

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on November 2, 2017:

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: George O. (Buster) Steere, Jr., President; Edward C. Burlingame, Vice-President; Walter M. O. Steere, III; William E. Reichert and Patricia Henry.

Also present: Timothy Kane, Town Solicitor; Susan Harris, Deputy Town Clerk; Gary Treml, Director of Public Works; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Ken Johnson, Building/Zoning Official; Lori DeSantis, Tax Assessor; Gerald Mosca, EMA Director; Robert Shields, Recreation Director; and Melissa Bouvier, Senior Center Director.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

None.

V. Resolution - Recognition: Ponaganset High School Named a Unified Champion School

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to TABLE the Resolution - Recognition: Ponaganset High School Named a Unified Champion School; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Consent Items - Discussion and/or action

A. Approval of Town Council meeting minutes of October 19, 2017

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to APPROVE the Town Council meeting minutes of October 19, 2017; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Boards & Commissions

1. Appointments - Discussion and/or action

a. Conservation Commission

One Alternate term to expire 2/2018

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Chair does not have a recommendation at this time. Councilor Henry stated that she spoke to the Chair who stated that he should have a name by the next meeting.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to TABLE the appointment to the Conservation Commission for one Alternate term to expire 2/2018; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Boards & Commissions - Discussion and/or action

a. Inactive Boards & Commissions -(Personnel Board; Affordable Housing Board; Community Resource Commission) - Status & Action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council discussed this at the last meeting and asked the members if they had any other thoughts about these three (3) boards. Councilor W. Steere stated that there was another board, Economic Development, that was mentioned at the last meeting. Councilor Burlingame suggested that the Council table this until the next meeting so we can check the Charter and the Handbook.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to TABLE Boards & Commissions - Discussion and/or action, Inactive Boards & Commission - Status & Action until the next Town Council meeting; seconded by Councilor W. Steere.

Discussion: Councilor G. Steere commented that the Affordable Housing Board should remain active in light of everything that is going on. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Clerk has advised the Council that there are currently four (4) members, which is enough to have a meeting.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VIII. New Business

A. Human Services Department

1. Amendment to Van Policy- Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Human Services Director is not present tonight. Councilor G. Steere suggested that this item be tabled until the Director is able to explain the amendment.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to TABLE the Amendment to Van Policy - Discussion and/or action; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Ratification - Correspondence from Town Council (dated October 23, 2017) to D.O.T. re: recent work to intersection of Chestnut Hill Road and Putnam Pike - Discussion and/or action

Discussion: Councilor G. Steere explained that DOT was planning to bump out the curb by 3 feet on the eastbound lane of Route 44, approaching the intersection of Chestnut Hill Road, losing 3 feet of the entrance of Chestnut Hill Road, and to widen the westbound lane by 2 feet. Councilor G. Steere stated that he called Gary Tella, Resident Engineer, to voice the Council's concerns. Councilor G. Steere stated that the work was stopped and DOT agreed not to touch the Chestnut Hill side, but will still widen the cemetery side by 2 feet. Councilor G. Steere stated that there was Council consensus, obtained by the Clerk's Office, to send a letter to DOT regarding these changes. Councilor G. Steere noted that the Council did not know about this project until the work had begun.

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to RATIFY the correspondence from Town Council dated October 23, 2017 to DOT regarding recent work at the intersection of Chestnut Hill Road and Putnam Pike; seconded by Councilor Burlingame.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Boards & Commissions - Discussion and/or action

1. Zoning Board of Review

a. One expired Five Year Term- to expire 11/2022

Councilor G. Steere noted that the Chair has indicated that Scott Carlson does not wish to be reappointed. Councilor G. Steere stated that we have an Alternate, Tracey Donnelly, who would

like to be appointed and we have received a recommendation from the Chairman of the Zoning Board to make that appointment.

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to APPOINT **Tracey Donnelly, who is currently #1 Alternate**, to the Zoning Board of Review to a regular position for a five year term to expire 11/2022; seconded by Councilor Henry.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor G. Steere stated that this leaves the Alternate position vacant and stated that this will be on the next Agenda.

- D. Gloucester Veterans Advocate - Discussion and/or action
  - 1. Creating position & establishing guidelines
  - 2. Appointment - Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that, resident, Walter Bienieki has been serving as a “self-appointed” liaison and advocate for local veterans and has had to step down due to health issues. Councilor G. Steere stated that there is an individual who is willing to serve in this capacity, however there is no actual town-appointed position. Councilor G. Steere stated that Mr. Yarn, the head of Veterans’ Affairs in Rhode Island, had reached out to the Town Clerk asking for a designated person to represent the Town. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Council should discuss whether to create a position and guidelines for a Veterans Advocate. Councilor G. Steere stated that resident, Charlie Vallor, has expressed interest.

Councilor Burlingame stated that it might be worthwhile to find out if other communities have a position such as this and get some position descriptions to consider. Councilor Reichert noted that his father-in-law was helped by a veterans’ advocate. Councilor W. Steere expressed his opinion that it is a needed position, however the Council must decide if it will be a paid position or volunteer, and what would be the hiring process. Councilor G. Steere stated that it will probably be an appointed volunteer position. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Town Clerk has reached out to Mr. Yarn. Councilor Burlingame stated that he will get involved in this matter and report back to the Council.

- E. Gloucester Code of Ordinance - Discussion and/or action
  - 1. 1<sup>st</sup> Reading proposed amendment to:

Article XI: Comprehensive Permit for Low and Moderate Income Housing

Councilor G. Steere stated that we could read the proposed amendment or we could waive the reading, as the amendment is quite lengthy.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to WAIVE the reading of the proposed amendment to Article XI: Comprehensive Permit for Low and Moderate Income Housing; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Discussion: Councilor G. Steere explained that this amendment pertains to comprehensive permits for low and moderate income housing, stating that right now we have no density bonus in the Ordinance. Councilor G. Steere noted that we recently had an application for a 42-unit project which was withdrawn, but no doubt somebody will come in with an application of this type. Councilor G. Steere stated that we were advised by two (2) experts that it would be better to have something in the Ordinance, now, prior to another low and moderate income housing project application coming before us.

Councilor G. Steere stated that there are copies available for review. Susan Harris, Deputy Town Clerk, stated that the Public Hearing must be advertised at least 10 days prior to the hearing. S. Harris stated that December 7<sup>th</sup> would allow enough time for advertising.

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to SET a Public Hearing for December 7, 2017 to consider the proposed amendment to Article XI: Comprehensive Permit for Low and Moderate Income Housing; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

F. Taxation of residents: docks & dock “rights” - Discussion and/or action

Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that after conferring with the Tax Assessor, his recommendation is that the taxing of dock rights is problematic. T. Kane stated that one option going forward is to tax the docks as what they are (size and makeup) and a second option is not to tax them at all due to administrative costs and work.

Councilor Burlingame asked Lori DeSantis, Tax Assessor, how many docks are involved and what is the revenue generated. L. DeSantis replied that there are 325 docks that are taxed for a total of \$25,727.00. Councilor G. Steere asked if some of them are docks and others “dock rights”. L. DeSantis replied that they are all dock rights. Councilor G. Steere stated that the Town is taxing residents \$25,000 for something that does not exist.

T. Kane stated that each dock is assessed at \$4,000. T. Kane stated that he checked in Smithfield and stated that an 8' by 6' dock was assessed at \$800 and a larger dock was assessed at \$1,100. T. Kane stated that if we were to value them, they would not be worth \$4,000. T. Kane stated the revenue figure would be done substantially.

Councilor Burlingame commented that you cannot tax intangibles, and dock rights are intangible. Councilor Burlingame stated that he would like to make this go away and not tax them at all. Councilor Burlingame also discussed some of the issues of the types of docks and searching for actual docks. Councilor Henry agreed, stating that State Law says that intangible property cannot be taxed. Councilor G. Steere stated that it would not be feasible to send someone out to look at the docks to determine their value.

Councilor W. Steere agreed but stated that this would result in a \$25,000 revenue loss. T. Kane commented that even if we taxed the docks at their value, the revenue would still go down to at least \$12,500 because they are not worth \$4,000. Councilor Reichert asked if we could word it so people cannot look for rebates. T. Kane replied that the appeal period is over.

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry that the Tax Assessor will no longer tax docks and dock rights in the Town of Gloucester, effective December 31, 2017; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere again expressed concern regarding how this would affect the Budget. Councilor Burlingame stated it will be spread out across the whole budget. Councilor G. Steere asked Lori DeSantis if this was the first year of taxing dock rights. L. DeSantis replied in the negative. (L. DeSantis continued to speak from her seat but was inaudible) Councilor Burlingame stated that if he had been aware of this when it began, he would have objected. Councilor Burlingame stated that, in the future, when the people doing our revaluation propose a baseline methodology change the Council should be made aware before implementation. Regarding the budget, Councilor G. Steere stated this is the right thing to do so we will have to live with any budget changes due to the shortfall.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

G. Resident Clean Up Plans to address Litter Concerns - Discussion and/or action  
Councilor Henry stated that at the last meeting, Councilor Burlingame asked her to put some things together to bring forward to the Council. Councilor Henry read her proposal as follows:

### **COMMUNITY LITTER PLAN, NOV. 2017**

Per discussion at the Council meeting of 10/19/17, the following is a proposal meant to initiate town wide resident clean ups and to show the Town Council's commitment to support future efforts by educating and participating in making Gloucester a litter free community:

1. Signage: A permanent sign shall be installed, in the area of the Transfer Station, asking residents to please be sure that their trash is secured and/or covered when transporting to the Transfer Station, as well as any additional signage, determined necessary by the Town Council and/or the Public Works Director, regarding litter control. (Said sign could have a reserved space to post citizen “clean up” dates.)
2. The Conservation Commission’s charge shall be amended to include the coordination of resident clean up efforts. The Commission shall be authorized to engage the help of other town groups desiring to participate in community projects.
  - a. Through citizen outreach (advertising & Town web site) residents will be informed of these efforts. Residents, desiring to initiate a clean up of an area, may submit a request to the Commission for available assistance with their clean ups. Upon approval by the Commission, the Town’s commitment to participate would include: an advertisement (to be prepared and advertised by the Town Clerk); the supplying of trash bags; the placing of temporary clean up signs; and physical assistance, as available.

The Commission’s budget shall include a line item for those specific costs.

The Commission will not assume any responsibility or liability during citizen clean ups but would provide assistance, when possible, as outlined above.

- b. The Conservation Commission, Public Works Department, and the Town Clerk shall embrace educational and informational programs, state initiatives, and grant programs available to our community to teach and assist our residents to keep their neighborhoods part of a litter free community.

Councilor G. Steere stated that there was Council discussion at the last meeting regarding placing a sign at the Transfer Station. Councilor W. Steere stated that he noticed several signs on the roads that were placed by the State. Councilor Henry stated that the Town Clerk is going to call D.O.T. to ask if we can get a few more of those signs to put up through the community. Councilor G. Steere discussed the sign at the transfer station with G.Treml. (G. Treml spoke from his seat and was inaudible)

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to accept the plan, Community Litter Plan, as presented; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor Henry thanked the Sand Dam Association for contacting her last year regarding this matter. (Judy Colaluca, of the Sand Dam Association, spoke but was inaudible on the recording.)

IX. Town Council Correspondence /Discussion

- A. Councilor G. Steere stated that a letter was received from the RI World War One Centennial Commission asking for support for educational and commemorative events being planned by the Commission. Councilor G. Steere stated there were no specifics stated in the letter.
- B. Councilor G. Steere stated that a letter was received from the State Traffic Commission informing us, in the nick of time, that there was a hearing on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. concerning a four-way stop sign at the intersection of Saw Mill and Snake Hill Roads. Councilor G. Steere stated it appears the correspondence was forwarded by Representative Winfield.
- C. Councilor G. Steere stated that a letter was received from Full Circle Recycling stating that there are changes in the requirements for rigid plastic materials that will be accepted for recycling. Discussion followed regarding the new requirements, which will result in some hard plastic being discarded in the regular trash instead of recycled. G. Trembl, Director of Public Works, stated that over the course of a year this will increase our tipping fees by about \$6,000.

Councilor Henry stated that she and the Finance Director attended a recycling meeting and they came away feeling that RI Resource Recovery is not interested in recycling programs any more. G. Trembl disagreed, stating that they want us to recycle but nobody wants to make the effort. G. Trembl further stated that nobody wanted to raise tipping fees for 20 years, which is why we are in the position we are in now. Councilor W. Steere stated we should send correspondence to our legislators. G. Trembl continued to speak about what he feels communities should do to address the landfill issues.

- D. Councilor G. Steere stated that a response was received from DOT concerning the Town Council's letter about the Chestnut Hill corner. Councilor G. Steere stated that DOT has accepted the changes requested by the Council.
- E. Councilor W. Steere congratulated the Unified Volleyball Team for winning the State Championship last weekend and asked for a Resolution at the next meeting.
- F. Councilor W. Steere requested that the expansion at FM Global be added to the



next agenda for discussion of a PILOT agreement.

- G. Councilor W. Steere commented that the sign for the parking area across from the Town Trader looks very good.  
Council discussed the successful recent holiday events that were held in town.
- H. Councilor Henry stated that somebody has offered to donate a Christmas tree to be, possibly, put up at the Pavilion. (G. Treml gave his input, inaudible)  
There was Council consensus to add Holiday Decorations to the next agenda.

X. Department Head Reports/Discussion

Councilor Burlingame thanked Melissa Bouvier, Senior Center Director, for keeping the center open during the recent storm related power outages.

- A. Ken Johnson, Building/Zoning Official, stated that there is still one contractor who has not submitted a building permit for the work that was done at the high school. K. Johnson stated that he sent a letter stating that if he does not hear from the contractor soon, the matter will be turned over to the State Building Commission.
- B. Gerald Mosca, EMA Director, gave a report regarding the recent storm and power outage. G. Mosca stated that currently, there are still 250 houses that are still without power, with an estimated restoration time of tomorrow morning. G. Mosca commended police, fire and public works for working hard to keep our citizens safe. G. Mosca stated that he has been in touch with National Grid every three (3) hours during the outage.

G. Mosca stated he had one request for shelter and that request was handled through Harmony Fire. G. Mosca stated there were no other requests. G. Mosca stated they called every person on the Health Department's, Special needs registry, and all were fine and had what they needed.

Councilor G. Steere commended G. Mosca for his efforts, stating that he had arranged for the use of the Middle School for shelter, if needed, with the assistance of the Red Cross.. Councilor G. Steere also stated that he was constantly staying on National Grid. G. Mosca stated within four hours of his call National Grid had trucks in the area. G. Mosca that people must understand that we still had high winds on Monday and the bucket trucks cannot operate until those winds died down. G. Mosca stated cots were quickly delivered by RIEMA upon request.

Councilor Reichert noted that neighboring towns over the line in Connecticut did not lose electricity and stated that there is something drastically wrong with the way National Grid does what they do. Councilor Reichert stated that is why people get so frustrated. G. Mosca stated he feels part of the reason is that Connecticut has a very

aggressive tree trimming policy. Councilor W. Steere stated he felt we, as a town, did everything we could do. Councilor Burlingame stated his opinion that it is a corporate problem with National Grid and that they are not being responsible due to a cut in work crews.

There was discussion concerning tree trimming. Councilor Henry commented that trees used to be cleared from the wires in the spring, summer and fall, but we don't see that being done any more. Councilor Henry questioned whether Council should contact National Grid, or should our legislators, to ask why this is not being done. Gerald Mosca stated that they are on a schedule where they move around the State and get back to Gloucester every three (3) years. Gary Treml stated that people will not agree to let National Grid cut the trees back to where they should be cut back to but they want power. Councilor Henry asked to put something on the next agenda that the Council President send something to National Grid asking them to come out and trim. Councilor W. Steere suggested that we send a letter expressing our concern about their lack of response.

The Council members thanked G. Mosca for all the work he did this week.

XI. Bds. and Commissions Reports/Discussion

None.

XII. Open Forum

A. Andy Andreoni, of East Providence, stated that his wife is the trustee of property at 26 Hamilton Hill Road. A. Andreoni stated that they would like to work out an agreement with the Council whereby the residents would pay for the materials and the Town would perform the labor to repair the road. Councilor G. Steere noted that this is not on the agenda so the Council cannot address the request.

Gary Treml, Director of Public Works, stated residents of Hamilton Hill filed the paperwork. G. Treml stated there is a policy that if residents of a private road pay for the materials and sign a document, that we drafted, stating that they don't want the Town to maintain the road, the Town would provide the labor. G. Treml stated the policy states the town will not sand, plow, or salt the road. G. Treml stated the road was about 560' long and 16' wide. G. Treml stated some work has to be done on the road before it can be paved.

Linda Andreoni, resident, stated the road was in very bad condition.

Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, asked if the Council normally authorizes this action. Councilor Burlingame stated that it is the Public Works Director's call as this is a practice he has followed. Councilor W. Steere questioned the legality of the forms signed by residents. Atty. Kane stated he had prepared a template a few years ago.

XIII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to ADJOURN at 8:50 p.m.; seconded by Councilor Henry.

VOTE:           AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
                  NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED