

**Needham Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting of October 17, 2012**

The meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by the Chair, Richard Reilly, at approximately 7:01 pm in the Great Plain Room at the Town Hall.

Present from the Finance Committee:

Richard Reilly, Chair; Richard Lunetta, Vice Chair

Members: John Connelly, Richard Creem, Gary McNeill (arrived 7:09 pm), Richard Zimbone

Also Present:

David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance

Mark Gluesing, Chair, Community Preservation Committee

Janet Carter-Bernardo, Vice Chair, Community Preservation Committee

Lee Newman, Planning Director

Bruce Eisenhutt, Chairperson, Planning Board

Tom Connor, Proponent, Special Town Meeting Articles 8 and 9

Lynda Hughes, Proponent, Special Town Meeting Articles 8 and 9

Citizen Requests

No citizens requested to speak.

Minutes of Prior Meetings

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Minutes of October 3, 2012 be approved as circulated. Mr. Zimbone seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0. (Mr. McNeill had not yet arrived.)

Special Town Meeting Warrant

Article 10: Appropriate for South Street Home – Charles River ARC

Mr. Gluesing stated that the application for funding was made before the Annual Town Meeting. The CPC asked them to delay until now because they were building almost the same structure in Wayland and had just started fundraising, so waiting would not significantly delay the construction. They are confident in the costs because the project is almost the same as in Wayland. The project has received \$280,000 in funding through the HOME Program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, where Needham joined a consortium with Newton. Newton reviewed and approved the project. The project was also approved by Needham's Planning Board, which will distribute the funding.

In response to a question from Mr. Creem, Mr. Gluesing stated that he feels that Charles River did pursue known possible avenues of funding. He added that the State will provide funds for care in the facility, but not for construction. Mr. Gluesing stated that this will add to the inventory of low income housing in Town. In response to a question from Mr. Connelly, Mr.

Gluesing stated that they have received setback waivers that were needed, and are in the process of getting permission from NStar to put the septic underground where there is an easement.

Article 11: Appropriate for Rail Trail Feasibility Study

Mr. Gluesing stated that the article would provide funding for the Bay Colony Rail Trail Committee for an engineering study for a rail trail from Needham Junction to Dover. The trail will continue through Dover and Medfield. The conceptual plan is done. The CPC could have funded this with administrative funds, but thought it should go through the Town Meeting process. The MBTA has given the Town the opportunity to re-lease the railway property for this purpose. \$26,000 would be for the engineering work, and an additional \$9,000 is needed for an analysis of the bridge, and environmental testing.

Mr. Reilly asked about environmental liability. Mr. Gluesing stated that environmental issues will be part of the study. He stated if the land is not disturbed, then they would not be liable for what is already there. Also, the MBTA requires an environmental liability policy, and will pay half for five years.

Mr. Zimbone asked about priorities for CPC projects. Mr. Gluesing stated that there have been Planning Summit meetings that are addressing that issue. In response to a question from Mr. Reilly, Mr. Gluesing stated that he has heard from the Selectmen that they do not support the Citizens' Petition for a Rail Trail Committee because they want to hold the Northern part of the railway land for a possible Green Line or train extension. He stated that the funding for the study would go to the BCRT, through the Town Manager's office. The Director is a Needham resident.

Article 12: Appropriate for Greene's Field Improvement

Ms. Bernardo stated the project was a joint effort of the Selectmen, the Park and Recreation Department, and the Town Manager to improve the field quality, the walking trail, and the playground. The Greene's Field Committee raised \$50,000. An additional \$445,000 is being requested from CPA, which will cover all additional expenses. Mr. Reilly and Mr. Connelly questioned whether the article should wait until the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Gluesing stated with the recent change to the CPA, the project is now eligible for CPA funding, and so the Town wants to move forward at this time. However, he stated the CPC is still putting together a master plan addressing its priorities. Ms. Bernardo stated that the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen have stated that this project is a top priority. Mr. Zimbone expressed concern that other playgrounds in Town have been funded entirely through donations, and this playground equipment is being paid for with \$50,000 of donations and \$125,000 from CPA funds. He noted that the Newman Playground Task Force raised \$200,000 but is planning to request \$30,000 from the Reserve Fund. He stated that the Town needs to establish a policy going forward. Mr. Connelly stated that it is not appropriate to go forward until the CPC has done its planning. Mr. Gluesing stated they are stepping ahead of the plan because he has been assured that this is top priority. Mr. Reilly suggested that the items be considered at the same time as the projects in the capital plan and go through the same process. Mr. Gluesing stated that the CPC cannot create applications, though it could give indications of what it was looking for. Mr. Zimbone asked

about ongoing maintenance. Ms. Bernardo stated that Green's Field would be added to the overall Town field maintenance program. Mr. Connelly stated that proponents should show not only the cost of a project but any ongoing costs.

Article 6: Amend Zoning By-Law – Height Limitation Exceptions

Ms. Newman stated that currently buildings are limited to 3 stories and 40 feet in height. The change would allow a building 50 feet in height located on a lot of more than 20 acres, if the building is at least 200 feet back from the property line. The purpose is to allow the salt shed to be built as planned. As proposed it will be 47 feet high and set back approximately 357 feet. Mr. Reilly questioned if there is an economic impact. Mr. Zimbone stated that if the article is not passed, then the salt shed will not be built as designed, and stated that the Committee should take a position.

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 6: Amend Zoning By-Law – Height Limitation Exceptions. Mr. Zimbone seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Article 7: Amend Zoning By-Law – Minimum Side and Rear Setbacks: Accessory Structures

Ms. Newman stated that the changes will allow a pool house to be built at least 8 feet from a pool rather than 10 feet, if the structure is less than 11 feet tall and less than 100 square feet of area. Mr. Connelly stated that he saw no financial impact of this article. However, he questioned whether how it was different from the last issue. Ms. Newman stated that this was very narrowly written to make a limited exception.

MOVED: By Mr. Creem that the Finance Committee take no position with respect to Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 7: Amend Zoning By-Law – Minimum Side and Rear Setbacks: Accessory Structures because there is no financial implication. Mr. Connelly seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Article 8: Citizen's Petition – Rail Trail Advisory Committee

Mr. Connors stated that the article would not cost the Town anything, but would set up a committee to look into building the rail trail along the Bay Colony rails. He stated that as he understands it, there is currently no such committee. He stated that there is a company that will remove the rails and put down stone dust in exchange for taking and recycling the rails. Ms. Hughes stated that the Town's proposed rail trail would exclude the northern section that goes to Newton, in hopes of a train extension some day. Mr. Creem stated that while that use of that section for a train is remote, but he understood that the Town was hoping the bridge would be restored as part of the Add-a-Lane project, and that there is concern that if the rail trail goes forward, the state would not join in the restoration process. Mr. Connors stated that the DOT said if there was a working rail trail that they would replace the bridge. Mr. Connors stated that the proposed committee is needed to advocate for the northern section. Mr. Lunetta cautioned against setting up a committee to study an issue with a specific conclusion in mind.

Mr. Connelly suggested there is no financial impact to the Town. Mr. Creem stated that the committee would likely want to hire consultants.

Article 9: Citizen's Petition – Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Mr. Connors stated that without an advisory committee, there is no mechanism for the Town to consider bike lanes and safety measures during road construction in collaboration with the residents. Mr. Creem noted that there could be a financial impact to the extent there is some interaction between the proposed committee and paid employees. He stated that the Town was already doing this as it considers major road projects. Mr. Connors stated there should be public input.

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Finance Committee take no position with respect to Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 8: Citizen's Petition – Rail Trail Committee because there is no financial implication. Mr. Zimbone seconded the motion.

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Finance Committee take no position with respect to Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 9: Citizen's Petition – Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee because there is no financial implication. Mr. Zimbone seconded the motion.

Mr. Reilly stated that he disagreed that there was no financial implication of Article 8 because there is a timing issue. Waiting for two years could preclude certain options.

VOTE: The motion to take no position with respect to Article 8 was approved by a vote of 4-2, with Mr. Creem and Mr. Reilly dissenting.

VOTE: The motion to take no position with respect to Article 9 was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Reserve Fund Transfer

Mr. Davison stated that the request was for \$30,000 to be transferred to Park and Recreation for a capital purchase of playground equipment, as discussed in the prior meeting with citizens. The Board of Selectmen supported moving forward with the purchase. Mr. Reilly asked about the legal issue with respect to bidding. Mr. Davison stated that this will be a standalone purchase, so the law would not apply to the purchase. Mr. Reilly noted that at a chairs meeting there was a strong indication that everyone supported including playground equipment in future school development projects.

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the Finance Committee approve of the request for a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$30,000 to Park and Recreation. Mr. Lunetta seconded the motion.

Mr. Zimbone asked the Chair to request that the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen establish a policy going forward regarding funding playgrounds in order to maintain fairness throughout Town.

VOTE: The motion was approved by a vote of 5-1, with Mr. Connelly dissenting.

Finance Committee Updates

Mr. Davison stated that the Town received a letter from the State providing that the salt shed will be fully funded by Chapter 90 funds, and that he expects Article 15 will be withdrawn.

Mr. Reilly stated that there was a Chairs meeting that discussed Hillside and Mitchell. A study found that rebuilding on the Hillside site is possible but would cost an additional \$750,000 - \$1 million or more for environmental issues. Mr. Zimbone stated that the extent of the issues would not be known until the old building was torn down.

Mr. Creem stated that the decision to have a separate ballot question for the question on alcohol in November, rather than on the ballot for the April State election, has caused additional stress and expense for the Town Clerk's office which will compel the office to request Reserve Fund Transfer. He feels that this expense was foreseeable.

Mr. Zimbone stated that the RTS Committee has surveyed other towns for cost and revenue data. Mr. Davison stated that the Town will probably need to increase its contribution to the RTS budget.

Adjourn

MOVED: By Mr. Lunetta that the meeting be adjourned, there being no further business. Mr. Creem seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0, at approximately 9:10 p.m.

Documents: Town of Needham October 29, 2012 Special Town Meeting Warrant; Request for Reserve Fund Transfer dated October 17, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mizgerd
Executive Secretary/Staff Analyst

Approved October 24, 2012