

Dover Warrant Committee

February 24, 2010

Members in attendance: David Stapleton, Chair; James Kinder, Vice Chair; Peter Smith, Secretary; Kate Bush; James Dawley; Kathy Hall; David Melville; Andrew Waugh; Jane Wemyss

Others in attendance:

Board of Selectmen: David Heinlein, Chair; Carol Lisbon

Parks and Recreation Department: David MacTavish, Director; Jessica Cooney, Assistant Director

Parks and Recreation Commission: Peter Davies, Chair; Nancy Simms, Secretary; John Budd; Rich Oasis; Scott Seidman

Karl Johnson, Caryl Park abutter

Mr. Stapleton called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

1. Review of minutes

Mr. Dawley moved that the minutes of January 25 be approved, seconded by Mr. Melville. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Dawley moved that the minutes of January 27 be approved, seconded by Mr. Kinder. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Dawley moved that the minutes of February 1 be approved, seconded by Mr. Waugh. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Dawley moved that the minutes of February 11 be approved, seconded by Ms. Bush. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Hall asked that approval of the minutes of February 8 be deferred until she can confirm an item with the Town Administrator.

2. Prior Notices and Reserve Fund Transfer Requests

Prior Notice from the Fire Department dated 2/2/10 for \$4,130.00 for "Emergency repair of fire whistle". Mr. Smith moved that the Committee acknowledge the Notice, seconded by Mr. Waugh. The motion was approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

3. Capital Budget Presentation — new playing fields at Caryl Park

There will be an article on the Town Meeting Warrant to raise by borrowing approximately \$2,800,000 to reconfigure the existing playing fields at Caryl Park and to add two new fields south of the existing fields. The new fields would have lights and synthetic turf to allow maximum utilization. They would be separated from the existing fields by a band of trees and would

not be visible from Dedham St. Their parking area would be accessed from the tennis court entrance.

Mr. Seidman opened the presentation by noting that the meetings with abutters have been fruitful. There is less concern with the fields themselves than with the traffic they will generate. He noted that the recent usage in hours per year is many times the recommended healthy level for grass fields.

Ms. Simms addressed the matter of alternate sites. Haven St. and Springdale Ave. lands are under conservation. The possibility of swapping land adjacent to Noanet woods for Trustees of Reservations land on Powissett St. was investigated, but the Powissett St. land is under agricultural restrictions. . The old landfill cap is insufficient for such use. Expanding the former Medfield State Hospital fields would require bridging over the gas line to allow heavy equipment into the area. Further, that land is under the control of the Regional Schools; Park & Rec is soliciting the views of the Regional School Committee on the matter. In the Commissioners' view, Caryl Park remains the best option.

Private funding for some portions of the project is being pursued. It is also hoped that private donations could go into a sinking fund to cover the replacement in 12 years or so of the artificial turf. Raising funds up front to defray the capital expenditure is a secondary goal.

Asked if the Highway and Police Departments had studied the plan, Ms. Simms said that the Commissioners are still working with their consultants, and the other Town departments are next in the planning sequence.

Mr. Johnson, who lives across from the parking lot by the tennis courts, noted the already high traffic level and frequent close calls with cars turning onto Dedham St. He worried that the previous Dedham St. traffic study counted only cars on the road and not the flow in and out of the several lots.

4. Operating Budget Presentation — Parks and Recreation

The budget request is for \$345,511.00, a 0.6% decrease from the previous Blue Book appropriation. Ms. Simms explained the details of the request.

Salaries are budgeted for the same number of hours as the previous year. Overtime covers spring cleanup, the skating pond, early morning commission meetings, and Dover Days.

The fuel oil expense is for the Whiting Rd. building and the maintenance shed adjacent to the Town Garage. If Whiting Rd. is relinquished, this line will be decreased, as will electricity, although Mr. Heinlein pointed out that these costs will simply transfer to other budgets. Water usage is down and is budgeted for the same number of gallons used in 2008, but at current rates.

Grounds maintenance costs have gone up as the Town switches to organic materials, as mandated by the State. Requirements are stricter for the coming year, but the Commissioners hope to cover up to \$16,000 out of the revolving fund. Last year the revolving fund was able to defray \$11,000 of these costs.

The only vehicle replacement is a ten year old pickup truck, which replacement should reduce maintenance costs.

Water system maintenance has been up over the last three years, in large part due to two lightning strikes.

Tree work at the parks, Town House, and the Protective Agencies Building is under the Park & Rec budget. The Town's Care of Trees budget only covers work along roads. As in past years the Commissioners are budgeting for six days of such work.

The Park & Rec offices are not covered by the Town House's Internet access agreement with Comcast, so they must purchase their own connection. Other computer-related costs include software licenses and maintenance.

The new holiday tree lights were paid for out of the revolving fund.

Finally, Ms. Simms noted that in the past, the Department has attempted to cover unanticipated expenses with funds from other line items, and even transfers from the Revolving Fund. She asked the Warrant Committee and Selectmen if this was preferable to Reserve Fund transfers. All agreed that the Revolving Fund is legally restricted in the types of expenses it can cover. Further, inter-account transfers obscure true costs. The consensus was that account transfers should be minimized, but that prudent budget margins should be built in to limit the need for Reserve Fund transfers, especially in the current tight fiscal environment.

5. Revenue Estimates for Fiscal 2011

Mr. Dawley passed around the first estimate of Town revenues, which were presented Monday at a meeting of the Selectmen, Assessors, and Treasurer. Local receipts are the hardest to estimate. Their biggest component is vehicle excises.

The Selectmen will be signing the Warrant February 25 so there will be no additions after that. The new sidewalks are estimated at \$130,000 for Springdale Ave. and \$9,000 for Dedham St. The Reserve Fund has been funded at \$200,000 for the past several years, but it is felt that given the growth in the Town budget, an increase to \$250,000 is prudent.

6. Liaison Updates

Mr. Stapleton (Chickering School): The budget is nearly finalized, as is the five-year capital budget plan. The new construction and renovation is now ten years old and maintenance items are starting to become significant.

*Mr. Waugh moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Dawley;
the motion was agreed by consensus at 9:10 pm
the next meeting will be March 1 at 6:30 pm*

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary

approved March 10, 2010