

MINUTES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MAY 19, 2003

TOWN HALL, SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM

The Board of Selectmen convened in a special capital budget session at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of the Town Hall. All members were present.

Action by Appointment

Public Hearing-- Verizon Hillcrest Road

A representative of Verizon spoke in support of a petition to install conduit near the intersection of Hillcrest Road and Common Street. There were no other interested parties present.

The Board moved: to approve the application.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Capital Projects

The Board convened with members of the Capital Budget Committee, Warrant Committee and the Permanent Building Committee to discuss major capital projects for the Town.

Mr. Brownsberger reviewed the agenda for the evening.

The group discussed a chart created by Mr. Brownsberger making various assumptions relative to the costs and tax burden associated with funding all the Town's current major capital projects over the next fifteen years.

The group also discussed a capital projects matrix that illustrated general prioritization of the major capital projects into categories of near-term (0-5 years) and long-term (5-15 years) and the source of funding (public/public and private funding).

Joel Mooney strongly advocated for the replacement of Wellington School within the next five years, highlighting the high cost to repair the building relative to the replacement cost.

Mrs. Bruschi of the Warrant Committee strongly advocated for the expenditure of funds in the near term to fund a study of the costs related to the renovation of the high school.

The group assented generally to the prioritization represented on the capital projects matrix.

The Board moved to a discussion of the fire station consolidation projects.

Robert McLaughlin, member of the Fire Station Consolidation Committee, reviewed the options considered by his committee relative to the consolidation of the Town's three fire stations into two stations. He highlighted the importance of placing one fire station on the south side of the railroad tracks and one fire station on the north side of the railroad tracks.

Mr. Brownsberger voiced a question posed by Mike Speidel inquiring about the impact of placing a fire station on the Alexander Avenue parking lot on parking in the Belmont Center. Mr. McLaughlin indicated that the net impact on parking is at worst zero.

Mr. McLaughlin inquired about the possibility to have two separate votes, one for the fire stations and one for the parking, under the funding article in the Annual Town Meeting.

The Board indicated their support for Town Meeting consideration of the parking and fire station issues as two separate motions under the Town Meeting article.

Mr. McLaughlin provided the Board with updated cost estimate of \$5.7 million (headquarters station on Trapelo Road) and \$4.2 million (Alexander Avenue substation), with a schematic design cost of \$175,000.

Multiple members of the Warrant Committee strongly supported the idea of uncoupling the Belmont Center parking garage project from the fire station substation project.

Mr. Brownsberger suggested the use of the Kendall fire settlement funds should be used for the funding of smaller capital costs, such as schematic design costs or property acquisition.

Mrs. Kobus indicated her reluctance to spend this money.

Mrs. Brusch indicated her support for utilizing these funds for schematic design costs, with the intention that these funds later be restored from the debt exclusion funds.

Mr. Clark, member of the Capital Budget Committee, indicated his preference to utilize these funds to smooth out the borrowing cost impacts on taxpayers.

Mr. McLaughlin voiced his opinion that all of the capital projects should be subject to a voter-approved debt exclusion and that none of the settlement funds be utilized to fund any one particular project.

The Board agreed to appropriate from the Kendall insurance settlement funds to provide seed funds for capital projects, with the condition that these funds be restored to the account upon the success of a debt exclusion to support the project.

Mr. Brownsberger inquired whether the balance of the Kendall insurance settlement funds should be transferred to the capital endowment fund to require a higher threshold for its removal (two-thirds vote) and to restrict the expenditure of these funds to only capital projects.

The Board moved to a discussion of the senior center project.

Barbara Miranda, chairman of the Council on Aging, provided her thoughts on the construction of a Senior Center on the former Kendall School site. She voiced the COA's belief that a branch library sharing the senior center space could be a compatible use. She indicated the COA's preference to keep the Senior Center concept moving forward such that the Town can have a senior center built before the Town's lease of the existing senior center building expires.

Vera Dryer, chairman of the Board of Library Trustees, noted her Board's deliberations regarding the potential for a branch library in a new senior center building. She indicated Trustee's inability to support this concept at this time, given the reductions in the library's operating budget in FY04.

Hal Shubin, member of the Board of Library Trustees, indicated the Trustee's support for the existing branch library services, but indicated their need to focus on the main library services given the current fiscal environment and, as such, are not supportive of a branch library in this senior center space at this time. He stated that the Trustees do not believe that the library can support two fundraising campaigns- one for a branch library and one for the main library.

Heli Tomford, member of the Board of Library Trustees, reviewed the current services the library provides to the senior community, but indicated their reluctance to diffuse the operations of the library by creating a new branch library, without an assurance of sufficient resources to support both operations.

Dr. Solomon questioned the Library Trustee's past strong advocacy to keep the existing branch libraries open, but their current lack of support for a replacement branch library for the Waverley branch which is slated to close and be sold. He questioned the argument that running this new branch would create more operating costs than the library is currently experiencing.

Mrs. Dreyer explained that the operating costs are likely to increase with a new branch library because a new branch would increase usage and also increase expectations for programming.

Mrs. Brusch commented that the Town Meeting must know specifically what they are voting on in June (e.g., two-story with second floor shell and basement).

Mrs. Mahoney indicated a previous vote of the Board indicating its support for the construction of a two-story structure on the former Kendall School site, including a basement. She expressed concern that the public may not support the construction of a single-story structure on this site, because of the loss of potential to maximize the use of the site for municipal purposes.

Mr. Heigham, member of the Warrant Committee, stated his inability to personally support the senior center project unless it is more than 50% privately funded.

Dr. Solomon stated his support for a multi-use facility on the Kendall site and his belief that the Town has a moral obligation to build a senior center for the Town's senior population. He also concurred with Mrs. Mahoney that it will be difficult to obtain public support for a project on the Kendall site that addresses only one purpose. He proposed that the Council on Aging and the Permanent Building Committee meet to discuss what compatible uses are appropriate uses for the second floor of a multi-use building.

Mrs. Mahoney indicated her reluctance to support the senior center article for the Town Meeting given the uncertainty about what is an appropriate second story use for the first story senior center.

Mr. Brownsberger commented that, given the lack of current strong constituency for any additional use on the former Kendall school site, he believes the proposal

that should go before the Town Meeting is a single-story structure on this site to house only a senior center.

The Board moved: to recommend to the Town Meeting that a single-story senior center, with partial basement (if warranted), be constructed on the former Kendall School site.

The motion passed 2-1, Mrs. Mahoney opposed.

The Board moved to a discussion of the Town's parking needs in the Belmont Center.

Kevin Foley, chairman of the Belmont Center Parking Study Committee, summarized the work of the committee and its recommendations. He requested information relative to how major capital projects in the vicinity of Belmont Center will impact the existing parking in the Center. The Committee recommended the Town explore short-term changes that are low-cost to see how they affect parking capacity. The Committee expressed its desire to work in coordination with the Board of Selectmen, the Town Hall Complex Building Committee and the Fire Station Consolidation Committee.

Mr. Brownsberger stated his desire that these committees get together to discuss parking issues to attempt to mutually identify some solutions and not appropriate funds for a feasibility study during this Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Foley indicated his preference to conduct a more formal study of the actual parking supply and demand in the Belmont Center.

The Board agreed to not seek Town Meeting approval for funding for a feasibility study related to a parking structure in Belmont Center.

A resident inquired when the appropriate time is for a public discussion relative to the historic preservation of the fire stations to be sold by the Town.

Mr. Brownsberger stated he felt that the issue of the reuse of the fire stations requires additional public discussion and deliberation prior to a Town Meeting vote on this issue.

Mrs. Mahoney expressed her desire that the Board get authorization from Town Meeting to dispose of the Waverley Fire station property as soon as possible in order that the Town not retain the costs of maintaining the buildings. She indicated her support for implementing historic preservation restrictions related to the facade and the exterior of the building, but did not want to see the Town defining the reuse of the building by prospective buyers.

The Board agreed to move ahead to seek Town Meeting approval of the disposal of the Waverley Fire Station with the commitment that the exterior of the Waverley Fire Station building be historically preserved.

The Board requested to review a draft of the motion to be presented to the Town Meeting.

Action (By Writing)

Letter from Resident re: Permission for a Graduation Party

The Board reviewed a request from a resident regarding permission to close a public way to hold a graduation party on June 15, 2003.

The Board moved: to approve the request to close a public way for the purpose of a graduation party.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Other

Mr. Brownsberger inquired whether the Board of Selectmen would be supportive of signing a proclamation recognizing the naturalization of a citizen.

The Board moved: to issue this proclamation.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Brownsberger inquired as to the progress on the development of a scope of services for consulting services relative to the needs assessment for the selection of the Town's next Police Chief.

Mr. Brownsberger noted the Town's ability to vote to elect representatives to the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Town's recent displeasure with the MPO's process to fund projects.

The Board moved: to vote for the towns of Hingham and Salem as representatives of the MPO.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Brownsberger distributed examples of Board of Selectmen mission statements he collected from the web.

The Board moved: to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing property acquisition for the location of a fire station headquarters on Trapelo Road; further that the Board will not return to open session.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0), by roll call vote.

The regular session adjourned at approximately 10:40 p.m.

Melvin A. Kleckner, Town
Administrator
Clerk, Board of Selectmen