

Select Board Sidelines

May 12, 2021

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in the Sidelines are the individual thoughts of the Select Board member.

Submitted by Martha Johnston-Nash

Your Town Boards are diligently working on numerous projects right now. I'd like to give a run-down on some of them from my viewpoint.

SOLAR ORDINANCE: We are seeing more and more solar array fields around the state, and probably should have made an ordinance sooner. We are fortunate that the company putting the array in Union has agreed to comply with all the things in the proposed ordinance. The Planning Board has done a great job writing the new code, but had only a few people at their public hearing. Hopefully, that means that they have your confidence that it is what we need.

BROADBAND: The Broadband Committee has been researching ways to bring better connectivity to all residents. We've seen the importance of this with the learning and working from home mandates. There are options, and sorting through all the information is quite a job for this group. They are up to the challenge and come a good way toward a solution for us. Stay tuned (pun, yes).

FUTURE OF THE THOMPSON COMMUNITY COMPLEX: Our committee has spent our first two meetings gathering information and sharing historical evidence. The TCCA (association which currently has lease/operational) gave us a tour of the building, and we were disappointed to see the deterioration taking place. To keep the facility usable, some of the projects listed in the engineering study will need to be started. Whether to or how to do that will likely be the focus of the next few meetings of the group as we attempt to form a recommendation to the Select Board.

FOOD ORDINANCE: This committee is very dedicated to giving the townspeople a way to sell their home products without going through the State's extensive licensing standards. For many products, that's a good thing. However, I found the ordinance as it was written to be clouded with a lot of unnecessary rhetoric; and expect the committee will continue to work on it to make it clear and concise if it is to go before the voters (possibly in November, if passed through by the select board).

Lastly, a word on the upcoming budget: Again, this year the financial warrant articles will be on the written ballot which makes it especially important to attend the budget hearing on May 25th. If you want to attend but cannot because you don't have Zoom, let us know ahead of time.

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Submitted by Bill Lombardi

Select Board Sidelines – Our email was not distributed after the last meeting as it was decided that my advocacy of the Local Food Ordinance was promotional. In my defense, I did not break any of the pre-established parameters that the Board set prior to our first publication. Some have argued that since the Select Board voted not to place this ordinance on the Town Warrant that I should not have written explaining why I thought it was a good idea. It is my position that the Board clearly intended to re-visit this issue. I will continue to passionately present and advocate for issues that I feel are in Unions best interest.

To quote Eleanor Roosevelt: “Do in your heart what you think is right, you’ll be criticized anyway.”

Budget Meeting – The Budget Committee and the Select Board held a joint meeting, Tuesday April 27. The most impactful change was adding road expenses back into the budget. Last year these expenses were covered by our recently issued bond. With tax revenues also increasing this year we will need to wait on the final tax ramifications. Hopefully, there will be a tax increase of limited proportion.

Speeding – I have asked that this topic be added to the agenda at our next Select Board meeting. This challenging topic has been voiced by many of our residents concerned about road safety. It is my hope that we can brainstorm solutions to mitigate this issue.

Your input is requested- Give us your feedback, good, bad, indifferent. Our email addresses are on the Town’s web site. First question, do you find the SB Sidelines useful? What would you like to see different?

Town Hall Streams – Can't make a Select Board meeting at its scheduled time? Want to hear what was discussed at the Road Workshop? Check out Town Hall Streams. The link is on the front page of the Town web site.