

February 10, 2020 Minutes  
Town of Sharon Finance Committee Meeting

**Present:** Daniel Lewenberg, Patricia-Lee Achorn, Anja Bernier, William Brack, Arnold Cohen, Gordon Gladstone, Ann Keitner, Ira Miller, Edward Philips, Anil Ramoju.

**Absent:** Charles Goodman.

Also present: Fred Turkington, Town Administrator

1. Discuss proposed Annual Town Meeting Non-Budget Articles:

- Article H - Proposed land swap for civil defense building. To unprotect .2 acres next to Deborah Sampson Park to build the Civil Defense building it is necessary to swap land.
  - Town has an offer in to Temple Adath to swap 2 parcels of land and give approximately \$15,000 for the property. Agreement is not finalized yet and Temple Adath's Executive Board needs to meet with the congregation before moving forward.

**Motion:** by Anja Bernier **Seconded:** Ann Keitner to recommend to approve Article H with the stipulation that the amount is not to exceed \$15,000. **Voted:** 10-0-0.

- Article F - Citizen petition to restrict use of recycled pavement.
  - Richard Kramer discussed that Recycled Asphalt Pavement (RAP) was spread last year on a trail in Deborah Sampson Park by Department of Public Works. Mr. Kramer discussed concerns that toxins and heavy metals such as lead, chromium and cadmium in RAP may reach aquifers and wells. Also concerned that Town of Sharon stockpiles RAP as this could also be a threat to residents and the environment. Mr. Kramer discussed that New Jersey and 16 other states have banned it to some extent, including prohibiting its use as a surface material.
  - Fred Turkington, Town Administrator, discussed that material was laid on the path because during heavy rains it becomes muddy. Residents and school athletes use the trail, and previously wood chips have been put down in order to mitigate risk of tripping from exposed tree roots. Department of Public Works is responsible for that project.
  - Committee discussed that they have questions such as why the material was laid down, cost to Town, feasibility of removal, what future uses is the DPW planning for the RAP it is stockpiling, and more.
  - Committee agreed there are too many open questions to have answered before they can responsibly vote on this article.
- Article C – Transfer of Rattlesnake Hill. Proposed article will transfer Rattlesnake Hill from Select Board to Conservation Commission, authorize notice and order of taking for Rattlesnake Hill and grant to Mass Audubon a conservation restriction on Inter Lochen Park on Rattlesnake Hill.
  - Parcel is landlocked and unlikely to be developed. Discussion regarding how Mass Audubon will create a secondary restriction in order to preserve as conservation land in perpetuity.
- Article K - Council on Aging Advisory Board alternates.
  - Fred Turkington discussed that currently there are two alternates for the Counsel on Aging, and the Board would like to add a third alternate. This would not alter

the amount of regular Board members. The Counsel was created by bylaw, therefore the addition of an alternate needs to be voted on. Currently the Counsel has interest from various community members for this alternate position.

- Article M - Proposed easements for South Main Street intersection improvements.
  - Bob Shelmerdine discussed that in November 2019 a zoning article was passed related to the Sharon Gallery on South Main Street. Mass Department of Transportation (MassDOT) requires that roadway configuration for Old Post Road needs to be modified. Temporary construction easements, overhead utility easements and permanent easements were discussed, affecting the plaza across from Sharon Gallery and properties nearby. There will be a new entrance constructed to the plaza, and several lights put in on South Main Street at the plaza / Gallery and for access to I-95 ramps.
  - Easements will affect two properties near the plaza: One is 12 square feet and the other is 32 square feet. Both will be long, thin strips allowing the road to be slightly widened and the sidewalk to be moved accordingly. Sidewalk will be the minimum width allowable.
  - MassDOT may not approve the layout without the taking of the easements, and the Sharon Gallery project would be unable to proceed.
- Article L – Proposed change to Recreational and Residential Overlay District. Approve adjustments to size of parcels within recreational and residential overlay district on Tiot Street.
  - Bob Shelmerdine discussed that the original plans for the layout of townhouses has been modified to allow for all future residences to have golf course and open space views and to mitigate traffic in the district. Number of residences and parking lots spaces will not change. The development is private, and the developers need to obtain approval at Town Meeting in order to change the layout due to a land swap being done on the property. New plan will make properties more attractive to buyers and potentially add revenue.
  - Mr. Shelmerdine discussed that there will be no difference to abutters for the new layout, and that other Town boards have no concerns with the reconfiguration that he knows of.
  - Committee discussed that this matter should be turned over to the Planning Board, who will potentially approve within the next two weeks.
- Citizen petition to ban artificial turf fields.
  - Debbie Tetro discussed the citizen petition to ban artificial turf on land of any size in the Town of Sharon, including not replacing any existing natural grass fields with artificial turf. Discussed that artificial turf contains toxic chemicals including Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) which are very stable, do not break down in the body and have adverse health effects.
  - Stated concerns that when artificial turf is trampled, exposed to sunlight and weather, and breaks down over time that these toxic chemicals may get into Lake Massapoag and the Town's drinking water.
  - Costs of artificial turf installation versus natural grass were discussed, and Committee stated they would like more information related to costs.
  - There are disagreements between professionals regarding the dangers of PFAS in artificial turf as well as drainage near the high school.
  - PFAS are difficult to test for because several are proprietary and therefore no accurate tests have been developed.
  - Standing Building Committee voted 7-3-0 in favor of artificial turf installation.

- Committee questioned why the ban is for artificial turf specifically. Ms. Tetro discussed that turf contains other toxins besides PFAS that are dangerous.
  - Committee discussed that if artificial turf is installed the Town would be assuming this risk, versus installation of natural grass that can make playing conditions harder.
  - Some towns have moratoriums on the installation of artificial turf.
  - Committee stated it needs more quantifiable information such as cost / benefit analyses, research on what other towns are doing to mitigate environmental concerns, and if other jurisdictions have banned it.
- Stormwater bylaw; water discharge bylaw: Not discussed.
  - Zoning bylaw restricting locations for firearm sales: Not discussed.

2. Bond Issue Update:

- a. Fred Turkington discussed that the bond issue will be updated for the warrant.
- b. Town is borrowing \$90 million at 1.9% and an estimated \$25 million at 2.5% for the high school and library projects.
- c. Total savings over earlier projections for Town of Sharon for interest over the 20-year loan will be \$7,575,515.

3. Priorities Committee Update. Fred Turkington, Dan Lewenberg and Patricia-Lee Achorn updated the Committee on the February 6, 2020 Priorities Meeting:
- a. Recommendation from the Priorities Committee meeting for the additional \$225,000 in anticipated revenue is to increase the health insurance fund by 3.5% and add \$100,000 to the OPEB trust. This will help the Town's bond rating which will enable the Town to borrow at more favorable rates in the future.

4. **Liaison Updates:** None given.

5. **Minutes to be Voted: January 06,2020**

**Motioned:** by Patricia-Lee Achorn **Seconded:** Edward Philips to approve the January 27, 2020 minutes **Voted:** 7-0-2. William Brack and Anil Ramoju abstained.

6. **Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair in 48 hours:** None discussed.

7. **Adjournment**

**Motion:** by Edward Philips **Seconded:** by Anja Bernier to adjourn **Voted:** 9-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:54 pm.