Due to the state of emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to the COVID-19 epidemic occurring at the time of this meeting, this meeting was authorized to convene through electronic means and all attendees participated remotely utilizing login or call-in information provided in the duly posted public notices.

Members Present:  Chairman Peter Harris, Ex Officio Selectman Jon Pike, Michael LeClair, Gary Grant, Recardo Segalini, Richard Pickwick, Dennis Grimes

Others Present:  Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Ruth Mooney, Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin, Building Inspector Steven Paquin, Fire Chief Mike Newhall, Land Use Technician Rick Ball, Town Planner Dari Sassan

Introductions
Chairman Harris opened the meeting at approximately 6:00 PM. Mr. Sassan explained that, as always, Chairman Harris would be in control of the meeting, but that he himself would provide a presentation and assist in calling on people who wish to speak.

Permitting Temporary Outdoor Service at Restaurants During the COVID-19 Epidemic
Mr. Sassan gave a presentation entitled Permitting Temporary Outdoor Service at Restaurants During the COVID-19 Epidemic. He said that pursuant to Emergency Order #40, Governor Sununu will allow restaurants to provide outdoor seating and service beginning May 18th, and that Belmont will require restaurants intending to conduct such operations to utilize the "outdoor festivals & special events" permitting process. According to NHMA, continued Mr. Sassan, the Governor’s order does not serve to override local land use controls, however the Governor intended to allow temporary, immediate means for resuming some level of commerce, and Mr. Sassan said Belmont seeks to provide a quick turnaround.

Mr. Sassan said that given the temporary nature of this provision, as well as the short period of time before the order goes into effect, utilizing the Land Use office’s existing outdoor festivals & special events permitting process will be the most appropriate method for authorizing outdoor service. He explained that under the Governor’s order, restaurants in “shared spaces” are required to obtain local approval, but that based on NHMA’s guidance the Land Use office interprets that the Town maintains its authority to require permit applications for all restaurants. He added that any permissions will be temporary, with the expectation that site plan review would generally be required to expand by adding permanent outdoor seating.
Mr. Sassan described the following steps associated with administering the existing temporary/special events permitting process:
1. Receive and Circulate Permit Request
2. Compile Department Feedback
3. Conduct Land Use Review
4. Issue Denial or Approval with Conditions
5. Inspect
6. Enforce

Mr. Sassan showed examples of the permit forms used by the Land Use office and the Fire Department as well as examples of emails used to request and receive comments from other town departments. He said that when conducting land use review, his office reviews previous approvals for the same site and applies general zoning considerations. Mr. Sassan showed a special events decision issued in 2019 for a fundraiser event. He identified that the decision memo identified the parameters of what was being permitted, established conditions which incorporated departmental comments and concerns, and enumerated required subsequent inspections and approvals from Chief Newhall and Mr. Paquin.

Mr. Paquin said that the process is not as complicated as Mr. Sassan’s presentation may have made it sound. He and Chief Newhall reviewed their inspection and enforcement procedures, explaining that they are commonly able to provide same-day inspections and operational approvals.

Board Members and other attendees asked questions and provided comments to Chief Newhall, Mr. Paquin and Mr. Sassan. The Board expressed that it would be important to respond to permit requests quickly, that all restaurants should be treated fairly, and that public safety measures must be upheld. Chief. Newhall, Mr. Paquin and Mr. Sassan said that they share the Boards goals, and they added that restaurant owners and operators have also shown that they are ready and willing to cooperate.

The Board expressed consensus that utilizing the special events/outdoor festivals permitting process, as presented and described, would be an appropriate mechanism for permitting temporary outdoor restaurant service and seating during this epidemic.

**Adjournment**
The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 PM.

Prepared by,

Dari Sassan
Town Planner