

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, July 9, 2024
Select Board's Chamber and
Via ZOOM**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waFfCQI6BHs>

- 3:00 p.m. **Call to Order:**
A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Kevin Keane. Those present were Vice Chair Heidi Frail, Clerk Cathy Dowd, Marianne Cooley, Joshua Levy, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. David Davison, DTM/Finance, Katie King, DTM/Operations, and Myles Tucker, Support Services Manager, were also in attendance.
- 3:00 p.m. **Public Comment Period:**
Mr. Dan Goldberg, a member of the Council of Aging, discussed the current status of the fitness room at the Center at the Heights and desire to swap it for a game room, as well as his desire for the Center to increase parking, accept credit cards, install a retractable awning for the sun deck, and provide improvements to the kitchen.
- 3:10 p.m. **Goals Setting**
The Board discussed goals set for FY2024 & FY2025 and made the following recommendations.

FY2024-2025 Initiatives	Description	Status	Goals Meeting Discussion
1	Identify ways to institutionalize community conversation around race, diversity, equity, and inclusion, to build relationships and a stronger understanding of different perspectives and lived experiences. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	A planning group has been established. The first event was led by the High School students on May 2, 2024. The planning group is meeting to plan the next event for Fall 2024.	Refer to HRC, NUARI, NDI, Resiliency Network and/or other community groups based on conversations.
2	Make intentional efforts and identify creative ideas for community outreach to diversify the candidate pool for all appointed Boards and Committees,	Topic surveys complete, curriculum and media being finalized. Target date will be September for new appointments. Using this data, community groups were directly solicited to	Operationalized.

	measure progress. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	pass along the Town's request for committee member applications in the Spring of 2024.	
3	Complete the Equity Audit, clarify objectives, and determine next steps. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The Town received a \$50,000 Community Compact Grant for this project. The project will kick off this summer. The Town has partnered with a DEIB consultant to conduct employee focus groups, for the purpose of recommending impactful next steps in our DEIB strategy, more meaningful engagement in DEIB themes, and equity audit objectives.	Operationalized. Currently working with departments to scope the audit and define parameters.
4	Conduct Board and Committee member orientation sessions to include the Town's race equity vision statement and NUARI principles. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Staff drafted the curriculum outline and received feedback via survey from current Board/Committee Members. Orientation planned for Fall 2024.	Operationalized, to be executed in Fall 2024.
5	NUARI: Conduct Board and Committee member orientation sessions to include the Town's race equity vision statement. <i>(Included in Initiative 1.4)</i>	Included in Initiative 4.	Operationalized, to be executed in Fall 2024.
6	Hold a public hearing and determine if the Town will change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Hearing held 11/28/2023, vote to change held 12/5/2023.	Complete.
7	Invite various identity network groups to meet with the Select Board and introduce the work they do and the community they serve. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Staff will use data gleaned from surveys and committee recruitment outreach to engage with identity network groups, with the intent of using these conversations as	0-18 Months. To be executed by attending identity network group meetings/events. Board to initiate outreach and

		segues to Select Board meeting discussions. A request for outreach was included in the solicitation of committee member applications.	indicate desire to meet with and participate in community events.
8	Develop a plan for a community observance of Juneteenth. (18-36 months)	A brief ceremony was held on June 19, 2024, and the Board will discuss this goal at its next goals workshop.	Operationalized. Staff to engage with Chairs on how to expand.
9	Implement Valor Act and consider aligning the administrative process for both the Valor Act and the Senior Corps programs. (Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)	Staff will make a proposal in CY2024 Q4 for the Board's consideration.	Operationalized.
10	Conduct focus groups with BIPOC community members to identify strategies for ensuring that all members of the community feel welcome as outlined in the NUARI vision statement and guiding principles. (Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)	Focus groups were held in Fall 2023.	Operationalized. Continue to focus on engagement with BIPOC community and meet with NUARI following orientation sessions.

11	Evaluate Chestnut Street Redevelopment (36+ months)	Deferred.	36+ months. Assessment to occur following outcome of MBTA Communities Law-related warrant article.
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12 *	Work with the Planning Board on next steps related to the MBTA Community Housing Guidelines and the update to the Town's Affordable Housing Plan.	The HONE Working Group submitted its final recommendations to Select Board & Planning Board on April 30 th . The initial plan has been filed with EOHLC. October 21, 2024, STM is the	0-18 months. Board will continue to work with the Planning Board and other relevant stakeholders
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	Review updated demographics and impact on anticipated transit-oriented development and schools. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	target for Town Meeting Action.	upon state assessment of Town's proposal.
13	Identify funding for School Master Plan projects and participate in the planning process. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The MSBA approved an Invitation for Eligibility for the Pollard project on December 13, 2023. Funding for feasibility was approved by the 2024 Annual Town Meeting.	Operationalized. The Board will continue to track progress, to include changes to cost/financing or set initiative to work with School Committee, Finance Committee, and PPBC to understand project and cost.
14	Evaluate RTS Service Delivery Model to guide long-term investment and review operational efficiencies in the short-term. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	After failing to receive bids within the allocated budget, DPW is working with a firm to conduct a survey. Once results are complete, viable options will be evaluated by a consultant. The target for survey completion is Fall/Winter 2024.	Operationalized. RTS Survey in work. Staff to report back to Board.
15 *	Evaluate next steps for use of the Stephen Palmer Building. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	A survey has been drafted with Select Board and Park & Recreation Commission input, with targeted distribution in Fall 2024 following a stakeholder meeting, to include current residents.	0-18 Months. The Board will host resident engagement in Fall 2024. Staff will work to drafting feasibility scope.
16	Evaluate expansion of off-leash dog areas. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Staff will provide concept plans based on the ARA Working Group recommendations by August 2024.	0-18 Months. Staff will develop concepts for Hillside and Mills, with potential for an off-leash area at Rosemary.

17	Support for the Needham Housing Authority redevelopment project. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The Select Board, Planning Board, and CPC advanced articles to the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. All of the articles passed. The Town-Financed Community Housing Oversight Committee (T-CHOC) will oversee the allocated funds.	Complete.
18	Evaluate the role of the Affordable Housing Trust. <i>(18-36 months)</i>	Deferred.	0-18 months. The Board will invite the League of Women Voters to present their study on the Trust to a joint AHTF/SB meeting
19	Begin the Ridge Hill/Nike Assessment Phase 2 Project, including working with the Community Farm to decide on the long-term plan for the farm at the site as well as considering potential future uses of the site. <i>(36+ months)</i>	Deferred.	Removed.
20	Create a voluntary local historic district under Chapter 40C for the property of Elizabeth and Maurice Handel at 3 Rosemary Street, built by Jonathan and Jemima Kingsbury in 1779, the oldest house in 02494 and the 11th oldest in Needham. <i>(Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)</i>	The Final Report is complete, and the By-law amendment was approved by the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. The By-law will become effective upon the approval of the Office of the Attorney General.	Complete.
21	Upgrade Town Seal to improve graphic quality and historical accuracy.	The Needham Branding and Town Seal Committee was appointed by the Board and has been meeting since Fall	Operationalized. The new seal is targeted for the 2025 Annual

	<i>(Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)</i>	2023. The Governor has cut the funding allocated for this project in half under the 9C cuts. The Board has allocated ARPA funds to fund the remainder of the project. The Committee is working with a consultant to develop a brand logo and revised Town Seal.	Town Meeting. Branding effort will conclude with selection and roll out by end of CY2024.
22	Identify opportunities for expanded active and passive recreation facilities including but not limited to an action sports park and additional boat ramps. <i>(Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)</i>	Construction funding for reconstructed and expanded NHS tennis courts projects is in the permitting phase, with funds proposed for the October 21, 2024, Special Town Meeting. The Active Recreation Feasibility Study has been awarded to CHA Solutions Company. Their process began in early 2024 and is likely to run through the summer in order to deliver their suggestions before budget season in Fall 2024. Their focus is to find the best location for a skate park and pickleball courts.	Operationalized.
23	Maintain/repair the barn at Ridge Hill. <i>(Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)</i>	The revised License for use of the barn by Needham Community Theater is complete (Select Board endorsement approved on 12/19/2023). Emergency repairs are on-going – discussions on the future of the property will be scheduled in 2024.	Complete.
24	Improve trailhead access to ensure clear and accessible access; consider creating a trails app. <i>(Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)</i>	The Conservation and Park & Recreation Departments have reestablished the Town's Trail Stewards Program and have engaged Tighe & Bond, who designed uniform trail markers.	Operationalized.

25	Update parking payment technologies to allow for credit card and/or app-based payments. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The procurement of an app-based payment option has begun. Four bids were received with review of bids in June 2024.	Operationalized. RFP concluded, with vendor selected.
26	Ask the Planning Board to update parking requirements in zoning at May 2024 Town Meeting. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The Planning Department requested FY2025 funding for technical assistance to inform a Planning Board zoning amendment on this topic. The funding request was approved.	Complete.
27	Pilot converting some on-street parking spaces for more active curb use (e.g., short customer visits, active loading areas). <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Deferred until after the app-based payment technology is in place and additional data has been collected.	18-36 months.
28	Update the Town's parking regulations and permit program (including permit rules, time/day regulations, and pricing). <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Deferred until after the app-based payment technology is in place.	18-36 months.
29*	Seek funding for noise reduction/Quiet Zone feasibility, design, and construction. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Funding in the amount of \$750,000 for design was funded at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. DPW is drafting procurement documents.	0-18 Months. Design funded, and process to proceed in FY2025.
30	Evaluate and make a final determination of the appropriate plan for Downtown Redesign Phase 2. <i>(0-18 months)</i> .	The Director of Public Works solicited design concepts from consulting engineers, and presentations were made to the Select Board this past winter. A design contract was awarded to Environmental Partners. The Town is currently defining the scope for Phase I of the	Operationalized. DPW leading working group with Environmental Partners over Summer 2024. Town Manager will propose composition and charge for working group at 7/30/24 SB meeting.

		project, to include community outreach and design of pilot. Phase I is expected to be implemented in CY2025.	
31	Evaluate expansion of snow and ice removal efforts, including sidewalk plowing strategies. (0-18 months)	DPW will provide an update to the Board during FY2025.	0-18 months. DPW to provide update in pre-winter overview.
32	Evaluate funding options for the Rail Trail extension from High Rock Street to Needham Junction. (36+ months)	Deferred.	18-36 months. Discussions commenced with Town of Dover.
33	Evaluate future use of the rail corridor between Dover and Newton. (36+ months) (Included in 32 and 34)	Deferred.	Removed.
34	Evaluate the feasibility of a shared use way between Needham Heights and the City of Newton. (36+ months)	Deferred.	0-18 months. Town Manager will begin discussion with Newton and MassDot.
35	Implement the Parking Study. (Included in 25 and 28)		Removed.
36	Prioritize Funding for the Central Ave/Center St Bridge (Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)	Funding for this project is included in the amended FY2025 TIP. Dover is taking the lead on designing a new bridge and has contracted with TEC to work the TIP process. It is anticipated this project will be approximately 5 years out and will have to be coordinated with MassDOT's project at Chestnut St.	Completed. Included in TIP, as requested by Dover.

37	Actively monitor progress on the law enforcement	The Police Chief attended the March 26 2024 Select	Complete. Police Chief invited to
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	recommendations that NPD Chief Schlittler presented to the Select Board on June 8, 2021. <i>(Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)</i>	Board meeting to present the 2023 Annual Report.	provide at 2+ updates per year starting in FY2025.
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38	Evaluate the need for a flag policy. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The policy was approved at the 11/28/2023 Select Board meeting.	Complete.
39	Evaluate the possibility of developing a Community Master Plan. Develop an inventory of Town long-range plans and identify overlaps and conflicts, including other Boards of jurisdictions. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Pending	0-18 months. Staff to create a inventory of existing master plans.
40	Establish process to do regular by-law charter review updates. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The Select Board appointed a working group on 1/9/2024 to develop a proposal for Town Meeting. The proposed By-law amendment to implement the review process was approved at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. This committee will be established in Q2 FY2025 following approval by the Attorney General.	Complete.
41	DPW phased renovation/construction. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Funding for the design of Phase I of this project was approved at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. Staff is performing a scope review in June 2024.	Operationalized. Design funding secured with work progressing.
42	Capital Facilities: CATH upgrades (including additional parking) and Library phased renovations. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Projects requests were submitted in the FY 2025-2029 CIP. Design of the Library's Young Adult project was approved at	Library: Operationalized. Phase I in design.

		the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. Funding for the rental of 13 additional parking spots from the MBTA next to the CATH was approved at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting. CATH upgrades are included in the most recent Capital Improvement Plan.	CATH: 0-18 months. COA to review prioritization of fitness room relative to other priorities.
43	Evaluate ways to increase minority and women-owned business participation in construction, building maintenance projects, and other Town programs. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The PPBC will meet or exceed the MSBA standards for MBE & WBE participation on the design and construction of the Pollard project. This topic will be included in the Town's upcoming procurement manual.	0-18 Months. Staff to begin study with the topic being added to upcoming procurement meeting in summer 2024.
44	Review and recodify the non-criminal disposition by-law <i>(Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)</i>	The October 30, 2023, Special Town Meeting approved the By-law amendment that has been approved by the Attorney General. A correcting amendment was approved at the May 13, 2024, Special Town Meeting	Complete

45	Prioritize and implement the Climate Action Plan. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The CAPC presented a draft plan on 12/19/2023, and a public hearing was held on 1/9/2024. The Select Board approved the composition and charge of the permanent committee (CAC) at its meeting on March 12, 2024 and approved the Climate Action Roadmap	Complete
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		on May 14, 2024. A Sustainability Manager was hired in December 2023.	
46	Identify parcel acquisition to comply with Land and Water Conservation Fund requirements. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	Pending	0-18 months. Ongoing effort.
47	Evaluate adoption of net-zero building code; specialized opt-in code. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The October 30, 2023 Special Town Meeting approved the adoption of the code.	Complete
48	Sponsor a tree summit. <i>(0-18 months)</i>	The Tree Summit was postponed from 2/7/2024. The Town Manager is convening a small working group to help determine next steps.	0-18 months. Further discussion on 7/30.
49	Explore development of a Town Electric Vehicle (EV) policy, i.e., the default position for fleet replacement should be EVs unless there is a compelling reason to use an alternative. <i>(18-36 months)</i>	The Sustainability Manager has started a process to identify what the potential policy may cover.	0-18 months. Staff identifying scope of policy, followed by drafting.
50	Recommend community energy aggregation <i>(Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative)</i>	Public comment on draft plan held 12/6/2023 to 1/5/2024. Comments were compiled and submitted to the DPU. The draft plan was validated and approved for submission by the Town working group on 1/8/2024. A required meeting with DOER occurred on 1/16/2024, followed by DPU Public hearing held on 3/14/2024. The proposal is currently awaiting review by the DPU.	Operationalized. Awaiting approval from DPU.

51	Review/establish electric vehicle charging rates (<i>Operationalized FY 2023-24 Initiative</i>)	The Select Board approved the rates at its 10/24/2023 meeting.	Complete.
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The Board discussed adding new goals including:

- Create an action plan for transitioning all Town Buildings to having all-gender bathrooms.
- Launch a Civics Academy to introduce Needham residents to all facets of local government
- Establish clear guidelines for public art proposals for the Town of Needham, including an outline of the existing process for approval from the appropriate committees to develop a consistent public arts program to serve the Needham community
- Town Hall Dance Party
- Gather community data from Placer.ai to look at movement and time in location (duration) to target future businesses and amenities (parking lots, parks, etc.).
- Encourage and participate in the Planning Board's large house review
- Explore renaming Hemlock Gorge to Nehoiden's Grant

6:58 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Ms. Frail that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting of Tuesday, July 9th, 2024.

Second: Ms. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting is available at:

<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID>

The next Select Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 30, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.