

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
January 20, 2016**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, January 20, 2016 at the Franklin Municipal Building, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, Massachusetts. Councilors present: Andrew Bissanti, Robert Dellorco, Glenn Jones, Matthew Kelly, Thomas Mercer, Peter Padula, Deborah Pellegri, Judith Pond Pfeffer, Robert Vallee. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jeffrey Nutting, Town Administrator; Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *January 6, 2016, January 12, 2016.* ► **MOTION to Approve** the January 6, 2016 meeting minutes by **Padula. SECOND** by **Mercer. No Discussion. VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ► **MOTION to Approve** the January 12, 2016 meeting minutes by **Mercer. SECOND** by **Dellorco. No Discussion. VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** ► Chairman Kelly announced the meeting would be recorded by *Franklin TV* and available for viewing on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29. This meeting may also be recorded by others.

**PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS:** *Miss Massachusetts Teen USA 2016.* Chairman Kelly read a proclamation congratulating Alexis Frasca, Miss Massachusetts Teen USA 2016, for her outstanding accomplishments.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** None.

**APPOINTMENTS:** *Historical Commission.* Ms. Pfeffer read the appointment. **MOTION to Ratify** the appointment of Richard Remillard by the Town Administrator to serve as a member of the Historical Commission by **Mercer. SECOND** by **Bissanti. No Discussion. VOTE: Yes-9, No-0.**

**HEARINGS:** None.

**LICENSE TRANSACTIONS:** None.

**PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS:** ► *Billboard.* ■ Mr. Nutting stated this was discussed at the Economic Development Committee meeting and applicant was told he would be on tonight's agenda. Applicant's proposal is to have the Town Council rezone land along Route 495 to allow up to three electronic billboards approximately 48 x 20+ feet wide. They suggested if Town does so they will contribute \$40,000 per year to the Town for one sign. Mr. Nutting recommended this was not in the Town's best interest as Town has worked hard to improve Town image and Franklin does not get better by having a billboard on Route 495. He noted applicant was turned down in Bellingham. ■ Mr. Bissanti stated in the interest of fairness this discussion should be continued until applicant is present. ■ Council members discussed that applicant was notified item was on tonight's meeting agenda. ■ Resident from Chestnut Street asked if Town was turning away money by deciding this today. He would like to hear discussion from applicant. ■ Mr. Padula stated the applicant was aware of the opportunity to attend tonight's meeting and therefore, this item does not need to be discussed further. ■ Ms. Pfeffer stated they should be given the opportunity to appear before the Town Council. ■ Mr. Dellorco stated he is aware the Town of Peabody has two such signs and the Town receives \$200,000 per year for each sign. ■ Mr. Cerel stated this should be discussed in terms of re-zoning, not in terms of compensation. There is no requirement that anyone putting up a billboard would have to pay the Town money. ■ Eileen Mason, 62

Beaver Street, stated having signs along Route 495 will not represent Franklin well, will be a distraction, and will offer no advertising benefits for local business owners. ■Chairman Kelly asked Mr. Nutting to put this item on the agenda for a future meeting.

► **Pond Street Land Discussion.** ■Mr. Nutting provided a handout to audience members and gave a brief overview of the Pond Street land owned by the Town and discussed the appropriate future use of the land. Options for this parcel include: do nothing, accept the condominium development, do another RFP for another purpose. He identified the wetlands area and the no-build zone on the map. About half of the 30 acres is available for building. When RFP was put out a greater frontage setback than legally required was requested. Proposal received for 99 condominiums. Traffic studies were looked at. He showed the rendering of the proposed condominium development. Another option the Town considered is a hotel built on this site. Differences between the costs, traffic, and taxes of the condominium and hotel developments were discussed. ■Seth Jackson, 466 Daley Drive, asked about the estimated tax benefit for the hotel and the condominium developments. If the Town sold a piece of the parcel for the hotel, would the Town still be able to sell the remainder? He is opposed to any development of the property. Franklin is over-built at this point already; there are three chain hotels in town. How would another one sustain business? Traffic will increase no matter what; but, the condos are the best of a worst case scenario. ■Mr. Nutting stated the estimated tax benefit for the hotel is \$300,000 with about the same for the condominiums. This seems to be a reasonable range given other developments in Town. Mr. Nutting discussed concerns about traffic. MassDOT came out and did a site observation. They will prepare a traffic study report about the intersection with short and long-term solutions for the stack lanes. Clearly there needs to be physical solutions which could take 3-5 years if the State is funding it. ■Stephanie Pazniokas, 4 Hilltop Road, asked if the MassDOT study would include the new development and the addition of cars. She stated she is adamantly opposed to hotel on the site. She questioned why Town is looking to buy additional conservation land when this parcel is owned. ■Mr. Nutting stated he advised MassDOT of the potential for a new development which may include additional 600-1,000 cars. ■Michelle Beksha, 743 Pond Street, stated concern with need to change intersection due to additional cars and mentioned many cars would be rerouted to Medway end of Pond Street. ■Maura Pearce, 2 Ashbury Drive, stated she is not an immediate abutter, but knows Town needs to raise revenue. Her first choice is to do nothing with the property and asked Town Council to think about property values for the residents in the Pond Street area. ■Mr. Nutting stated there would be no drain on Town services other than police or fire call and no children in the school system for the hotel as opposed to condos. ■Eileen Mason, 62 Beaver Street, stated condos are better than a hotel. As a realtor in town she knows there is a housing shortage and it would be more beneficial for Town to build another development like Eaton Place for seniors. ■Mr. Nutting stated they have spoken to developers of Eaton Place and discussed the difficulty of developing such a place. Federal government rules and regulations are difficult. ■Resident, Chestnut Street, asked if the reason Town wants to move property now is that Town needs the money, or if Town holds property the value may increase. The more money Town has the more it spends. He does not want so much development in town. ■Sandra Verhaegen, 24 Hilltop Road, stated she is adamantly opposed to a hotel because of what it would do to the community. If billboards would detract from the Town, so would the hotel with a sign on Route 495. Would like land preserved, but if must be developed would prefer the condominiums. She stated the Town Council has in the past stated that condominiums do not attract children and now it was said that condos will bring in some children. ■Mr. Nutting stated condominiums produce fewer children than single-family homes. ■Mr. Padula asked about issues regarding any contamination on the site. ■Mr. Nutting said buyer would be solely responsible for the property. If the condo development were to go through, developer would have to discuss and work out many issues before submitting to Planning Board. ■Mr. Jones said he agreed it needs to be built up not so much to gain revenue but because we have need in Town for additional housing. He reiterated the Town would have much input with a development agreement. He would not like to see a lot of the trees removed for any development of this property. ■Mr. Nutting reiterated that nothing in the wetlands can get cut. ■Mr. Dellorco asked about possible traffic solutions. ■Mr. Nutting said traffic engineer would need to look at

information. ■Mr. Bissanti thanked neighbors and residents for coming out and being so vocal on issue. ■Ms. Pfeffer stated she did not want the 99 condos as it is too much for that piece of land. The amount of tax even on a three bedroom condo is not enough for children to be educated in the Town of Franklin. Only the last RFPs had a residential component. ■Mr. Bissanti disagreed and said that all RFPs had come back with residential components. This is mixed use site. The fact that it faces Route 495 does not make it commercial. ■Bryan Taberner, Director of Planning and Community Development, stated that prior RFPs did not get sent out with residential component. ■Chairman Kelly stated if it was going to be condos he would prefer they be two bedroom not three bedroom. He noted the amount the State contributes does not cover the cost to educate a pupil in Franklin. ■Mr. Padula thanked people in audience for their participation in helping shape the decision. ■Roy McDowell and Todd McDowell with Baystone Development stated they are currently doing development in Hopkinton, Legacy Farms. Their proposal is majority of site would stay woods; they would put in trails and do cleanup. They would have both two and three bedroom condos, and some aged-targeted units. Taxes of \$311,000 are after paying for students, fire, and services. He does not want to overpromise. He would be happy to meet with neighbors to review. ■Mr. Jones wanted to confirm that the taxes of \$300,000 to \$400,000 would go to the general fund as it would be new growth. ■ Mr. Nutting said the sale of the land would go to capital use.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS: None.**

#### **LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:**

1. ***Resolution 16-85: Acceptance of Gift – Franklin Police Department.*** Ms. Pfeffer read the resolution. **MOTION to Move** Resolution 16-85 for acceptance of gift of \$2,500 from Digital Federal Credit Union (DCU) to support the Police Department’s efforts in providing programs that will make a difference by **Mercer. SECOND by Padula. Discussion:** ►Mr. Nutting stated it was a generous donation and a thank you will be sent. **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0.**
2. ***Resolution 16-86: Acceptance of Gift – Council on Aging.*** Ms. Pfeffer read the resolution. **MOTION to Move** Resolution 16-86 for acceptance of gift of \$250 to the Council on Aging from Richard Hertzberg of Ames Financial to be used where needed by **Mercer. SECOND by Padula. Discussion:** ►Mr. Nutting stated it was a generous donation and a thank you will be sent. **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0.**
3. ***Resolution 16-87: Acceptance of Gift – Franklin Police Department.*** Ms. Pfeffer read the resolution. **MOTION to Move** Resolution 16-87 for acceptance of gift of \$50 from Guerriere & Halnon, Inc. in support of Franklin Police Department and their programs by **Mercer. SECOND by Padula. Discussion:** ►Mr. Nutting stated it was a generous donation and a thank you will be sent. **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0.**

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:** ►The Downtown Project continues and updates will be provided as progress continues. ►Town Council voted to begin the aggregation process for electricity with hope to provide report in 30 days. ►Will be into budgets and capital plans soon. ►At next Town Council meeting will provide update on the Master Plan.

**OLD BUSINESS:** ►Mr. Padula asked if RFP should be back on the agenda and how process moves forward. ►Chairman Kelly said he will be meeting with Town Administrator and would like to move process along and get it on the next agenda. ►Mr. Nutting said it could go back to the Town Council for a decision. ►Mr. Vallee said it has taken too long.

**NEW BUSINESS:** ► Mr. Bissanti asked Mr. Cerel if an endorsement from the EDC was needed. ► Mr. Nutting said EDC only makes recommendations. The Chairman can put it on the agenda for a vote; the Town Council must make the decision. A resolution cannot be prepared until the vote is taken.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:** ► Mr. Jones congratulated Nancy Danello who formally worked in Building Department and is now the Assistant Town Clerk, and welcomed Casey Thayer to the Building Department. ► Mr. Dellorco said the next Coalition event has been moved from the High School to Horace Mann on February 2, 2016 at 7:00 PM. ► Mr. Bissanti gave condolences to Peter Padula and his family for the loss of his mother. ► Ms. Pfeffer stated approval has been obtained for the two houses of the Housing Trust. Both will be in lottery on March 30, 2016. Also, the Coalition has Chris Harrington coming February 29, 2016 and he will spend day at School Department. ► Mr. Padula thanked the Franklin Police and Fire Departments for their professionalism and for how they treated his mother with dignity and respect. He thanked everyone for the support given to him and his family. ► Chairman Kelly thanked Mr. Hellen for updating the Town Council website and gave condolences to Peter Padula and his family.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

**ADJOURN: MOTION to Adjourn by Padula. SECOND by Bissanti. VOTE: Yes-9, No-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary