

Swampscott Finance Committee Meeting
Monday, May 8, 2017
7:00PM

Joint meeting of BOS and CIC

Attending: Marzie Galazka (chair) Polly Titcomb, Jill Sullivan, Mary Ellen Fletcher, William Jones, Joan Hilario, Cinder McNerney, Tim Dorsey

Absent: Gail Rosenberg

Also present: Peter Spellios (BOS) Members of CIC (Ryan, Raymond, Begin, Eccles), Darren Klein (Town Counsel), Gino Cresta (ATA for Operations), Naomi Dreeben (BOS). Sean Fitzgerald (TA), Katie Klein (Town Counsel) Ron Mendes (ATA for Administration)

Meeting was opened at 7:00

Chair Galazka states that we will be going into joint executive session with CIC to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the town and the town's position in a threatened litigation
Polly/Bill

Roll Call vote:

Galazka, Fletcher, Titcomb, Hilario, Jones, Dorsey, McNerney, Sullivan

Exited Executive Session at 8:06

Introductions.

Comments from Rail Trail interested parties. Richard Fineberg made comments against the rail trail project. He argues we're doing a disservice to the 150 households who abut the trail. He argues that the eminent domain proceedings will cost a lot more money.

Don Pinkerton speaks in favor of the Rail Trail. Opportunity for the town to add an amenity. He recognizes that there are a variety of problems. He compares the rail trail to a sidewalk on a busy street. Part of the cost of living in a great neighborhood is welcoming passersby. As for the finances – bonding \$850,000 over 20 years is \$11 per year per household. We always need other items. We have ample reserves and a lot of debt capacity. At no time in the recent past have we had the debt capacity to invest in something that in theory has a perpetual life. Please make an investment in the town's future.

Kim Nasser reminds us of what was in last year's town meeting letter – we remarked on infrastructure needs and concerns about expense structures. Maintenance is not included.

Abe Nasser – reviewed March 1 2017 BOS budget meeting. Mr. Spellios argued that we are unsustainable from a cost perspective. Rail Trail article came up immediately after that.

Mr. Pinkerton – clarifies that rating agencies look for investments made on behalf of the town. With our excess capacity, we perhaps aren't investing enough. We have done a very poor job over the years in investing in open space.

Brendan Reen says this seems suspicious that the committee has not raised enough money for their project over the years – isn't this \$850,000 just a bail out of a failed project.

Elizabeth Papallardo. The Master Plan designated green space as a big need. Shouldn't we tie this to school funding as a bonus for the School Project in the future.

Paul Dwyer asks Town Counsel – the article gives the Selectmen a lot of leeway of what they can do with the money raised. Why should the Selectmen be allowed to use for improvements. Are there other easements under consideration in the article?

Kristin Tierney. Feels that the town is not being transparent.

Sean Fitzgerald comments about the warrant – the word "improvements" was added because of some comments made by abutters that could make this a successful project.

Mr. Spellios comments on the words "improvements" was added to allow in kind compensation such as fences or other buffers for abutters. This is not to be used to construct the trail at all.

Ms. McNerney is not prepared to vote. We agree to meet tomorrow at 7. She would like to see how many towns have done rail trails using eminent domain. Attorney Klein says it is a very common practice when Rail Trails are done.

The finance committee discussed various ways the article could be split into several portions.

Capital Improvements Committee voted 3-1 to approve the project.

Motion to adjourn: Jones/McNerney at 8:05