

# PLYMOUTH SELECT BOARD

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022

REMOTE VIA ZOOM, PLYMOUTH, MA – 4:00 PM

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## 4:00PM - CALL TO ORDER

Richard Quintal, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked Vice Chairman Cavacco to read the following statement:

In accordance with S2475, and pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish [to watch the meeting may do so](#) in the following manner: tune into PACtv government cable access channels Comcast Channel 15 or Verizon Channel 47 and watch the meeting as it is aired live, or watch the meeting live through PACtv's website at <https://pactv.org>. Members of the public who wish to PARTICIPATE in the meeting may do so in the following manner: contact the Select Board's Assistant, Chris Badot, [who is available prior to and throughout the meeting to provide public remote access](#), via the public call-in line, (508) 322-3383, or [cbadot@plymouth-ma.gov](mailto:cbadot@plymouth-ma.gov). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, for reasons of economic hardship and despite best efforts, we will post on the Town's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Present: Richard Quintal, Chairman  
Betty Cavacco, Vice Chairman  
Patrick Flaherty  
Harry Helm  
Charlie Bletzer  
  
Lee Hartmann, Acting Town Manager

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## 4:00PM – TOWN MANAGER CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

Chairman Quintal said they are meeting today beginning at 4:00pm so that they can give ample time to the three Town Manager Candidates time to answer questions during each of their interviews. He said we do not want o rush this process at all.

Bernie Lynch from Paradigm came on and thanked the Board for having him in tonight. He said the process that we will be using is the same process that we use in most of our communities that we work with. He said the hope is to start a dialogue between the Board and each applicant to get as much information as possible from them so you can make an educated and informative decision. He then said some of the Board members sent in questions and he added some within the same areas to add to them in more detail. He said he prefers it not to be just him asking the questions and encouraged the Board members to engage the candidates and ask other questions as well. He said the goal is to have the Board members jump in and have the discussions that are going to help each of you with your decision-making process when the time comes to vote for one of the applicants to be your next Town Manager for the Town of Plymouth.

Bernie Lynch then said that he blocked them out as follows. Derek Brindisi will begin at 4:15pm, Jennifer Callahan at 5:30pm, and Jennifer Phillips at 6:45pm so hopefully that will be enough time for the Board and the candidates. He said he instructed the candidates to join the meeting a little bit earlier in case we get through all of the questions quicker than expected. He said he is excited to get the process going and will take any feedback that the Board members might have when the process is complete. He said that he had spoken with Chris Badot earlier today about the process and the candidates will be kept in a waiting room where they cannot hear the questions or the answers. He then said he would be happy to answer any questions before the interviews begin, which there were none. He then asked Chris Badot to let the first candidate in so they could begin the interview process.

Video recordings of each of the interviews can be found on the PACtv website at the following link: [PACTV's Video on Demand | PACTV](#)

After all three interviews were completed the Board discussed taking a vote. They ultimately decided to take a couple of days to go over the information they were presented and then to come back on Friday morning and take their vote.

On a motion by Charlie Bletzer and seconded by Harry Helm, the Board voted to convene on Friday, January 21, 2022 at 9:00am to vote for the New Town Manager. *Voted 5/0*

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## **8:27PM – FOREST LEGACY**

Sharl Heller came on and thanked the Board for having them in tonight. She said they will try to be as brief as possible as they know that the Board has had a long night so far. She then began her presentation. She said this is the U.S. Forest Services Forest Legacy Grant Program. She said the Massachusetts Coastal Pine Barrens Partnership which was formed in 2015 is one of 42 regional conservation partnerships and it focuses on the coastal pine barrens of southeaster Massachusetts. She said the Pine Barrens Partnership Steering Committee consists of the following:

- Cape Cod Commission
- Mass Audubon
- Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Manomet, Inc
- Wareham Land Trust
- Simmons Stewardship and Conservation Ecology
- Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance

Sharl Heller said the partnership's mission is to bring about broad recognition of the unique qualities and intrinsic value of the Massachusetts Coastal Pine Barrens Ecoregion we build partnerships to:

- Protect, restore, manage, and connect the landscape to support the diversity of plants and animals
- Provide a forum for landscape resiliency planning
- Prepare for the effects of climate change
- Maintain the Pine Barrens' enduring appeal to residents and visitors alike

She then said she would like to share why this partnership is focusing on the Holtec property as the core of a potential Forest Legacy Grant. She said Holtec Decommissioning International owns the largest remaining undeveloped tract of land with Coastal Pine Barren habitat in forest management since 1977.

Sharl Heller said it is the highest elevation from Arcadia in Maine to North Carolina and this tract of land has 360-degree views and enhanced recreational opportunities. She said it is also a critical habitat for 43 state listed species. She said it has been managed constantly for fire reduction and forest health. She said conservation of this land fits in with the Select Board's Climate Emergency Declaration which is to support climate mobilization strategies including prioritizing forests and other open spaces because of their ability to draw carbon out of the atmosphere and store it. She then showed some maps of the entire Holtec property and said this property will be for sale if the Select Board designates conservation as their top priority. She said Holtec has let them know that they would be a willing seller of the unlicensed parcels for the purposes of a grant application provided that the Town is on consensus. She said the following groups are in support of the Forest Legacy Grant:

- Plymouth Conservation Commission
- Plymouth Planning Board
- Community Preservation Committee
- Plymouth Open Space Committee
- Plymouth Area League of Women Voters
- Sustainable Plymouth
- Wildlands Trust
- Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe

She said they need the Select Board's support to move forward with the Forest Legacy grant application process which is why they are here tonight.

Lindsay Nystrom came up next and thanked the Board for having them in tonight. She said the Forest Legacy Program is a conservation grant program managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Massachusetts DR. She said the program protects privately owned forestland through conservation restriction or full fee purchase. She said it also conserves important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses and promotes sustainable forest management. She also said the program awards grants up to \$20 million dollars. She said Massachusetts joined the Forest Legacy Program back in 1993 and 31 projects have been funded so far with a total of \$37 million dollars in grant awards and \$18.7 million dollars in cost shares which covered about 19,767 acres of land. She then showed a map that delineated areas of need in Massachusetts which included Plymouth. She then said there are three core criteria for Forest Legacy Projects. She said the first is importance which ensures the environmental, recreational, and economic public benefits gained from protection of the property. She said the next is the attributes such as adjacent land use, ability to develop, and landowner circumstances are threatened. She said finally the project must be relevant or related to broader conservation efforts. She said the requirements the property must be held by a government entity, the land must be protected in perpetuity, the land must remain at least 75% forested, and the land must be under stewardship with annual monitoring and have an active forest stewardship plan. She then talked about some of the completed Forest Legacy Projects in Massachusetts.

Chairman Quintal came on and said that we are watching this presentation without getting any of the information prior to the meeting. He said he and the other Board members like to read through material like this prior to the meeting so we can have questions ready if needed. He said he likes to educate himself and reads everything and watches videos when available in order to learn. He said it is only fair to get this information prior to the meeting. He said he would like to support this, but he wants to know exactly what he is supporting. He then asked if all of this information and the presentations be sent to Chris Badot after the meeting.

Mark Withington came on next and thanked the Board as well. He then said he would like to expand on a few of the core criteria. He said besides conserving open space he would like to promote non-motorized year-round outdoor recreation for residents and visitors which would provide economic growth and tax relief through increased tourist visits and extended stays. He said this is in the open space corridor and is the gateway to Plymouth's ecotourism features and adds to our tourism economy. He said this would be a contributor to the state's zero-carbon 2050 goal and it will protect and conserve the globally rare coastal pine barrens. He said it will also encourage outdoor recreation and education for Plymouth residents and visitors. He said one advantage to them is there is an area that has already done this that they can reference. He said they did something similar in the town of East Burke, Vermont which is the Kingdom Trails Association which has been around for about twenty years or so. He said there are over 100 miles of non-motorized trails which bring about 150,000 visitors each year. He said it is estimated that it brings \$10 million dollars of economic impact to this community and has about 582 volunteers that help maintain the area. He said after visiting Kingdom Trails, he really feels that Plymouth could successfully do the same thing. He said we could provide recreation and educational opportunities by managing, maintaining, and building trails to foster the health of our community, surrounding environment, and regional economy. He said we could use this property as a tourist attraction. He then went over the results of an Outdoor Foundation Study which touched on the possible economic impact to Plymouth. He talked about how many people get outside and enjoy the wilderness such as mountain biking, hiking, fishing, and running for Americans six years and older. He then talked about how many people live within a forty-five-mile radius of Plymouth calling it the total available market. He then talked about the potential for attracting out-of-town visitors that might stay overnight for a couple of days. He said there has been a petition sent out by the Pine Hills Area Trails System (PHATS) which has over 1,800 signatures and is growing. He then read some of the comments made by the petition signers. He then said that he hopes the Board considers the tremendous opportunity that we have here to follow and existing success story in East Burke, Vermont.

Vie Chairman Cavacco said that the Board has discussed this area and we are in active negotiations with Holtec on other matters. She said she has spoken to Sharl Heller in the past about this property and is all for it but, she would also like to continue looking for a place for our residents to legally ride dirt bikes and ATV's. She said she has no problem with this area being non-motorized but if we do that then we have to offer them the ability to use motorized vehicles someplace else because right now they are using everything on that property. She said she would like to see everyone to think of some areas that we could offer for our residents to use motorized recreation in the area if we are going to take this away from them.

Selectman Helm came on and wanted to confirm that the maximum grant amount was \$20 million dollars, to which Sharl Heller said that is correct. She said we are looking at about 1,100 acres divided into about 12 parcels that are available now. She said there is another 600 acres that will be coming available around 2028 that we will then have to decide on how to use that property. She said this is just the beginning of a very long process and there is no obligation until the very last minute so perhaps you are overthinking this.

Selectmen Helm said it is not about overthinking because we are in active negotiations with Holtec, and the Board's priority is this property. He said we need as much information as we can possibly get in order to negotiate successfully. He asked them to not take offense by any of their questions because he actually supports this initiative. But his main concern is going into negotiations with a major corporation, so he is just trying to get his head around all of this information.

Selectman Helm then asked if the maximum grant is \$20 million dollars where will the remainder of the funds come from. He said he supports this and added that Holtec is profit driven so they would be looking for the highest offer, to which Vie Chairman Cavacco said we are actually in active negotiations, and she feels there are certain things that we should not be discussing in this forum. She then said she would like to see some type of partnership with this group and the Town for this property as we both want this land. She said that she still feels that they should gift that land to Plymouth.

Selectman Flaherty came on and thanked them for this presentation. He said before we part from this meeting it is important to understand what the actual ask is of the Board. He said we need to not only know what that is but what it means for the Town, to which Sharl Heller said all that they are asking for is a letter of support from the Select Board stating that conserving this property is a priority. She said we would be working as a team and go to Holtec to have them say that they would be a viable seller. She said once we have those letters, we can begin the grant process.

Steve Hall came on and said he supports this completely and it would be an incredible asset to Plymouth. He said his business along with other local businesses support this initiative. He said this would attract a lot of people and business to Plymouth. He said up in Vermont cultures formed around these centers and it drives business because people do not go there just to hike, but they also eat, drink, and shop as well. He said that he also supports finding an area for motorized off-road vehicles to use as well.

Bill Bowles came on next and said this is an opportunity that the Town cannot overlook. He said most of what has been discussed has been the economic benefits but the people that will benefit the most from this are the Plymouth residents.

Chairman Quintal said that the Board will take this up again at a future meeting for a vote and support with the letter that is being requested. He said he will need more information before he can vote to support this process. He said he does not think all of this land should be developed but he still wants to get more information on economic development as well. He said once we get more information, we can get together one more time and finalize this. He said we will try to get this back on an agenda within a couple of weeks.

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### 9:27PM – PUBLIC COMMENT

None

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### 8:28PM – LICENSES AND ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

On a motion by Charlie Bletzer and seconded by Patrick Flaherty, the Board voted to approve a One Day Wine and Malt License for **Spectacle Management** for a Concert being held on February 9, 2022 from 7:00pm to 11:00pm at Memorial Hall. *Voted 5/0*

On a motion by Charlie Bletzer and seconded by Betty Cavacco, the Board voted to approve a One Day Wine and Malt License for **MAR Promotions** for a Cage Titans Event being held on February 5, 2022 from 5:00pm to 12:00am at Memorial Hall. *Voted 5/0*

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

On a motion by Betty Cavacco and seconded by Patrick Flaherty, the Board voted to approve the use of ARPA Funds in the amount of \$153,200 to be used for the purchase of Covid-19 Home Testing Kits for the Emergency Management Department. *Voted 5/0*

On a motion by Betty Cavacco and seconded by Patrick Flaherty, the Board voted to approve and execute a Grant Agreement between the Town of Plymouth and Plymouth County for ARPA Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act from the U.S. Treasury. *Voted 5/0*

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**9:30PM - COMMITTEE LIAISON / DESIGNEE UPDATES**

None

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**9:31PM - OLD BUSINESS / LETTERS / NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Quintal said that there was an Executive Session scheduled for this evening after the Open Session but there is no need to hold that meeting, so he asked for a motion to adjourn the Open Session for the night.

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**9:10PM - ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Charlie Bletzer and seconded by Betty Cavacco, the Board voted to adjourn the Open Session at 9:10pm.

*Voted 5/0 By Roll Call: Quintal-Yes, Cavacco-Yes, Flaherty-Yes, Helm-Yes, Bletzer-Yes*

**Recorded by:** Christopher Badot

*Administrative Assistant, Board of Selectmen*