Needham Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting of April 14, 2021

The meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Chair Carol Fachetti at approximately 7:00 pm via Zoom Video conference:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86112323465?pwd=cko1dkxyVlZJTmRRWi9UV2p4WXYvZz09

Present from the Finance Committee:
Carol Fachetti, Chair ; Joshua Levy, Vice Chair
Members: John Connelly, James Healy, Tom Jacob, Richard Lunetta, Louise Miller, Richard Reilly

Others:
David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director
Lee Newman, Director of Planning and Economic Development
Adam Block, Planning Board
Timothy Muir McDonald, Director of Health & Human Services

Citizen Requests to Address the Finance Committee

No requests to speak.

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings

MOVED: By Mr. Reilly that the minutes of the meeting of April 7, 2021 be approved as distributed, subject to technical corrections. Mr. Connelly seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.

Warrant Articles

May Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles (CPC):

Article 24 - CPA - Emery Grover Renovation Design

Ms. Fachetti stated that the Community Preservation Committee has deferred this article, waiting for input from other boards. There will be a Chairs/Vice Chairs meeting on April 15 to get a better understanding. Ms. Fachetti suggested deferring the vote. There was no objection.

Article 25 - CPA - Preservation of Marriage Records

MOVED: By Ms. Miller that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 25 - Appropriate for Preservation of Marriage Records in the amount of $25,000. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Article 26 - CPA - Town Common Historic Redesign

In response to questions, Mr. Davison clarified that this article requests funding for construction work on the Town Common itself, separate from the streetscape project and other roadway work.

The design work was funded at a previous Town Meeting. Mr. Jacob noted that Chapter 90 funds had been used in the streetscape project, but not this project.

MOVED: By Mr. Lunetta that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 26 - Appropriate for Town Common Historic Redesign and Renovation in the amount of $1,364,000. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Article 27 - CPA - Fisher St. Trailhead Construction

MOVED: By Mr. Lunetta that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 27 - CPA – Appropriate for Fisher St. Trailhead Construction in the amount of $15,000. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Article 28 - CPA - Resurface DeFazio Track

Ms. Fachetti asked why the Athletic Facilities Fund did not cover this project. Ms. Miller stated that the AFF is intended to cover turf fields primarily since they are specifically excluded from CPA funds, but CPA funds can be used for this project.

MOVED: By Ms. Miller that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 28 - Appropriate for Resurfacing the Synthetic Track at DeFazio Park in the amount of $166,000. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Article 29 - CPA - McLeod Field Renovation

MOVED: By Mr. Jacob that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 29 - Appropriate for McLeod Field Renovation Design in the amount of $48,000. Mr. Lunetta seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Article 30 - CPA - Trail Identification - Design

MOVED: By Mr. Lunetta that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 30 - Appropriate for Trail Identification - Design in the amount of $6,000. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Article 31 - CPA - Town Reservoir Sediment Removal

Ms. Miller asked whether this work would be done pursuant to the stormwater permit. Mr. Davison stated that this is required by the EPA pursuant to the July 2018 permit, and that it would count toward the NPDES report. Ms. Miller stated that the implementation costs are anticipated to be about $1 million.

MOVED: By Mr. Reilly that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 31 - Appropriate for Town Reservoir

Sediment Removal in the amount of $262,000. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Article 32 - CPA - Appropriate to Community Preservation Fund

Ms. Miller asked if the allocations would change if the Emery Grover project is not funded. Mr. Davison stated that no receipts from this article were planned for the project design in FY22.

MOVED: By Mr. Jacob that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 32 - Appropriate to Community Preservation Fund, as set forth in the warrant. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Article 33 - CPA - Appropriation to CP Fund - Supplement (FY2020)

Mr. Reilly stated that this is essentially a bookkeeping matter.

MOVED: By Mr. Reilly that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 33 - Appropriate to Community Preservation Fund Supplement, as set forth in the warrant. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article 5 - Zoning - Highway Commercial 1 District, Article 6 - Zoning - Highway Commercial 1 Uses, Article 7 - Zoning - Highway Commercial 1 Map Change

Ms. Fachetti stated that the information provided from the fiscal analyses showed how development would enhance tax revenue with build-out under current zoning as well as in various other possible changes. The issue is the magnitude of the increase. Ms. Miller stated that she had questions on whether the fiscal impact study included an analysis of the impact on the wastewater pumping facilities, stormwater management, or on the Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Block stated that the fiscal analysis considered infrastructure but he did not have a breakdown of the particular costs. He discussed the revenue and municipal costs under various scenarios as described in the fiscal impact study and the update. Mr. Reilly asked if they had factored in the potential revenue from personal property which can be significant in the case of a lab, which was one of the uses considered as a likely scenario. Mr. Block stated that there would be too much conjecture to be able to estimate personal property taxes. Ms. Fachetti asked if it was possible to assign probabilities to the various scenarios. Mr. Block stated that it would be impossible to come up with actual figures with any confidence, but he felt that most likely uses would be mixed use or lab space with some retail. He felt that housing would seem unlikely given the location next to the highway, though he understood that a housing development was just built on Greendale Ave. next to the highway.

Mr. Levy stated that the traffic analysis showed that under the original plan, there would be a big impact on traffic that would require changes at several intersections. He stated that it is possible to calculate the cost to commuters using time lost and the cost of time, though it would not be evenly distributed among residents, and would apply to some nonresidents as well. He stated that based on wait time, the loss could be as much as $100K per year associated with wait times at an affected intersection. He stated that it is not clear how to qualify the effects of the development on Needham residents. Mr. Block stated that the fiscal impact of traffic was outside of the scope of the traffic study and of the fiscal impact study, so he cannot speak to that, but could look into it. Mr. Levy stated that there may be no way to easily quantify, but he would like to know. He also asked how much of the original traffic study is relevant since the proposed zoning is scaled down. Ms. Fachetti also asked about the difference in traffic if there is housing versus no housing in a development.

Mr. Reilly requested a good faith estimate of the possible personal property tax on the different types of development. This could be a critical factor for Town Meeting to consider when looking at the financial impact. Without a special permit, there is a maximum net swing of $2 million in revenue based on the information provided. He pointed out that total real and property taxes for the Town are in the vicinity of $150 million. If the personal property tax might add another $500K in tax revenue meant that there might only be a 1% variation in revenues between the current zoning provisions and the proposed zoning provisions. . Mr. Davison stated that the revenue will depend on the type of lab and the types of equipment, but that a lab would generate more personal property revenue than a standard office.

Mr. Block stated that he has made note of the comments and questions. He commented that the purpose of the zoning is to create a framework, and then to let the market determine what will actually end up there. He stated that he can come up with scenarios, but cannot say that any one will be accurate. He is not sure how to estimate the personal property tax since there could be office space or lab space which would end up with very different personal property values. Mr. Reilly stated that he understood that the amounts would be theoretical.

Ms. Miller stated that it is important to assume much more impact on infrastructure than expected. She commented that the Town has incurred substantial infrastructure costs from every development, such as needing to add an ambulance at Fire Station 2 and an additional Police sector car. As revenue is added from zoning changes, the Town needs to be prepared to reserve money for additional infrastructure and not rely on overrides or changes in fees for residents. Mr. Reilly and Ms. Fachetti agreed. Mr. Jacob commented that infrastructure increases often involve step-ups rather than linear increases. It would be helpful to map out when those step-ups occur.

Mr. Block stated that the Planning Board will consider the impacts to all departments of the Town in the permitting process for any project, including incremental increases. He believes that almost any proposed project will require a special permit, and the Board will exercise its authority to reduce a project to the point where the Town has the capacity to handle it. He is not sure what could be done about loss of time for residents at intersections.

Mr. Healy raised the question of whether the Finance Committee should be looking for the most revenue and least costs, or the best interests of the Town. Ms. Fachetti state that there is a continuum of costs and revenues, and the Finance Committee provides the transparency so that the decision can be made. Ultimately, it will be up to Town Meeting to decide. Mr. Healy stated that data points are important, but not the only thing to consider. He feels the Committee should look at the character of the Town and the value to the Town. Mr. Connelly stated that he agrees and that he has given this a lot of thought from the points of view of a Finance Committee member, a Town Meeting member and a taxpayer. There is no question that there would bring more revenue, but he feels the need to wear other hats. He is thankful for all of the information provided, and feels that while the Committee can keep chasing information but questioned whether the Committee would to make a different decision with more information. Mr. Reilly stated that the Committee needs to make sure that there is sufficient information presented to Town Meeting before it makes a decision. One can make a different judgment as the financial impact changes, and the Committee could find it is not worth the enhanced revenue, but there needs to be a full explanation of the financial impact. Mr. Healy agreed, and stated that the Committee should not be constrained to considering projected revenue and can say that something is bad design even if it brought more revenue.

Ms. Miller asked about the specific impacts of development on wastewater, stormwater, Police, Fire and schools that were considered. Ms. Newman stated that the consultant looked at infrastructure costs and used a proportional model, which assumed that the effects on infrastructure were proportional to developments of a similar size. She added that traffic mitigation requirements would be involved. She stated that the infrastructure numbers were imbedded in the model. Nonresidential costs are assigned on a proportional basis, using Needham-specific costs from the last fiscal year. Ms. Miller stated that infrastructure build-out costs are always underestimated. Mr. Healy asked about the consultant for the fiscal analysis. Ms. Newman stated that she has done fiscal analyses for the Town for approximately 15 years.

The Chair held off on a vote until later in the meeting.

May Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 13 - Public Health Consulting Assistance

Mr. McDonald stated that the Board of Health (BOH) would use these funds for expert advice when there is no other source of funds. When the BOH issues permits, then the Board can require expert opinions at the applicant’s expense. But where there are health-related issues in other matters, such as a permit that Eversource was seeking last year for a utility project, the BOH needs other funds to explore any health-related issues that are beyond their own expertise. Mr. McDonald stated that he included funding for this expense in last year’s operating budget, but the Finance Committee recommended that he make the request through a warrant article. Mr. Reilly noted that it seems like an expense that would not occur each year, so it does not seem that the amount should be in the operating budget. Ms. Miller suggested that a Reserve Fund transfer could be used for an unexpected need. Mr. McDonald stated that he would use whichever approach is recommended. Mr. Levy stated that this is similar to the Planning Consulting consultant. He asked how long the requested funds are expected to last. Mr. McDonald stated that it would depend if a big project came in, but he would expect it to last multiple years. He noted that the Planning Board is not able to object to a project on health grounds, so the BOH needs to be involved if there are potential health issues. He stated that he estimates that the costs per project would be $10K-$15K, based on an expert hired at $300-$500 per hour. Mr. Levy stated that if the funding is needed often it should be in the operating budget, but if expenses cross fiscal years, then having them in the operating budget does not make sense. Mr. Healy stated that there seems to be a tendency to use financial warrant articles rather than the Reserve Fund for uncertain needs. He would rather have the funds available for such issues in the Reserve Fund.

Ms. Fachetti asked if time was of the essence when the need for these costs crop up. Mr. McDonald stated that they would not know about them when the budget is developed, but there would generally be a couple of weeks' or months' notice. Ms. Fachetti stated that it seems that they would be able to ask for a Reserve Fund transfer. Mr. Healy stated that he does not feel that the Committee should give money to departments to spend however they like. Mr. Reilly stated that he felt opposite; Mr. McDonald should be relied upon to use his professional expertise and to make judgments. He does not feel the Finance Committee should put itself in the position to veto his judgement without professional expertise. Mr. McDonald stated that the decision to spend these funds would likely be made by the BOH, and not by him. He stated that he expected a large project every 18-24 months where they would use these funds, or else approximately 2-3 times per 5 year period at $10K-$15K per project. He cautioned that these are very rough estimates.

Mr. Connelly stated that he does not want to micromanage departments. If something is routine, he does not want the departments to come to the Finance Committee every time they need funds. If there are bigger issues, not identified ahead of time, and not needed on an emergency basis, then those needs are appropriate for Reserve Fund transfers. He stated that, for this need and situation, the mechanism of a Reserve Fund transfer is appropriate, and not a warrant article.

MOVED: By Mr. Levy that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 13 - Appropriate to Public Health Consulting Assistance in the amount of $50,000. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion. The motion was not approved, by a vote of 4-4, with Mr. Levy, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Jacob and Mr. Lunetta voting in favor. Ms. Miller, Mr. Connelly, Mr. Healy and Ms. Fachetti voted against the motion.

The Committee stated that it may be best to re-vote the article when Mr. Coffman could attend, so that the Committee could take a position.

Annual TM Article 3 - Establish Elected Officials' Salaries

Mr. Davison stated that this annual article is needed to set the salaries of elected officials, including the Town Clerk and the Select Board members. He stated that these salaries were supported by the Personnel Board. There are no increases. The Town Clerk has been classified as a department manager, and department managers will be receiving no salary increase in FY22.

Ms. Miller asked if the Town Clerk can get salary increases retroactively. Mr. Davison stated that the salary must be voted annually at Town Meeting. Ms. Miller asked if the Town Manager has the ability to increase the salaries of other department managers during the fiscal year. Mr. Davison stated that she does have that authority, but there will be no merit increases for managers in FY22. Ms. Miller took issue with the fact that there is no raise for the Town Clerk in FY22. She noted that there are raises in some collective bargaining agreements, and that the Town Clerk has had to work in extraordinary circumstances for the past year, and will have to continue to do so. She stated that the position is very important and that she does not understand the reasoning beyond the fact that other people are getting a 0% increase. She will vote for the salary because the Town Clerk needs to be paid, but feels that the Town can afford to give her a raise. Mr. Reilly asked if the Finance Committee could vote a raise. Mr. Lunetta stated that the Personnel Board has tried to create parity between this position and managers. Ms. Miller stated that increasing the salary is outside of the Finance Committee’s purview, but felt that the Town Clerk is in a different stead since the Town Manager has discretion to give other staff bonuses. Mr. Lunetta stated that this is the first he has heard of a staff pay freeze. He stated that in light of COVID, he would think people would get raises.

Mr. Lunetta asked why the starting salary for a new Town Clerk decreased from $89,402 in FY21 to $74,419 in FY22. Mr. Davison stated the under the new classification and compensation study, the Town Clerk position was classified with other jobs that have a lower starting salary, so this was adjusted to correspond. Mr. Levy asked for the rationale behind the Select Board salaries. Mr. Healy stated that the origin was as a stipend to pay for members to attend events around Town, and also it used to make members eligible for the Town health plan if they received a salary. They also used to be eligible for a pension before the pension reform bill.

MOVED: By Ms. Miller that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of 2021 Annual Town Meeting Article 3 – Establish Elected Officials' Salaries. Mr. Connelly seconded the motion. The motion was approved, by a vote of 8-0.

May STM Article 35 – General Fund Cash Capital

Mr. Davison stated that the Town Manager forwarded a document with Frequently Asked Questions and information on the Ridge Hill demolition project. He stated that this was the only outstanding request for information. Mr. Connelly stated that he had two issues for discussion. He does not support either the Pollard feasibility study or the Ridge Hill demolition. He stated that the Pollard study is intended to further design work on Pollard recommended in the school master plan, but this work needs to be considered with all of the capital projects in the financing plan when that is available. He stated that until the financing plan is available, the Town won't be able to determine whether to advance Emery Grover, Mitchell, or Pollard. He added that something of this magnitude should not be part of the list in the cash capital article, but should be separated out. He suggested taking it out of this article.

Mr. Connelly stated that he is not convinced that the Ridge Hill building needs to be taken down. He also thinks that the costs are too high and the contingency is too high. Both the timing and the cost are issues with this item. Mr. Reilly stated that he agreed with Mr. Connelly on both issues, but particularly for Ridge Hill. $650K is a huge amount, and he is not comfortable that this is the only practical option. He would recommend that the Finance Committee remove both of these items.

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 STM Article 35 – Appropriate for General Fund Cash Capital as in the warrant, but eliminating the Pollard Feasibility Study for $280,000 and the Ridge Hill Demolition for $650,000, leaving a total appropriation of $3,028,653. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion was approved, by a vote of 8-0.

May STM Article 37 - Public Safety Buildings Construction

Mr. Davison stated that the PPBC has recommended to lower the amount in the article to $1.4 million. Mr. Reilly asked if the reduction came from the contingency. Mr. Davison stated that it came from the contingency and also the costs associated with soil remediation and COVID, and changing the burn rate from $80K to $72K. Ms. Fachetti asked if the amount assumes that they will return Hillside to the prior condition. Mr. Davison stated that it assumes they will do the project as planned, which includes the work at Hillside. They are seeking CARES Act reimbursement for COVID-related costs. Ms. Fachetti stated that $1.4 million still seems high, and that they could get by with less.

Mr. Connelly agreed and stated that starting with the $1.7 million in the warrant, they should deduct $200K of extra contingency, $378K which is a placeholder for Hillside, and $176K for COVID costs. That would leave $946K, which can be rounded up to $1 million, as the proper amount to cover the remaining 9 months of the project. He stated that he told this to the PPBC Chair, but that committee has come back with $1.4 million, trying to meet halfway. Mr. Healy agreed that the amount should be amended. The project needs to move forward and $1 million is the appropriate amount. Ms. Fachetti agreed. Mr. Levy asked if there is enough Free Cash to cover it. Mr. Davison state that if cash is introduced, IRS rules and potential penalties will be involved, so he requested that the Committee support financing these costs. He stated that the funds will need to be within the 3% levy limit.

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 37 - Appropriate Public Safety Buildings Construction, amended to reflect the amount of $1 million. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

May Town Meeting Warrant Article 1 – Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Independent Town Workers Association

Mr. Davison stated that the negotiations with this bargaining unit are ongoing.

May Town Meeting Warrant Article 2 – Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Needham Independent Public Employees Association

Mr. Davison stated that the information has not changed since the executive session. This union covers DPW workers. The classification compensation study will be implemented in the first year, but there will be no additional wage increase. He stated that the incremental cost of the new bargaining agreement will be $79,255 or 2.05%. The step increases, already factored into the operating budget, are $95,682 for a total cost of $172,957 or 4.5% in additional wages in FY22. He stated that this covers employees in the General Fund, the Water Enterprise Fund, and the Sewer Enterprise Fund. He stated that if this article is approved at Town Meeting, the resulting increases to the Water and Sewer budgets for FY22 will be addressed at the Fall Special Town Meeting. He stated that the amounts needed in the General Fund operating budget will be transferred from the Classification, Performance and Settlement line.

MOVED: By Mr. Lunetta that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 2 - Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Needham Independent Public Employees Association. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

May Town Meeting Warrant Article 3 – Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Fire Union

Mr. Davison stated that this article will be withdrawn.

May Town Meeting Warrant Article 4 – Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Police Union

Mr. Davison stated that this is a one-year agreement to cover the current year, FY21. There is an increase of 3% to the base wages, with an incremental cost of $113,679 or 2.29%. The step increase and increase in detail pay amount to $48,081 or 1.18%, which is already in the operating budget. The total increase is $161,760. The detail pay is increasing from $52.50 to $55.00 per hour. He stated that additional terms include a performance evaluation that was supposed to be included, but missed years ago. Also, the union has agreed to bargain in good faith over the future of the Civil Service system in Town. Mr. Levy asked if the numbers include overtime costs at the higher pay rates. Mr. Davison stated that they do not, since the budget is set, and they will need to stay within the budgeted amount despite the higher rates. No funds will be transferred to this budget for overtime costs. He stated that there will be additional pay for hours already worked, but the changes apply only to officers on the payroll when the agreement was signed. He noted that uniformed police and fire staff were not part of the new classification and compensation study.

MOVED: By Mr. Lunetta that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 4 - Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Police Union. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

May Town Meeting Warrant Article 5 – Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Police Superior Officers

Mr. Davison stated that the Police Superior Officers' Union also reached an agreement for FY21. There were 2 issues: the increase in the police detail rate to $55 per hour, and the agreement to bargain over leaving the Civil Service system for the positions in this unit. There is a 3% base wage increase for a cost of $19,105 or 2.93% for the current budget. Because of staff changes, the step changes are decreasing by $8,017 versus FY20, or -1/23%. The new increase is $11,088 or 1.7% increase. There will be a total transfer of $19,105 to the Police budget.

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 5 - Fund Collective Bargaining: Police Superior Officers' Union. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant:
Article 5 – Amend Zoning By-law: Highway Commercial 1 Zoning District
Article 6 - Amend Zoning By-law: Highway Commercial 1 Zoning District Schedule of Permitted Special Permit Uses
Article 7 - Amend Zoning By-law: Map Change to Highway Commercial 1

Ms. Fachetti stated that the Select Board meeting was still underway and the Board had not yet voted. Mr. Connelly asked whether that would affect the Finance Committee's vote. Mr. Jacob stated that there are so many speculative issues involved that it seems best to wait for a developer to propose a project and then consider it. He was originally in favor of the changes, but it turns out that the issues are too complex. Ms. Miller asked if there was some consensus on the Finance Committee and people were ready to vote. She stated that she was not in favor of the current articles, and not in favor of amendments that would not be carefully thought through. Mr. Healy agreed that a consensus would be helpful. He stated that he is not in favor of the articles. Mr. Levy stated that the data presented is speculative and lacking. There could be tax revenue increases but there are too many trade-offs that are not quantified. Ms. Fachetti asked if they could ever be fully quantified. Mr. Levy stated that they could be better quantified. Ms. Miller stated that there was a reasonable report on the financial impact for the Trip Advisor project, but no other proposed projects. Mr. Reilly stated that information on personal property tax was critical for the vote on the NBC Universal project.

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Finance Committee recommend that Town Meeting not adopt 2021 Annual Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 5, 6 and 7: Amend Zoning By-laws: Highway Commercial 1 Zoning District, Schedule of Permitted Special Permit Uses, and Map Change. Mr. Healy seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0.

Mr. Reilly stated this matter has generated a friction to a large portion of the Town and the financial impact of the proposed zoning changes did not appear to be material enough to warrant generating that unrest . Mr. Lunetta stated that this may take a significant amount of time on Town Meeting floor, and suggested that it could help if the Finance Committee were involved earlier in the process. Ms. Fachetti stated that after what happened in 2019, they did try to get everyone involved, but the momentum has swung in favor of other options. Mr. Jacob stated that he did not think it would have made a difference if they had come in earlier, since there are just too many variables. Ms. Fachetti stated that it is complicated since the Town does not own the property, and can't control its destiny. Mr. Levy stated that there is a tension between large scale zoning for large areas and more narrow planning for a smaller area.

Updates:

A short meeting would be needed on April 21 to possibly discuss Emery Grover and to reconsider the Public Health Consulting article.

Adjournment

MOVED: By Mr. Jacob that the Finance Committee meeting be adjourned, there being no further business. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0 at approximately 9:27 p.m.

Documents: Town of Needham 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant; Town of Needham May 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant; 2021 Fiscal Impact Analysis, Highway Commercial I Rezoning, Barrett Planning Group, March 20, 2021; Memorandum to Finance Committee from Planning Director Re: 2021 Fiscal Impact Analysis, Highway Commercial 1 Rezoning, April 13, 2021; Ridge Hill Manor House and Garage Demolition, Frequently Asked Questions, 2021 Special Town Meeting Article 35, Version 1- 4.14.2021;

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mizgerd
Staff Analyst

Approved April 28, 2021