

Call to Order

Roll Call

Chair Moffitt called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m and initiated roll call. Through video conferencing mode, present were Chairperson Eugenie Moffitt-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Kevin O'Handley-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, John Barry-Y, Spiro Christopoulos-Y and Paul Russo-Y. Also present were Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Lawlor, Deputy Town Manager Michael Lindstrom, Select Board Chair Annie Gilbert and Finance Director Donna Walsh. The meeting was videotaped and live cablecast.

Article P26 – Andover High School Design

Chair Moffitt noted that Mr. Johnson was unable to attend tonight's meeting and will make his presentation at the next meeting. Ms. Anderson noted that she had spoken with Mr. Johnson and he shared that the MSBA rejected the statement of intent for the ninth time. The School Committee will meet to decide on submitting statement of interest again (June deadline) or commencing the project on its own.

Article P34 – Land Acquisition Chandler Road

The Town Manager noted that this article would appropriate funds to acquire a strategic parcel off Chandler Rd. Although the family has just recently agreed to move forward with the sale of the property, executing the town's right of first refusal, this acquisition has entailed several years of work.

He followed with the presentation (see attached PowerPoint slide deck.)

- Property served as family pig farm for decades.
- Strategic acquisition abutting town-owned conservation land and Deyermund landfill.
- Just under 44.5 acres, a rare once-in-a lifetime opportunity for town acquisition.
- Potential use as multi-purpose athletic fields, walking trail, dog park, community farm/garden, playground and picnic area.
- Contracted with CDM Smith to appraise site, which determined a clean site with respect to soil contamination.
- Total recommended Appropriation: \$4,025,000 which is comprised of \$3,925,000 for the land and \$100,000 in associated costs.
- Funding plan would combine non-exempt debt service of \$3,000,000 and \$1,025,000 from free cash. The impact to the average tax bill would be approximately \$11.90.
- Budgetary decisions have allowed for this acquisition under CIP guidelines of 5.72%.
- Projections are subject to change during the budgetary process to allow for above.
- This purchase will be made within the previously agreed upon 5.72% CIP guideline.

Ms. Gilbert, Chair of the Select Board, addressed the committee. The town acquired the right of refusal on this property three years ago, and the Select Board directed the Town Manager to explore all possibilities in acquiring this parcel by means of testing in order to determine that it is in fact a clean site. The Select Board has been satisfied with the due diligence and views this parcel as a high priority parcel unique both in size and placement contiguous to either town owned or AVIS owned conservation land. The Board appreciates the family's willingness to negotiate within the assessed value of the property.

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- The zoning is residential/agricultural use and requires no zoning change for recreation.
- A previous offer several years ago from a developer was received and rejected for land swap to be developed for field use at no charge.
- The possibility of revisiting that offer for little or no town cash outlay was raised to see if this is a viable option to get sports fields at a lower cost.
- Also the option of real estate holdings by the school that may be used for this purpose.
- The prudence of exploring other town opportunities that may exist for development.
- Risk of contamination of adjacent landfill has been discounted but taken in account.
- Provisions of the agricultural farm act ensured offer of first refusal to the town.
- Tax bill increase to the average taxpayer is approx.. \$11.90 on a level debt basis.
- Timeframe for purchase and sale, if appropriated by town meeting would be the summer.
- Possibility of postponing the purchase to a fall town meeting to allow more deliberation.
- Due to timing of the project, educational outreach to the community is limited.
- Significant asks for two school projects and pension obligation bond are factors in consideration.
- Consideration of future costs of developing the parcel.

Chair Gilbert noted that the community has traditionally held open spaces in high value. Additionally, she noted that when the Bancroft School was built, the MSBA as part of its conditions, demands that every possibility of parcels of lands that may be available in town are explored. As a member of the building committee at that time, no such parcels were discovered that would be suitable for the development of sports fields. The Town Manager noted that the land adjacent to the West El will be used for development of the school, and the contiguous area was primarily wetlands.

Chair Gilbert also remarked that the open space acquisition article is not an ask financially, but an updating of the 2014 list of properties with access to the Shawsheen River.

The Town Manager will make available to right of first refusal agreement along with the CDM Smith report to the committee. Also requested was a list of the real estate holdings of the town and school. The committee agreed to continue discussion at the next meeting and the Town Manager will have planning and town counsel available to answer questions.

Warrant Article Votes

Article P35 – Merrimack River Solid Waste Collection and Removal from Free Cash

Chair Moffitt noted that she had invited the petitioner to the meeting but had not had a response. She invited the Town Manager to address this article.

The Town Manager noted the Merrimack River runs through a number of cities and towns. A non-profit called Clean River Project has gone about pulling debris out of the river. In 2016 the group assessed a fee to communities along the Merrimack for this service. The town decided not to engage in the Clean River project, but instead to seek a regional solution for state and federal resources. The Deputy Town Manager, along with the conservation commission and other land

groups, are active participants in investigating sustainable solutions to pollution issues. Consequently, he is not in favor of this article.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Barry, it was unanimously voted to recommend disapproval of the above article as printed in the warrant. Chairperson Eugenie Moffitt-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Kevin O'Handley-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, John Barry-Y, Spiro Christopulos-Y and Paul Russo-Y. Motion passed 9-0.

Remaining Articles – Explanation by Ms. Walsh

Article P7A – Budget Transfers – The Finance Committee will make its recommendation at Town Meeting.

Article P7B – Supplemental Budget Appropriations – The Finance Committee will make its recommendation at Town Meeting.

Article P7C – Stabilization Fund – To be withdrawn

Article P7D – Free Cash – To be withdrawn

Article P7E – Unexpended Appropriations – Hold

Article P7F – Unexpended Appropriations Capital Projects Fund

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Barry, it was unanimously voted to recommend approval of the above article for unexpended appropriations in the capital projects fund in the amount of \$31,606.38. Chairperson Eugenie Moffitt-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Kevin O'Handley-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, John Barry-Y, Spiro Christopulos-Y and Paul Russo-Y. Motion passed 9-0.

Article P9G – Rescinding of Bond Authorizations – To be withdrawn

Article P18 – Deficit Reduction

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Mr. O'Handley, it was unanimously voted to recommend approval of the above article for deficit funds in the total amount of \$38,606.91. Chairperson Eugenie Moffitt-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Kevin O'Handley-Y, Linn Anderson-Y, John Barry-Y, Spiro Christopulos-Y and Paul Russo-Y. Motion passed 9-0.

Working Group Update - FinCom Report and Letter

Mr. Monticciolo reported on the progress of the report and letter. He noted the timeline for the responsibilities of members and others for content submissions. A logistical meeting will be scheduled for next week among the group members and Mr. Lawlor, Ms. Walsh and Ms. Barraford.

Liaison Updates

School – A presentation is scheduled for next week. The financials will be discussed, specifically \$500K in the salary line item and additional FTEs. Ms. Moffitt referred the committee to the preliminary budget book to be better informed on the questions to be asked. Mr. Monticciolo asked where the school stands on pension reform in general and article 6 in particular. Discussion ensued.

Retirement – Mr. Russo noted a retirement meeting scheduled for tomorrow and he will report back to the committee at its next meeting.

Mr. Lawlor reported that the public outreach virtual sessions on the Integrated Financing Plan are going well. He will provide feedback on the questions to Ms. Moffitt.

Approval of Minutes of April 14, 2021

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Logee, it was voted to approve above minutes as amended. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Paul Russo-Y, John Barry-Y, Ms. Anderson-Y, Kevin O’Handley-Y and Mr. Christopulos-Y. Motion passed 9-0.

Article P33 – Amendment of Open Space Land Acquisition Bonding Appropriations

Mr. Betts read the statement provided by Ms. Stott (see attached.) Mr. Lindstrom added that this article proposes to rescind previous town meetings monies authorized and reappropriate funds in the amount of \$1,215,2780.75. He noted that this is a revision of the 2014 list of properties with access to the Shawsheen River because some of the parcels had changed. Ms. Stott joined the meeting. She said that 1,300 acres are AVIS owned and 2,500 town owned conservation land.

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Betts, it was voted to recommend approval of the above article as printed in the warrant in the amount of \$1,215,270.75. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Paul Russo-Y, John Barry-Y, Ms. Anderson-Y, Kevin O’Handley-Y and Mr. Christopulos-Y. Motion passed 9-0.

Meeting Schedule

Wednesday, April 28 @ 6:00PM – Fincom Meeting

Wednesday, April 28 @ 7:00PM – Triboard Meeting

Wednesday, May 5 @ 7:00PM

Working groups to continue

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Betts, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt-Y, Andrew Betts-Y, Mary Ellen Logee-Y, Paul Monticciolo-Y, Paul Russo-Y, Ms. Anderson-Y, John Barry-Y, Kevin O’Handley-Y and Mr. Christopulos-Y. Motion passed 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

Minutes of Meeting April 14, 2021

Open Space Task Force Statement