

Board of Selectmen
Meeting, January 31, 2023
7:00 PM

This meeting is being recorded

Chairman Anthony Cogliano called to order at 7:00 PM. Also present Vice Chair Debra Panetta, Selectmen Jeffrey Cicolini, Corinne Riley and Michael Serino. Also, present Town Manager Scott Crabtree.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

CORRESPONDENCE: Letter from Retirement Board regarding 2% increase on a Motion by Selectman Cicolini, the letter was referred to the Manager for his approval and referred the correspondence to the file. Chair seconds, all in favor, Motion passes 5-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Mr. Hari Krishna Burlakoti, with brother at 22 Wilbur Avenue, regarding water meter and property tax demand notice.

Chairman asked if they heard from the town to evaluate the meter and Mr. Burlakoti said no one came out. Selectman Cicolini stated that they replaced the old meter with a new one and turned in the old one which was tested.

The Town Manager asked them to contact the treasurer as the town will cover the cost of the new meter. He also stated that the older meter registered slightly slower – lower than the acceptable limit and had 98.8% accuracy. The treasurer was told there was no evidence to tell that water didn't flow through it. The Manager asked Mr. Burlakoti to visit the treasurer's office tomorrow to discuss the issue and there is a report available.

CONTINUED HEARING: Win Host Agreement tabled.

APPOINTMENTS: Mr. Ronald Wallace, 54 Magnolia Street, requesting re-appointment to the Cemetery Commission. Selectman Riley asked Mr. Wallace to explain the process on cleaning stones. He said to work on the stones, permission is required from the family and a special cleaner is required for that use.

Vice Chair Panetta made a Motion to re-appoint Mr. Wallace to a 2-year term on the Cemetery Commission with the term ending on December 31, 2024. Chair seconds – all in favor, Motion passes 5-0. The entire Board, along with the Town Manager, thanked Mr. Wallace for all his challenging work and dedication.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Vice Chair Panetta made the Motion to table the Minutes of January 19, 2023. Chair seconds all in favor, Motion carries 5-0.

MEMBER COMMENTS: Selectman Riley gave updates on Coffee at the Library a new program sponsored by the Saugus Advocate. Each month there will be different precinct. Town Meeting Members are invited to meet with their constituents to discuss various issues facing

their area. Pct. 2 is next week. She asked if there was any response when letters were sent out to other cable companies. The Manager stated there was no response. Selectman Riley also asked about the upcoming Comcast contract coming up 2027 and wanted to know if the Board could have them in to discuss various issues and rates as the Selectmen have the authority. Town Manager Crabtree stated because it is a contract there may be an issue, but he will look into holding a public hearing. Vice Chairman Panetta stated she worked with an attorney in the last contract. "If you call, they may give you a discount. When we negotiated with Comcast, the rates didn't go up. The next negotiation opportunity will be 2025-2026."

Selectman Serino stated that his bill went up this month as did many other in the community. Residents are not happy and the discount only applies to low-income families.

Selectman Cicolini explained: "As people give up Comcast and use other options for TV service, along with the loss of customers, the rates go up. RCN and Verizon will not be coming in. We contacted them repeatedly, but they do not want to come to Saugus and the only thing that keeps them in business is the internet.

7:15 Public Hearing: Mr. Ken and Charles Lian, 125 Pleasant Street, Lexington, MA owners of Space Zero LLC, d/b/a GATCHA requesting a Special Permit to operate a place for amusements to be located at 1201-W223, Broadway, Saugus, and also for a license to operate 20 Coin Operated Devices.

Selectman Cicolini asked about the 20 claw machines and if all recommendations were received. The clerk stated they were and also all approved. Selectman Cicolini questioned the hours and was told they have to go by the hours of the Mall – they do not expand their hours but shorten them. The business model, which is similar, is operating at the South Shore Mall and another one in Orlando, Florida.

Selectman Riley asked if they host birthday parties and they said yes as the families bring the food in we do not have anything to do with food. Vic Chair Panetta asked where the business would be located and was told on the second floor, #223, formerly Xpress Clothes, right across from the Food Court.

Vice Chair asked about the concept. The main attraction is the Kids Play Park, along with the claw machines where you reach down and try to grab a prize – it is like a kid's playground.

Chairman Cogliano asked if there was anything online to view renderings and was told there are a few online right now. The typical age is 3-20, families and young adults and we host a lot of birthday parties. Mr. Lian passed his laptop around to the Board to view. GATCHA.US is the website and SPACEZERO.US is another site.

Selectman Riley asked when they would be opening and was told they hope to open by the summer. Vice Chair Cogliano asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak in favor or opposition – none.

Selectman Cicolini made the Motion to close the hearing. Chair seconds, all in favor – Motion passes 5-0. Selectman Cicolini then offered a Motion to grant the Special Permit (S-2) to Space

Zero LLC, d/b/a GATCHA, located at 1202-W223, Broadway, Saugus, MA to allow for a place for amusement. Also, to include 20 coin operated devices.

Hours of operation: Monday through Thursday, 10 AM to 8 PM; Friday and Saturday 10 AM to 9 PM; Sunday 12 PM to 6 PM. This Special Permit is conditional that the Saugus Police Department will have access to the business at their leisure as needed and all outstanding fees are to be paid in full prior to granting their request. Chair seconds the Motion. Any discussion, seeing none – Roll Call Vote: Selectman Riley YES; Selectman Cicolini YES; Selectman Serino YES; Vice Chair Panetta YES; Chairman Cogliano YES. Motion passes 5-0.

MEMBERS MOTIONS: Selectman Cicolini:

“Kudos to the Saugus Department of Public Works, they did an excellent job during the last storm. Also a shout out to the girls and boys basketball teams doing some great things – winning in overtime, and Coach Bertrand.”

Selectman Serino: To the Manager: “There has been complaints about the many pot holes on our town roads and asked if the DPW could fill them up especially Eastern Avenue.” The Town Manager stated he had been out looking at the situation and will mention Eastern Avenue.” Chairman Cogliano asked the Manager to also look at Indian Rock Drive and Stillings Road.

Chairman Cogliano: I moderated my last six and seventh community outreach meetings for cannabis hearings last week. One location is at the Avalon Motel and the other is at the former 99 Restaurant. The Town Manager will have his work cut out for him as every group is remarkable, extremely professional, and they know their craft. Four residents came out in favor.

Selectman Cicolini: “I think the residents can understand the FRI, the process is out there. Companies will propose their business and will be interviewed by the Town Manager, along with the department heads. The town is being well represented from a health and public safety prospective, hopefully we can move this process forward quickly. There are three approved sites on Route One and if we have two on Route One, on north bound and one south bound, I wonder how that would work competition wise and I am anxious to get this project moving.”

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None. Selectman Cicolini offered a Motion to adjourn. All in favor – Motion passes 5-0. Meeting ended at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice K. Jarosz, Temp Clerk