



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Symonds Way Exploratory Committee

Date: 2023-07-24

Time: 6:30 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Draft

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Carlo Bacci, Vice Chair Chuck Robinson, Angela Binda, Heather Clish (remote), Andrew Dribin, Karen Janowski, Nancy Twomey

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Community Services Director Jenna Fiorente (remote), Recreation Administrator Jim Sullivan (remote), Chris Haley, Karen Gately Herrick (remote), Jeff Dietz (remote), Jack (remote), MaryAnn Devlin, Eileen Manning, Joe McHugh, Peter Lydecker, Robert Rio, Kerrin McGuire

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jacquelyn LaVerde

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting was held in-person in the Town Hall Select Board Meeting Room and remotely via Zoom.

Chair Carlo Bacci called the SWEC and Select Board meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Vote to Reorganize SWEC:

Town Manager Fidel Maltez opened the floor for nominations for Chair.

Karen Janowski nominated Carlo Bacci to continue as Chair.

Nancy Twomey nominated Angela Binda as Chair.

Angela Binda nominated Chuck Robinson as Chair.

Carlo Bacci stated that he would like to be Chair again and see this process through to the end.

Angela Binda expressed concern over Mr. Bacci continuing as Chair, as it may be a conflict of interest given Mr. Bacci's involvement with the Pickleball Community.

Chuck Robinson noted that he was thankful for the nomination, but declined.

Following discussion, the Committee voted the nominees for Chair alphabetically by last name.

Roll call vote for Carlo Bacci: Heather Clish – Abstain, Andrew Dribin – Yes, Angela Binda – No, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Karen Janowski – Yes.

As Mr. Bacci received five votes to elect him Chair, Ms. Binda suggested taking a re-vote for consensus.

Roll call re-vote: Heather Clish – Yes, Andrew Dribin – Yes, Angela Binda – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Karen Janowski – Yes.

Carlo Bacci opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Heather Clish Nominated Chuck Robinson to continue as Vice Chair. With no further nominees, the SWEC voted Chuck Robinson as Vice Chair.

Roll call vote: Heather Clish – Yes, Karen Janowski – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Angela Binda – Yes, Andrew Dribin – Yes.

Presentation by Reading Pickleball Players Association (RPPA):

Members of the Reading Pickleball Players Association (RPPA) presented the mission of the organization, and the growth of the sport. They explained that Symonds Way is an ideal location for pickleball courts, as it meets the space needs, and is a great distance from homes, so neighbors would not be bothered by the noise.

Eileen Manning and Joe McHugh of the RPPA explained that the Ice Arena Authority offered space for temporary courts in the open parking area behind the arena. The hope is that development of the Symonds Way area will include permanent courts with lights, and establish replacement parking elsewhere on Symonds Way.

Some SWEC members expressed concern at the immediacy of the request, and building something permanent before the development of the whole area could be considered. Though they were comfortable with the proposal being incorporated into the RFI.

Following a lengthy discussion, the RPPA members agreed that temporary, but dedicated, pickleball space would be acceptable.

Discussion with Recreation Department on Community Needs:

Recreation Administrator Jim Sullivan and Community Services Director Jenna Fiorente shared what they have heard are needs in the community including pickleball courts, lighted multipurpose athletic fields, a public pool, and a skate park. Mr. Sullivan noted that there is not enough pickleball courts for folks who want to play. It is also difficult to schedule field time for all the youth organizations. He cautioned that if partnering with a private entity to build a facility, the Town must ensure that parameters are set to avoid competing against said partner.

Ms. Binda asked about potential indoor space. Mr. Sullivan also noted that a joint community-senior center in another community had separate areas, but a shared kitchen, gymnasium, art room, and dance room.

Eileen Manning of Riverside Drive stated that when the YMCA changed its schedule, the High School swim team lost pool time. If partnering with a private entity, it is important to maintain flexibility for the future. Mr. Sullivan concurred that there is a need for a public pool in Town.

Mr. Sullivan stated that while a skate park was not high priority, he felt that if there was one in Town, it would be utilized.

Review Preliminary Draft Request for Information (RFI) for Symonds Way:

The Committee began to review the draft Request for Information (RFI). Following a brief discussion, members agreed to review the document individually, send feedback to the Town Manager, and review and refine at the next meeting.

Review and approve prior meeting minutes:

On a motion by Chuck Robinson, seconded by Heather Clish, the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee voted 7-0-0 to approve the meeting minutes of June 13, 2023 as presented.

Roll call vote: Heather Clish – Yes, Karen Janowski – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Andrew Dribin – Yes, Angela Binda – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes.

Discuss future agenda items and meeting dates:

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, August 16th, 2023, at 6:30 pm in the Select Board Meeting Room. The only agenda item will be to complete the review of the RFI.

On a motion by Chuck Robinson, seconded by Nancy Twomey, the Symonds Way Exploratory Committee voted 7-0-0 to adjourn at 8:39 pm.

Roll call vote: Heather Clish – Yes, Karen Janowski – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Andrew Dribin – Yes, Angela Binda – Yes, Nancy Twomey – Yes, Carlo Bacci – Yes.

On a motion by Carlo Bacci, seconded by Karen Gately Herrick, the Select Board adjourned at 8:39 pm.