

Call to Order:

The Planning Board Special Meeting was called to order at 8:30AM on May 6, 2021 via Cisco Webex online video conferencing platform. Present were Chair Zachary Bergeron, Vice Chair Rocky Leavitt, and member Neil Magenheim. Also present were Paul Materazzo, Land Use & Planning Director and Lisa Schwarz, Assistant Director of Planning.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:**Town Meeting Warrant Articles:****P34 – Land Acquisition**

The Planning Board hosted a special meeting to discuss Preliminary Article 34 for the acquisition of land located at 138 & 140 Chandler Road. Mr. Materazzo shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Board and provided a comprehensive review of the preliminary article. For the past 6 months, the Town has been negotiating with the Park family to acquire this asset, which is a former pig farm located across from Sarkisian Farms and comprises approximately 44 acres of land. Mr. Materazzo explained that acquisition of this land would provide the Town with a unique opportunity to move forward with expansion of active recreation, fulfilling a need that has been expressed by the community.

Mr. Materazzo presented the funding plan which included a total cost of \$3.925M to purchase the parcel plus \$100,000 in additional costs to be used towards clearing the land and cleaning of debris. The Town Manager is proposing to fund this project within the proposed Capital Improvement Program; therefore, acquisition of this land would not be an additional cost to the Town.

Mr. Materazzo shared a conceptual plan that highlighted potential future uses based on community feedback, including multi-purpose athletic fields, conservation land (open space, walking trails), community farm/garden, dog park, playground/tot-lot, and picnic areas. The conceptual plan included a delineation of the wetlands, provided by a wetlands scientist that is employed by the Town. In addition, a site assessment has been completed by CDM Smith to confirm that the operations of the pig farm did not cause any environmental constraints that would prohibit the Town from acquiring the property.

Mr. Materazzo displayed the preliminary article, as it is written, to be presented at Town Meeting. He shared that the Select Board, Conservation Commission and Finance Committee voted unanimously to support this article at their meetings on May 3, 2021, May 4, 2021, and May 5, 2021, respectively. He added that the article number was changed to 35 when the Select Board signed the formal warrant.

Mr. Magenheim requested information on the plan to fund development of the property. Per Mr. Materazzo, it was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting that community partners have expressed interest in supporting the Town regarding the creation of new fields, and the Town wants to collaborate with the community at large on how to reposition this asset.

Mr. Leavitt asked if any action could be taken to assure the community that this property would be used for the proposed intended purposes. He also asked if the article was written in a way that would restrict the property to public space use only. In response, Mr. Materazzo explained that the Select Board has

the authority to make the decision as to how the article is being presented, and that it is currently written to allow the broadest flexibility for the Town. Mr. Bergeron added that there is no restriction that would prohibit the Town from moving in a different direction. As a result, the Planning Board expressed concerns that the article would not be well-received at Town meeting.

Mr. Bergeron requested information on projected annual tax revenue. Mr. Materazzo shared a yield plan that was developed by an appraiser in 2010 and has since been reviewed the Town Assessor. Two scenarios were presented, including a \$495, 395 projected annual tax revenue with the development of attached cluster condos or \$211, 002 with a single-family development. Mr. Materazzo added that the land is currently classified as farmland (61A), and therefore exempt from taxes.

Mr. Magenheim inquired if the Park family is working exclusively with the Town. Per Mr. Materazzo, the Town has an agreement in principle to acquire this parcel. He added that should this article not successfully pass at Town Meeting, there are other developers with significant interest in acquiring this land.

Mr. Bergeron asked if the Planning Board could recommend support for this article with the stipulation that it is used for municipal purposes only. Mr. Materazzo explained that if the Board sought to amend this article, such action would need to be taken on the floor at Town Meeting.

Mr. Leavitt inquired about Town land surrounding the site that could be improved upon or further developed, such as Deyermond Field. In response, Mr. Materazzo shared that the land in question is conservation land for passive recreation use and deeded as such. Therefore, any change would require a Town Meeting vote and special legislation through the State. He added that Deyermond Field was a former landfill that was closed for a reason, and the Town is unable to rebuild fields on this site based upon the previous use of the property.

On a motion by Mr. Magenheim, seconded by Mr. Leavitt, the Planning Board voted to recommend approval on Article 35 – Land Acquisition – 138 & 140 Chandler Road, excluding the financial portion of the article. **Vote: (3-0)**

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Magenheim, seconded by Mr. Leavitt, the Planning Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:09AM. **Vote: (3-0)**

Documents:

Park Land Property PowerPoint Presentation – 5.4.21