



Randolph Town Council

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, July 24, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

This is a hybrid meeting. The Public is invited to attend this meeting in person or remotely, by telephone or computer access.

Call to Order: Council President Alexopoulos called the meeting to order.

Roll Call – Council Members Present: Christos Alexopoulos (In-Person), William Alexopoulos (In-Person), Richard Brewer (By Zoom), Natacha Clerger (By Zoom), Jesse Gordon (In-Person), Katrina Huff-Larmond (In-Person), Kevin O’Connell (In-Person).

Pledge of Allegiance: Pledge of Allegiance led by Councillor O’Connell.

Moment of Silent Prayer: Moment of Silent Prayer held.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting Minutes of Town Council Meeting July 10, 2023

Motion to approve the Minutes of Town Council Meeting on July 10, 2023, made by Councillor C. Alexopoulos, seconded by Councillor Clerger.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-1 (Absent: Burgess and Egan; Abstention: Brewer)

Motion passes.

Public Hearings:

1. 6:15 PM: Special Permit Application for a Proposed 24-Hour Warehouse Operation located on multiple parcels on Randolph Road, Randolph, MA 02368

Attorney Robert Buckley made a brief introduction regarding the intent and purpose of the Proposed 24-Hour Warehouse Operation located on multiple parcels on Randolph Road, Randolph, MA 02368. The Planning Board issued their Site Plan and Design Approval and they worked diligently to address all of the concerns.

Councillor Burgess entered the Town Council meeting, in person, at 6:26 PM.

Head of Development for Bluewater Property Group, Alex Escamilla gave a presentation regarding the proposed Site Plan and Design of the development Site One thing that was intentional in designing this development was making sure any trucking was away from abutters’ residents. Users of this business typically consist of bulk suppliers and distributors of dry/retail goods, appliances, building materials, food, and beverages. The number of employees will be 60-70 depending on the user. Typical operations for the 120,000-square-foot warehouse are broken down into three shifts: The morning shift which is for outbound trucks that have been loaded for distribution to customers; the mid-day to evening shift which

is for inbound receiving, unloading, and warehousing; and the overnight shift which typically consists of skeleton crew to prep pallets for next day outbound. There will be minimal deliveries overnight. There were quite a few abutter concerns that were taken into consideration during the Planning Board approval process and we hope to have addressed them all.

Council President Alexopoulos opened the public hearing to the public for comments.

1. Joe Burke, Hills Street: Will there be big plates on the trailer trucks and do they make a lot of noise? 2. Have the tenants been lined up yet, and will they be working 24 hours a day as well? Ms. Escamilla: This is a speculative project so we do not have tenants yet, however, once we receive approval we will begin marketing ourselves for tenants.
2. Justin Chandler, 2 Alward Drive: I have lived in Randolph for some time and I am here on behalf of myself, my family, and several of my neighbors to speak in opposition to this special permit application. North Street is already a bit of a problem. How is adding large tractor-trailers improving the traffic flow in this area? This building is going to affect the wildlife in the area and destroy more trees that we need. Attorney Buckley: The traffic impact reports show that there is very minimal impact. We are trying to be as sensitive as possible to the requests of the public. Council President Alexopoulos: Can you please provide additional information on traffic circulation? Gary McNaughton provided additional details regarding the traffic pattern.

Councillor Burgess: The photo on page two of the packet- when was that aerial photograph taken? Gordon: It says April 2, 2023. Council Vice President Brewer: Isn't there an existing building in this area. Ms. Escamilla: That building was made to stay in place. It is outside the property lines that we are acquiring. Councillor Burgess: Where is your stormwater discharge located? Ms. Escamilla: We have several locations. Councillor Burgess: Did you also have something addressing the wildlife if there is any significant impact on wildlife? Ms. Escamilla: Yes. Burgess: As far as bird of prey habitats, we always encourage nesting stands. Ms. Escamilla: They were not included but we can certainly look into it. Just a reminder that we are only disrupting approximately 35% of the vegetation. Councillor Burgess: What are the peak hours? Mr. McNaughton: 6:00-8:00 AM would be the peak times and early afternoon such as 3:00-5:00 PM. Burgess: Have you looked at the preferred directions to get there? McNaughton: There are no designated routes however we do anticipate that trucks would come from the highway. Burgess: Do you have the ability to influence your tenant's route? Escamilla: Yes, we certainly can.

Councillor Clerger: Thank you to Councillor Burgess for asking all the right questions. I would love to hear from more residents in this area before voting on this Special Permit.

Councillor Gordon: There are two potential conservation areas I am interested in. One is the nearby reservoir and the rail trail that ends at the Randolph/Braintree Border. Is there any means of ensuring access to those areas for your property?

3. Sandy Cohen, Bittersweet Lane: How do you know what the hours of your potential occupants will be, secondly, the peak hours Mr. McNaghton mentioned are when school buses are on the roads. This will further add to the traffic and dispensing pollution as they are standing idling.

Council President: I want to reiterate what exactly is being discussed here. This warehouse is allowed by right to operate from midnight to 6:00 AM. What we're talking about here is allowing them to operate from midnight to 6:00 AM until midnight.

4. Lu, 790 North Street: I am here as a resident and member of the planning board.
5. Derrick Marshin, 312 Oak Street: Traffic is very bad on North Street. It's bad enough we have the other project happening that has plates dropping.

6. Christopher Nash, 10 Kelly Road: I'm a new resident and I have concerns regarding the traffic in the area. I also am concerned about the property value.
7. Lily Chan, 2 Alward Drive: I totally agree with Justin Chandler and I'm concerned about the traffic and the pollution.

Council President Alexopoulos closed the public comments portion of the public hearing. The Town Council Clerk read two pieces of correspondence from abutters. The first one was from Justine Chandler and the second was from David Andler and Ann Naughton. Council President Alexopoulos invited Planning Director Michelle Tyler to speak on behalf of the Planning Board.

Planning Director Michelle Tyler: The Planning Board went through an extensive process reviewing the site plan and design review for this development.

Councillor Burgess: Michelle, did you look at the HVAC system? Ms. Tyler: There are four units on the four corners of the roof to accommodate whether they have two or three tenets. There was an acoustical sound test conducted along with all of the requirements we have and at the state level and even with that, we requested additional buffers be put in place.

Council President Alexopoulos: Do you know what the height of the building is? It is 32 feet plus 4 feet for buffers. Council President Alexopoulos: What is the height requirement in that district? Ms. Tyler Tyler: The height requirement is 50. The project did meet all of the zoning requirements.

Councillor O'Connell: Do you know the seat of the roofs? I'd be happy to follow up with that piece. Are they going to sit exposed or have barriers? Escamilla: Our acoustical study showed that we are well under the limits.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: I'm just trying to wrap my head around this because it's so much information. We're having a lot of conversations about how you will control the noise and traffic but I wonder about the tenants. My second question is regarding businesses, we know that you can operate from midnight to 6:00 AM, how exactly will that increase your business intake? What do you perceive to increase from that increase of six hours? Ms. Escamilla: The activities from midnight to 6:00 AM are critical preparation hours. There are lots of deliveries made during the day and that type of inbound material gets placed in the warehouse but then it needs to be prepared for the next day when it goes outbound to a customer. The 24-hour permit is critical to this business because operation for the outbound cannot happen without it. There are people working inside the building in order to break down pallets and build pallets for the next day. Councillor Huff-Larmond: Will there be trucks operating between those hours? Ms. Escamilla: No there will not be, and if there are any trucks driving inbound or outbound then it is the exception, not the rule. It is something you have to be able to plan for due to unforeseen circumstances.

Mr. Buckley: We expect that the tenants will be provided with a copy of the conditions of the sit.

Councillor Brewer: I think this is a great way to bring in extra revenue. We all want attachments yet we don't want to see growth. If you're driving by North Street, you wouldn't even see it from a distance.

Councillor Clerger: Would you be okay if no deliveries were made at that time? Ms. Escamilla: I'd have to think about that. I think one of the biggest challenges before we move forward is ensuring we can lease the building. I understand the request and I would have to come back with additional information. Mr. Buckley: The Town can monitor the operations of the Town to ensure we are complying with all of these concerns.

Council President Alexopoulos: That gives the responsibility to the Town to monitor the operation. You're shifting onto us to hold you accountable for what you should be doing. Mr. Buckley: Mr. President, with all due respect, isn't that the case with all permits issued?

Councillor C. Alexopoulos: Mr. Buckley I just want to remind you that you are a guest here and the residents have been here and lived here for several years.

Councillor Burgess: Questions were asked regarding the various parts of the development that need to be constructed. I know where the wetlands are so the Conservation Commission will clean up that situation. This area has been zoned industrial for a long time and we've never looked to change it from industrial to residential. For all the master plans I have been involved in, the town has made a conscious effort to leave this as an industrial zone. Just because land is conservation land does not mean that it is conservation-protected land. I think overall the project is good. I'm pleased with the attention to detail within this application.

Councillor Gordon: I think the six-month check-in is a great way to also address conservation issues.

Council President Alexopoulos: You've heard the concerns of the Council? How do you wish to proceed? Attorney Buckley: How many votes do we need? Council President Alexopoulos: You need six votes. Attorney Buckley: We will provide drafts of conditions in response to the Council's concerns. Council President Alexopoulos: When do you wish to return before the Council? Attorney Buckley: The Council meeting of August 21, 2023, works for us.

Councillor Burgess: According to our ordinances, a special permit would be issued for them to operate between the hours of midnight through 5:00 AM.

Motion to continue the public hearing to the Council Meeting of August 21, 2023, at 6:15 PM made by Councillor Clerger, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

Roll Call Vote: 7-1-0 (Absent: Egan; Nays: O'Connell)

Motion passes.

Public Comments/Discussions

1. John Rowe, Milton, MA: The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has had two public hearings regarding the installation of a miniature rotary on the intersection of Chickatawbut Road and Route 28. I'm urging the Randolph Town Council to contact the State Department and submit comments. It is heavily traveled by many people including Randolph residents. This proposal will back up traffic more than anything else.
2. Sandy Cohen, 63 Bittersweet Lane: Jesse Gordon, Toby Lynn Shwartz and I attended the Conservation Commission meeting with Holbrook where the engineer working on the TLA-Holbrook trash transfer station requested a three-year extension on the permit. It was denied which means they have to go back and reapply for a permit.
3. Joe Burke, Hill Street: Can I come to the upcoming Conservation Commission meeting? Council President Alexopoulos: All public meetings should be held in a hybrid format so that residents can attend in person or virtually. Town Attorney Griffin: The current state of the law is that each board, authority, etc, can be held in person, virtually, or hybrid. I don't believe there is a uniform policy for Randolph's Boards at the moment.

4. Justin Chandler: I want to point out that not a single person of the thirty people I spoke to received a notification regarding the development at Randolph Road.

New Business:

1. Council Order 2023-044: FY2024 Water Sewer Rates

Council President Alexopoulos read Council Order 2023-044. Town Manager Howard introduced Council Order 2023-044 and provided a brief explanation on the purpose of this Council Order. Assisting with the presentation is Matthew Abrahams, of The Abrahams Group. Mr. Abrahams gave a presentation on the Water and Sewer Rates.

Council President Alexopoulos opened the floor for questions or comments of the Council.

Council Vice President Brewer: I think option two for a 2% rate increase is the best way to go. With this increase, we can stay ahead of the game and reduce the toll on residents.

Councillor Gordon: Yes the deficit is true for Fiscal Year 2028 but only if we vote to make a 1% increase for the next four years. In other words, if we vote for the 1% increase this year, we could vote differently next year and we wouldn't see the deficit projected in 2028. Town Manager Howard: We've been able to do the unidirectional flushing by using retained earnings because of the proactive method of the Council. In addition to that, GAC filters have been funded with that. If we want to continue to be on top of our needs, we need to be prepared. Council President Alexopoulos: Do we have an estimate of what the GAC filter costs would be? Town Manager Howard: I can get that information to you.

Councillor Burgess: May I have a copy of the larger study that was conducted? Town Manager Howard: Yes, we can get that to you.

Council President Alexopoulos: The public hearing for Council Order 2023-044 will be held on the next meeting of August 7, 2023 at 6:15 PM.

2. Council Order 2023-045: FY2024 Capital Plan

Council President Alexopoulos read Council Order 2023-045. Town Manager Howard provided a brief introduction on the purpose of this Council Order and gave additional information regarding each of the projects listed on the Capital Plan.

Council Vice President Brewer opened the floor to questions and comments of the Town Council.

Councillor O'Connell: Are there any projects for the schools listed in this? Town Manager Howard: The school department has been issued the forms based on the vote of the Town Council and the presentation I made. When they are done completing the necessary forms, it will be brought before the Council.

Council Vice President Brewer: Are any of the vehicles that are being sold or traded being offered to any other departments for use? Town Manager Howard: It all depends on the vehicle, we will certainly try.

Councillor Gordon: I'm wondering about our report regarding Chapter 90 increases and getting the easy streets listed and completed first. I think we should commit to "100 roads" which is a commitment made by Braintree to pave those roads. Town Manager Howard: We could do that with an override to the residents if they support it. Councillor Gordon: I'll ask the voters about that in the coming months.

Council President Alexopoulos: Do you have information on how much it would be to have all the Chapter 90 streets accepted?

Councillor Gordon: How can we give our residents an answer to a common question which is when their streets will be repaved? Town Manager Howard: Giving them a list that constantly changes can unintentionally provide false hope.

Council President Alexopoulos: The public hearing for Council Order 2023-044 will be held on the next meeting of August 7, 2023, at 6:15.

Committee Reports:

Human Services/Seniors/Recreation- Councillor Gordon provided an update on this Subcommittee. We are having a meeting tomorrow at 5:30 p.m.

Council Comments:

Councillor Clerger: The Concerned Citizens of Randolph will be closing due to a lack of volunteers.

Council Vice President: I want to let the residents know I missed a few meetings because I've had some health issues going on. It feels good to be in a meeting tonight and hopefully, I'll be at the next meeting but I do have a few more surgeries scheduled so we'll see what happens.

Councillor Huff-Larmond: 1. God bless you, Councillor Brewer. I hope everything goes well for you. 2. The NAACP Convention is occurring in Boston this year from July 26-August 1. Check out the schedule see what works for you and sign up to register. 3. The Summer Internship has started. We've had youth from the internship program, and other programs working throughout various departments in Town Hall. I'm happy that Randolph is investing in the Youth the way that they are. 4. Solely Levey celebrated their anniversary. They've been a great business to work with and have in Randolph. 4. The Randolph Intergenerational Center is hosting a community hike. Please visit their website for details and information. 5. Mattapan Tech is hosting its annual gala in August. Please visit their website for additional information 6. I wanted to mention that Terry Boston, Jr., and Makhi Boston He of Randolph were both killed following a car accident. Our condolences go out to their families.

Councillor Gordon: The Randolph Intergenerational Center is sponsoring a community hike. Please visit their website for details and information. 2. I'd like to respond to Mr. Rowe's comments on the rotary at the intersection being installed at the intersection of Chickatawbut Road and Route 28. I oppose Mr. Rowe's stance. The intersection would slow people down by five seconds and I believe it would benefit the people of Randolph. It is one of the most deadly intersections. The alternative option that Mr. Rowe and Senator Timilty are requesting an increased police presence which would cause increased ticketing for all of the individuals passing through the rotaries. I believe that is a terrible plan.

Councillor O'Connell: National Night Out is on August 1st at Belcher Park. There will be lots of demonstrations and things to do for all ages.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Councillor Clerger, seconded by Councillor O'Connell.
Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 (Absent: Burgess and Egan; Absent During Vote: C. Alexopoulos)
Meeting adjourned at 10:24 PM.