and he suggested this be fourteen (14) days. They also discussed having reflective numbers for emergency personnel trying to find properties at night and placing them near the access point to the property if the house was not visible from the road. Chief Palmer indicated that their goal was for all residents to have reflective numbers but as long as the numbers were visible that would be okay. He noted in Sec. 17-136(1) it suggested that the numbers shall be a minimum of 2.5 inches in height, but he believed they should be larger, suggesting 3.75 inches in height. Councilor Geary asked that this be put gently to residents and also posted on the website. Chief Palmer noted that several years prior they had suggested house numbering on social media and he believed there was a 10% improvement. He believes there are a lot of residents that do not realize this is a problem. Public Works Director Dave Caswell noted that he is a first responder for the Hope Valley/Wyoming Fire Department which covers portions of two towns. He indicated that it is very disheartening to get a call for an infant choking in the middle of the night and they cannot find the house noting that he has lived here his whole life and has a very good idea of where all of the roads are but new members do not. Mr. Caswell stated that the fire

apparatus has GPS but you could not always rely on that. Council President Moffitt wished to change the ten day accrual period for fines to fifteen days. Councilor Davis indicated that Sr. Planning Clerk Talia Jalette had prepared minutes of the Planning Board in which they discussed this proposed ordinance, noting that Ms. Jalette's questions and the proposed changes were wonderful. She went on to discuss Sec. 17-132, where it noted: "*Subsequent to the adoption of this ordinance it shall be the responsibility of each and every property owner...*" suggesting that they remove the five words that came after that. Councilor Geary asked Ms. Jalette to explain the Planning Board's recommendations regarding no more than a \$25.00 fine. Ms. Jalette explained that the Board had some questions about how the fine would be imposed and they wished to have a fee schedule in place and felt that this might be too expensive for people. Council President Moffitt felt that it should just be a \$25.00 fine and it does note that failure to comply during any successive thirty-day period shall be considered a separate offense which shall commence on the 31st day after receipt of such notice of violation. Councilor Geary asked who would keep track of this and who would be responsible to enforce it. Ms. Jalette noted that this was a question that she had as well and ultimately the Planning Board Solicitor felt the Planning Board did not have to look at that element which was something the Town Council needed to determine. Councilor Hirst suggested that if this ordinance was adopted they should send out a notice to all property owners with their tax bills so anyone living out of town could not claim ignorance. Solicitor Sypole thought that it should be the responsibility of the person who has control over the property and should read "*property owner, trustee, lessor and agent...*" which was agreed to by all. It was also agreed that fines would be accrued after fifteen days and be a flat fee of \$25.00 and each violation starts after every thirty days. Town Manager Brian Rosso noted that if there was to be a notice sent with the tax bills this would cost approximately \$1,600. Council President Moffitt asked Chief Palmer about enforcement of this ordinance and he believed that they would be knocking on doors asking people to comply with the ordinance. Chief Palmer questioned whether the police department or zoning office would be handling the enforcement of the ordinance. Ms. Desjardins noted that in the past letters had

generally come from her office. She noted that usually one of the responding agencies reached out to her if they could not find an address and then her office would send a letter to that resident asking them to please put a number on their house; however, in the past they were unable to enforce this. She noted that they will not issue a Certificate of Occupancy unless there was a house number posted. Councilor Davis reviewed Sec. 17-134, subsection (6) regarding multiple units within a structure with residential units being designated with letters (A,B,C) and commercial units being designated with numbers (1,2,3). She asked how many buildings would have to change designations. Ms. Desjardins noted that this was so responders would know right away if they were responding to a commercial structure or residential structure. She did not believe there were any buildings that would need to be changed. Ms. Jalette felt that if the Board had received more information as to how many homes were not in compliance, they would have been more comfortable with some of this language; a lot of their concerns were with inconveniencing people or making life difficult for people. Councilor Davis next spoke of Sec. 17-136, subsection (3), where it indicated “*No owner, occupant, lessee, tenant, or subtenant of any building shall display...*” and it was agreed that this would now read: “*No building shall display...*” Ms. Jalette noted in the first sentence of Sec. 17-136 where it states: “*All residents and other occupants are requested to display numbers assigned...*” that the Planning Board was very adamant that the word “*requested*” was used. Council President Moffitt did not feel that the word “request” should be used in an ordinance. Councilor Marvel felt that the word request would take the teeth out of the ordinance. Solicitor Sypole suggested that they require that numbers were displayed; however, they could make an exception for someone that has a unique property as to where that number was displayed. The intent of the ordinance was to make having a number mandatory so he felt that the word “required” should be used. Councilor Davis wished to add to the end of Division 5, Sec. 17-142: “*The Town Council shall vote on additions to the official street map after said streets have been subject to the land development and/or subdivision process and have been approved by the Planning Board. Every year the Town Council will confer with the requisite departments, boards and commissions, to compile a list of newly*

created streets for inclusion in the official street map.” Regarding Sec. 17-147, Councilor Davis asked for corrections: Blue Pond Road changed to Blue Pond Trail and Pinewood Drive changed to Pinewoods Road. Town Clerk Cook-Martin noted Sec. 17-147 was a list of uncertified roads, but it also indicated that it included “their approximate locations,” and she felt *and their approximate locations* should be stricken. Solicitor Sypole commented that a lot of the wording of the Official Street Map ordinance came directly from state statute, noting that there is an act in the state law that authorizes towns to adopt an official street map. He felt that before there were any changes made and voted on, he should take a second look at the statutes. He noted that if the Council set a date to vote on this ordinance, he could compare it to the State statutes beforehand. Councilor Marvel wished to address Division 4, Sec. 17-131 noting that the Planning Board had recommended using the existing language and not the proposed language which Councilor Marvel felt added clarity and a better understanding. Ms. Jalette believed the Planning Board felt the existing language was sufficient and did not need to be expounded on. Council President Moffitt felt that the proposed language added clarity and purpose and he support this being added. Town Planner Jim Lamphere added that Sec. 17-145 had to do with a regulation of building in the bed of mapped streets and wondered what exactly that meant. He also questioned when they would ever issue a building permit for building in the bed of a mapped street. Solicitor Sypole noted that this came from R.I.G.L. 45-23.1-3 and did not believe there was a definition provided. He indicated that his impression was that if there was a street that was mapped out for future development you would not allow someone to build where the street would be. Ms. Jalette indicated that the Planning Board thought that it might have something to do with paper streets. Council President Moffitt indicated that he would like to know more about this paragraph; Solicitor Sypole felt that this would only apply in the case of a paper street where an area was reserved for the possibility of a future street. He felt that a surveyor should be asked about this question. Ms. Desjardins noted that Hannah Lane is a paper road, approved in 2005 or 2006, and is not listed on the street map, but should be added. She also noted on Map 32 of the plat maps it shows Brushy Brook Road which has also not

been constructed yet and at what point do they include these roads on the official street map. Mr. Lamphere felt that they should be included when the Town Council accepted the road which would be after DPW inspected it and the Planning Board approved it. Ms. Cook-Martin questioned how this would work for private roads. Mr. Lamphere noted that in the case of a residential compound those roads never become public and in that case the private road should be put on when it is recorded in the land evidence records.

There were no comments made from the public. The revisions made during the hearing will be incorporated into the draft ordinance amendments.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR MARVEL AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO CLOSE THE HEARING AND SET APRIL 4, 2022 AS THE DATE FOR A DECISION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilor Hirst removed the Town Council Meeting Minutes of February 7, 2022. They were not considered and will be placed on the next agenda.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR MARVEL AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS FOLLOWS: TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING MONTHLY FINANCIAL-ACTIVITY REPORT: TOWN CLERK.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

PROCLAMATION - In Honor of Retiring Town Planner James Lamphere

Town Manager Brian Rosso confirmed that James Lamphere, the Town Planner will be retiring at the end of February after more than fifteen years of service. Mr. Rosso noted that Mr. Lamphere was very knowledgeable and always put the town first, stating that it has been an honor and a pleasure to work with him and wished

him the best in his retirement. Town Clerk Cook-Martin read a Proclamation in honor of James Lamphere:

*TOWN OF HOPKINTON, RI
PROCLAMATION
IN HONOR OF
JAMES LAMPHERE*

Be it hereby known to all that the Hopkinton Town Council wishes to publicly recognize the retirement of Town Planner James “Jim” Lamphere after fourteen (14) years of service with the Town of Hopkinton.

WHEREAS, James Lamphere has been employed by the Town of Hopkinton as the Town Planner since October of 2007; and

WHEREAS, James Lamphere has faithfully and conscientiously served the Town of Hopkinton and its citizens for over fourteen (14) years during which period of time numerous projects were initiated through his leadership which will continue to have a revitalization and growing impact on the Town of Hopkinton; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Hopkinton has benefited greatly because of the dedication and hard work of James Lamphere who has assisted the Town in obtaining numerous grant awards and shown genuine commitment to the residents of the Town of Hopkinton; and

WHEREAS, one characteristic that distinguishes James Lamphere’s career as a public servant is his enormous capacity for hard work; and

WHEREAS, James Lamphere has earned the respect and admiration of everyone with whom he has come into contact by his whole-hearted and dedicated participation in many civic projects; and

WHEREAS, said James Lamphere has been the Union Steward/Representative for the RI Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, Local Union 3163, since 2018.

NOW THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED: That the Hopkinton Town Council adopts this Resolution in recognition of James Lamphere’s faithful and invaluable contribution to the Town of Hopkinton and further extends its best wishes for a long, happy and productive retirement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Proclamation be presented to James Lamphere.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO ADOPT THE PROCLAMATION.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

James Lamphere gave this advice to younger people just starting out: dream big; work hard; study hard; follow your passion; develop your talents; love your fellow human beings; help others whenever you get the opportunity; and, you will have a wonderful, fulfilled life. Mr. Lamphere thanked Bill Dilibero, Bill McGarry and Brian Rosso, as well as others who have assisted him over the years.

OLD BUSINESS

STATUS REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY NATIONAL GRID IN TOMAQUAG VICINITY RE POWER OUTAGE PROBLEMS

Representative Brian P. Kennedy attended remotely and provided an update regarding improvements made by National Grid in the Tomaquag vicinity as reported by the Public Utilities Commission, including new fuses and tree clearing efforts being implemented in resolving power outage problems.

Mr. Kennedy noted that he has been trying to keep the Council, Town Clerk and Manager abreast of all correspondence that he has had with the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers and the Public Utilities Commission, noting that there were three fuses installed along the grid on Maxson Hill, near Frontier Road and on Collins Road. The purpose was that if one section of that particular part of the grid went out, the other fuses stayed on and the individuals along that stretch would not lose power. The latest information that has come in is that there will be targeted work done between now and early April to do some more trimming of the lines along the streets around the Tomaquag area and they announced that they will also be working on the Woodville Road area which showed pockets of poor performance and addressing additional dead trees adjacent to the conductor.

Mr. Kennedy noted that there is going to be a proceeding in the future regarding National Grid and their application to sell their territory in Rhode Island to a utility company out of Pennsylvania. He noted that the Attorney General has some concerns about this sale and the ability of having back-up service employees in this area if there is a major outage.

Councilor Hirst noted that several months prior he had gone to the Public Utilities Commission and spoke with several people who had informed him about the three fuses. He also met with Paul Stasiak of National Grid with Dave Caswell at the Crandall House regarding this issue.

Mr. Kennedy also wished to share information regarding upcoming road work noting that the Ashaway River bridge is to be milled during the spring season and a new coat of pavement will be applied in anticipation that in 2025 where there will be some major road construction occurring in the Ashaway section of town.

Representative Kennedy noted the Department of Transportation was going to have a major contract going out which would be inconveniencing people for a while, but hopefully by the end of 2025/2026 there will be much nicer roads going forward.

NEW BUSINESS

TOWN-WIDE FY 2022-23 ANNUAL GOALS & FY'S 2024-26 MULTI-YEAR GOALS

The Town Manager provided a listing of the proposed Town-wide FY 2022-23 Annual Goals and FY's 2024-26 Multi-year Goals that had been assembled as a result of meetings he had with department heads. Councilor Hirst noted he had no problem approving these goals and suggested the Town Council should have their own set of goals as well.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR MARVEL TO ADOPT THE PROPOSED TOWN-WIDE FY 2022-23 ANNUAL GOALS AND FY'S 2024-26 MULTI-YEAR GOALS.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

WPWA WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID) MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT FROM RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Discussion was held with the WPWA Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council on Low Impact Development (LID) Municipal Assessment from RI Department of Environmental Management. Participating remotely: WPWA Wild & Scenic River Stewardship Council Members from Hopkinton, Chip Heil, David Augustyn; Wild & Scenic River Stewardship Council Coordinator Kassi Donnelly; RI NEMO, URI Cooperative Extension Director Lorraine Joubert. Clifford Heil thanked the Council for allowing them to discuss this opportunity noting that he had sent the Town Council an email regarding low impact development municipal assessments that will potentially be required by RIDEM. The Stewardship Council working with the RI Office of Non-point Education for Municipal Officials is looking to support the town and actually do the effort for the town.

Lorraine Joubert present. She noted that she oversees a URI Cooperative Extension program called Non-point Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO). NEMO provides training and technical assistance to municipal officials in protecting drinking water sources and managing stormwater runoff. Ms. Joubert

indicated that she wished to explain how the Low Impact Development (LID) Municipal Self-Assessment will work when they begin this effort with the town, but first she wished to review what is low impact development (LID) and the municipal assessment; the LID assessment process that they will be following; and, what the benefits are to the town. Low Impact development is the current approach for managing stormwater runoff as required by DEM. It emphasizes better site design to protect natural areas, limit site disturbance, and reduce the amount of pavement and other impervious surface to the maximum extent possible. This has been the standard since 2010. Yet DEM reports that the number of stormwater permit applications without LID, still exceeds those with proper LID design. The problem is local ordinances may either prevent the use of LID designs or favor conventional practices. Even though developers are required to apply LID, DEM does not have the authority to override site designs approved by the town. DEM can only ensure that the design of stormwater treatment systems meets minimum standards to handle the increased runoff. To help towns apply LID, DEM and her office developed the Municipal LID Assessment so towns could compare their development rules with nationally recognized benchmark standards that better protect water quality. The heart of the assessment is a series of questions about the town's subdivision regulations, zoning standards, and other ordinances. Working through the assessment allows an in-depth review of the current standards that identifies which LID techniques are in place, and which standards could be improved.

Hayden McDermott, the URI graduate student intern funded by the Stewardship Council will complete the assessment as a first draft under her supervision, followed by review by the town planner. The results will include: (1) completed assessment as first draft based on review of the Town's Subdivision regulations, Zoning, or other Ordinance for each question; (2) the student will also make preliminary recommendations for standards to be updated and overall results summarized; and, then there will be a meeting with the Planning Board to present summary results. The Planner will then have an opportunity to review and comment as soon as the first draft is completed. The next step is where the Planning Board has to put in some effort. They will need to review results and

select priorities for change (which ordinances, which subdivision regulations, etc.) Ideally this would be done with input from other town staff, such as Public Works and Engineering, Public Safety, and Building Officials. If the town has a Technical Review Committee, their review would be ideal. Finally, the town would have to implement a schedule for implementing any changes; identify the need for comprehensive plan updates, draft updates and proceed with public review and adoption. Ms. Joubert explained that there were several reasons why this was so critical for the town and the watershed. Stormwater runoff is the #1 source of pollution to surface waters nationally and the primary reason why so many RI waters are not safe for fishing and swimming. In general, water quality is still very good in most of the Wood Pawcatuck watershed, but Hopkinton and other watershed towns are still growing, with an increase in polluted runoff expected. The third reason is that the Wood Pawcatuck tributaries have extensive cold water fisheries where any increase in polluted runoff can have a very serious impact. It is estimated that native trout can only live in streams where the average impervious cover is only 4% or less and are also primarily forested. LID provides multiple benefits over conventional stormwater systems such as open space, more attractive vegetated treatment systems and functional landscaping. LID is less expensive to install and maintain than conventional piped drainage. Installing LID with new development provides better water quality treatment, promotes ground water recharge, and is far less expensive than retrofitting conventional systems when they fail. Finally, DEM plans to require that all towns complete the LID assessment when the MS4 permit is updated. Completing the assessment now, while assistance is available, will meet that requirement. The following links were provided by Lorraine Joubert who asked that they be listed in the minutes:

What is the Municipal Self-Assessment? (Factsheet)

<https://web.uri.edu/nemo/files/lid-assessment-fs.pdf>

LID Site Planning and Design Techniques: A Municipal Self-Assessment (Interactive PDF)

https://web.uri.edu/nemo/files/LID-Checklist-Primer_2.10.pdf

What is Low Impact Development (LID)? (Factsheet)

<https://web.uri.edu/nemo/files/lidfactsheet.pdf>

Mr. Lamphere felt this was a great effort and believed this could go into the next update of the subdivision regulations. Council President Moffitt asked when the assessment would start and Ms. Joubert hoped to begin as soon as possible but was unsure if they should start before there was a new Planner in place. Council President Moffitt asked if there was anything else required from the town in order for this to begin and Ms. Joubert suggested that the work for the town would begin once the intern completed the first draft. Mr. Heil indicated that the LID assessment was to provide recommendations to improve and help encourage low impact development in the town and would fulfill an obligation to the state. He noted that if and when the town decided to address some of those recommendations, the Stewardship Council may be able to help provide some support, both financial and logistical, in making those changes. He also wished to stress that the town was not obligated to immediately make these changes; this was supposed to provide a guideline and a plan for when the time came that some of these regulations are up for review.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR MARVEL AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR DAVIS TO APPROVE ANY ASSISTANCE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY.

IN FAVOR: Moffitt, Davis, Hirst, Geary, Marvel

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

SENIOR EXEMPTIONS PROGRAM

Public Welfare Director Joe Moreau provided an update on the Senior Exemptions Program. Tax Assessor Tiana Zartman participated remotely. Joe Moreau of Old Depot Road noted that in conversations with residents there were three major items of concern which were heating oil assistance, food assistance and tax payment assistance. He wondered why residents, especially senior citizens, were struggling, noting that social security benefits had increased by 5.9% which is one of the highest increases in quite a few years; however, the U.S. inflation rate accelerated to 7.5%, which is the highest since 1982. He wished to advise the residents that the town does have a senior exemption

program for residents who are 65 and older and also for residents who are 85 and older, which can be found on the website. Mr. Moreau has been assisting an elderly woman who indicated to him that if she had known about the senior tax exemption she could have lived in her home longer. Mr. Moreau thanked Tax Assessor Tiana Zartman for her assistance in getting this information on the town's website. Mrs. Zartman noted that there were two senior exemptions in town, one being for residents aged 85 and older which was a blanket 10% exemption and required an application be completed and proof of birth. The other exemption is for residents aged 65 and older which is income based as depicted on the Health and Human Services poverty guideline, being that the maximum that the household could earn is \$45,775 for this year. In both instances they would need to own their home and be a resident of Hopkinton for at least five years. She noted that this information, as well as other exemptions, is listed on the website under the Assessor's Department. Council President Moffitt felt that a link for this information should also be listed on the front page of the website. Councilor Marvel suggested there be link for all senior services on the website. Councilor Hirst wished to have the Committee on Aging reactivated and wished volunteers apply to sit on this committee. Mr. Moreau noted that the deadline for the heating oil assistance program was March 15th. He also believed the Crandall House would be a good place to have a brochure in order to get some of this information out to seniors. Councilor Davis asked if individuals over 85 were given an automatic exemption and Mrs. Zartman advised that this was not automatic, the resident would need to come into the office and complete a form and provide proof of birth date and also noted that this exemption was not income based. Council President Moffitt noted that transportation was tough in town and maybe this should be a topic for another discussion. Mrs. Zartman suggested that if there were any seniors who could not get a ride to the town hall she would go to their home to have them complete their paperwork.

PUBLIC FORUM

Joseph Moreau of Old Depot Road wished residents to respond to the need to form a Town Charter Commission. He wished to thank the many people who

contacted him saying that they were going to send emails to the Council concerning their concerns regarding one of the applicants.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR HIRST AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR GEARY TO ADJOURN IN MEMORY OF CARL “RICK” DEVIN AND IN HONOR OF RETIRING TOWN PLANNER JAMES LAMPHERE.

SO VOTED

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk

Marita D. Murray

Deputy Town Clerk