

Dennis Finance Committee
Tuesday, November 5, 2013
Dennis Town Offices
Large Hearing Room 5:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Jim Plath, Members Pat Stone, Jay Murphy, Rachel Baroni,
Peter McDowell, Robert Prall, William Crowell

Staff: Town Administrator Rick White, Assistant Town Administrator Sandra Fife

Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. McCormick stated the Board of Selectmen has met earlier today in order to place the Articles on the Warrant. Recommendations still need to be made.

Mr. McCormick would like to take the first three items regarding the Town Hall on tonight's agenda as a package, since they all affect one another.

ROUTE 134 TOWN HALL CONSTRUCTION, ANNEX SALE OF PROPERTY, TOWN HALL SALE OF PROPERTY

Mr. McCormick read all three proposed Warrant Articles.

Gary Barber, Building Committee, was present and explained the proposed addition to the Town Hall Annex. Mr. Barber indicated no departments in Town Hall would need to move while the addition is being constructed. Mr. Barber stated the Building Committee looked at several options, and the proposal given this evening is the best one. If this option is passed at Town Meeting and Special Election, the Town would sell the Annex located on Route 28, and options for the existing Town Hall on Main Street have been given as well; either expanding the cemetery, selling it as a single-family home property or a commercial property. Mr. Barber stated this is not a final plan, and opportunities will be given to modify it. Should it be approved, the Building Committee would sit with the Department Heads to plan the space.

Mr. Bergeron stated he wanted to acknowledge the work that the Committee has done and thank them, as they have spent countless hours on this project.

Mr. McDowell asked for a total amount to be given that the proposed addition would cost. Mr. Barber stated it would be a 4.1 million dollar appropriation. Mr. White stated the plan would be to appropriate \$500,000.00 from Free Cash, \$500,000.00 from Capital Improvement, and to bond the remainder of the balance. It is estimated over a twenty-year span, a household assessed at \$400,000.00 can expect to pay approximately

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\$290.00 over twenty years in order to fund the project. If the sale of the Annex on Route 28 is successful, Town Meeting can vote to reduce the debt from the proceeds of the property.

Mr. Crowell asked about the contingency figure and why it seemed high. Mr. Barber explained the reasoning behind the \$300,000.00 contingency. Mr. Barber stated the Building Committee is unique, as it is made up of several "contractors". When a contractor on this project comes in at extra costs that are not foreseen, said costs can be scrutinized.

Mr. Plath stated he did like part of the payment coming from Free Cash and the Capital Improvement Fund. Mr. Plath stated he believes getting into a new town hall building for \$6,000,000.00 is pretty good. Mr. Plath stated this seems like a good plan including the proposed financing.

Mr. Barber stated if this proposal should fail to pass at Town Meeting or Town Election, something would need to be done with the existing Town Hall building. A discussion of the total appropriation took place.

Mr. Bergeron stated the Town has learned over the years that not addressing key issues regarding building maintenance and security never saves us money in the long run. It is critical to address it now.

Mr. McDowell stated his opinion on the project, including painting and decoration of the existing Town Hall. Mr. McDowell stated he is troubled with the amount of money that has been appropriated for all kinds of building renovations around the Town, including the improvements to the schools and the Senior Citizen Center that is proposed. Mr. McDowell stated he is going to vote no on this project, as he believes there is still life in this building.

Mr. Plath read the Article for clarification (Debt Exclusion to equal 3.1 million and appropriations of \$500,000.00 from free cash and \$500,000.00 from Capital Improvement Fund).

Mr. Barber stated in answer to Mr. McDowell's comments, that the elderly have too hard of a time negotiating this building.

Mr. Plath stated this project will need a 2/3rds vote at Town Meeting.

Motion:

Mr. Prall moved to recommend and place the Warrant Article Route 134 Town Hall Construction as printed.

Ms. Baroni seconded the motion. The Committee voted 6-1(McDowell)-0.

TOWN ANNEX SALE

Mr. McCormick explained the proposed Article.

Mr. Plath asked if the sale could be made contingent that the funds go into the Capital Fund (reducing the debt).

Motion:

Ms. Baroni moved to recommend and place the proposed Warrant Article Town Hall Annex Sale as printed.

Ms. Stone seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

TOWN HALL

Mr. McCormick explained the proposed Article. Ms. McMahon asked what the urgency was to make a recommendation on the options for the building. Ms. McMahon would like to hear input from the community.

Ms. Schadt recommended waiting to the May Town Meeting, as by then we will know if the funding for the addition to the new annex has been agreed to. Ms. Schadt recommended indefinitely postponement of the proposed the article.

Mr. Plath stated Ms. McMahon's comments are right on target.

At the conclusion of the agenda items, the Finance Committee returned to the Article to take a vote.

Motion:

Mr. Prall moved to indefinitely postpone the Warrant Article regarding the existing Town Hall.

Ms. Baroni seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

DESIGN & PERMITTING CORPORATION BEACH

Mr. McCormick read the proposed Warrant Article. Karen Johnson, Director of Natural Resources, was present and explained the reasoning behind the proposed costs. Ms. Johnson stated a brief memo was given to the Board. Ms. Johnson stated this is a high priority. \$40,000.00 is proposed to be appropriated from the Beach Capital Improvement Fund.

A discussion of how the \$40,000.00 figure arrived took place. Ms. Johnson stated it was a part of a cost and benefits analysis that came from the consultant's report. Mr. Crowell asked about the lower parking lot, and its need for repair before it is lost. Ms. Johnson stated it would require additional permitting.

Mr. McDowell stated the DPW used to be able to dump a load of beach sand after storms and asked if it would be worthwhile to get a maintenance permit to replenish the beach. Mr. Bergeron stated there would not be anything wrong with that.

A discussion took place.

Motion:

Ms. Baroni moved to recommend and place the Warrant Article: Design and Permitting Corporation Beach and appropriate \$40,000.00 from the Beach Capital Improvement Fund for the purpose of the article.

Ms. Stone seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

ENGINEERING & DESIGN FOR EXTENSION OF DR. BOTTERO ROAD

Karen Johnson, Director of Natural Resources, was present and explained the proposed article. The Beach Advisory Management Task Force obtained a report from a consultant regarding the area. There has been significant damage to Dr. Bottero Road, and, should nothing be done to correct it, it is possible the road would be compromised by 2017. Ms. Johnson explained the purpose of the Warrant Article. It is proposed to appropriate \$30,000.00 from Free Cash to begin the permitting process for filing of an ENF to be sure that the proposed solutions to fix the road are permissible.

A discussion of extending the revetment took place including the source of the funding.

Motion:

Mr. Prall moved to recommend and place the Warrant Article: Engineering and Design for Extension of Dr. Bottero Road and appropriate \$30,000.00 from Free Cash for the purpose of the Article.

Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

CHAPIN BEACH FENCING

Karen Johnson, Director of Natural Resources, was present and explained the purpose of the article.

Ms. Stone stated in the report it is noted the consultant stated sand fencing would not be a long-term solution and asked if a plan to measure the effectiveness of the fencing has been put into place. A discussion regarding the solutions took place.

Mr. McDowell asked if it was fair to assume that the barrier beach may disappear. Ms. Johnson addressed Mr. McDowell's question.

Motion:

Mr. Murphy moved to recommend and place the Warrant Article: Chapin Beach Funding and appropriate

Ms. Baroni seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

HOWES STREET BEACH WALKWAY

Mr. McCormick read the proposed article. Dustin Pineau, Beach Director, was present and gave a history of the Howes Street Beach Walkway. Mr. Pineau stated this will be the last year the Conservation Commission will allow for maintenance of the walkway to be done without permitting. Mr. Pineau stated this is a "pay" beach.

Motion

Mr. Crowell moved to recommend and place the Warrant Article: Howes Street Beach Walkway and appropriate \$5,000.00 from the Beach Capital Improvement Fund for the purpose of the article.

Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

CPC JACOB SEARS ROOF

Mr. McCormick read the proposed Article and stated this is a continued discussion from a previous meeting. Both Committees were seeking a legal opinion. A memorandum has been received from Town Counsel.

Motion

Mr. McDowell moved to recommend and place the Warrant Article: CPC Jacob Sears Roof as printed.

Mr. Crowell seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

PAYT OUTREACH

Rick White gave some background information regarding this proposal. The Committee is seeking a sum of \$8,038.00 to be appropriated in order to provide for a mass mailing to the community regarding Pay As You Throw.

Mr. Tuttle stated it may be beneficial for the Board of Health to come in and explain their position on Pay As You Throw before appropriating the funds.

Ms. McMahon recommended this be a televised discussion.

Mr. McDowell asked that the town consider hauling the waste to SEMASS themselves. Ms. Schadt stated the tax rate does not support sanitation costs.

Mr. White stated PAYT committee would like a discussion just like this, therefore needing the money to communicate to the public.

Mr. Crowell stated he believed the Committee would be setting a bad precedent if they appropriate the funding for this committee.

Ms. Stone asked if there was any money in the DPW budget that could go towards this expenditure: office supplies, unclassified, etc., as there seems there could be some funds in the budget to cover this request. Ms. Stone also stated it would be terribly “un-green” to print these flyers and mail them. Perhaps it would be better to advertise in the newspaper and post public meetings.

Mr. Plath stated he is not in favor of this proposal. Mr. Plath stated it is bad public policy to use taxpayers’ money to promote particular causes. Mr. Plath stated the Town utilizes a website and schedules public meetings, giving the community ample notice.

Motion:

Mr. McDowell moved to indefinitely postpone the Warrant Article: PAYT Outreach. Mr. Crowell seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

TOURISM

Mr. McCormick explained the proposed Article. The proposal is to appropriate \$30,000.00 from Free Cash to promote the Town of Dennis. A memorandum has been given as to what other towns spend.

Ms. Stone stated there is still a lack of promotional plan that hinders a positive vote for spending these funds.

Mr. Plath asked which committee is authorized to spend these funds. Mr. White stated it would be at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen.

Motion

Mr. Crowell moved to recommend and place the Warrant Article: Tourism and appropriate \$30,000.00 from Free Cash for the purpose of the article. Ms. Baroni seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

HARBOR ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING STUDY

Terry Clen, Harbormaster, was present and explained the two Articles that are on the agenda this evening regarding the Harbor. These items are a part of the deliverables that came from the ongoing study at the harbor. A recommendation was that there is a \$15,000.00 allocation for an electrical engineering study to the west side comfort station.

Ms. Schadt stated the money would be coming from Free Cash.

Mr. Plath asked if the Board of Selectmen has reviewed this study. Ms. Schadt stated no, it has not been completed.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the funding.

Bob Mazadri, South Dennis was present and explained the purpose of the study and what the consultant is evaluating. Woods Hole Group is the consultant on the Harbor Study. They are giving feedback in stages.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the proposed article.

Carl Howard, Waterways Committee, was present and gave a brief history of the electrical installation.

Ms. McMahon stated she would like to see the study to understand more about it and is not comfortable recommending the appropriation at this time.

Motion

Mr. Prall moved to indefinitely postpone the Warrant Article: Harbor Electrical Engineering Study.

Mr. McDowell seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

HARBOR STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING STUDY

Mr. Bergeron stated this study needs to be done at some point and explained the needs and impacts of the study.

Mr. McDowell stated there is no need to study this facility that there is nothing wrong with it. Mr. Bergeron commented it is more than a question of wood, metal connections, etc. Part of this ongoing study was to obtain a professional opinion and this is something the study deemed necessary.

Mr. Prall stated there is a dock replacement program already built into the budget. Mr. Prall stated he would rather see the final study before appropriating money.

Carl Howard stated there is no preventative maintenance done in this town.

Mr. Plath stated he is in opposition to this study as there is a program to replace these docks already. There is no need to do a study and Mr. Plath feels too much money is being spent on studies.

Ms. McMahon stated she would like to see indefinite postponement. Mr. McCormick stated it could be left on the warrant and more information can be taken at Town Meeting.

Mr. Murphy stated that once a full report has been given, both boards will be better positioned to say what studies need to be done.

Motion

Mr. Prall moved to indefinitely postpone the Warrant Article: Harbor Structural Engineering.

Mr. McDowell seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

SERGEANTS

Mr. Plath explained the proposed contract settlement.

Motion:

Ms. Stone moved to recommend and place the Warrant Article: Police Sergeant's Union Contract Settlement as printed.

Ms. Baroni seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.

Mr. Plath stated the school assessment is predicted to be approximately \$260,000.00 less this year.

Motion:

Mr. McDowell moved to adjourn.

Mr. Crowell seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0-0.