

**MINUTES**  
**CAPITAL OUTLAY COMMITTEE**  
December 17, 2015

**APPROVED**

The meeting of the Capital Outlay Committee was called to order in the Town Hearing Room at Sharon Community Center at 7:00 pm by Chair Paul Linehan.

**Members Present:**

Chair:	Paul Linehan
Board of Selectmen:	Walter “Joe” Roach and William Heitin
Finance Committee:	Gordon Gladstone
School Committee:	Emily Smith-Lee
Planning Board:	Robert Maidman and Louis Modestino

**Others Present:**

Town Administrator:	Frederic E. Turkington, Jr. (Ex-Officio)
Finance Director:	Cynthia Doherty (Ex-Officio)
Recreation Director:	Amanda Levasseur
Council on Aging Director:	Kathleen Medeiros
Council on Aging:	Nancy Weiner, Administrative Assistant
Library Director:	Lee Ann Amend
Civil Defense:	Michael Polimer
Forestry & Grounds:	Kevin Weber
Sharon Soccer Association:	Paul Driscoll

**Administrative Items**

Chair Paul Linehan requested that the Capital Outlay Committee members introduce themselves.

**MOTION:** (Heitin-Roach) To approve the Regular Session Minutes of December 10, 2015

**VOTED:** (6-0-0) **PASSES**

**Fields Presentation**

Paul Driscoll of the Sharon Soccer Consortium Board and Sharon Soccer Association was present to discuss the capital request to renovate and expand the town’s athletic fields. He presented the findings of the Fields Committee, which was formed about two years ago to study the need for additional field space and rehabilitation existing space. The Committee is comprised of members from the following groups: Board of Selectmen, High School Athletic Department, Recreation Department, Recreation Advisory Committee, Department of Public Works, various town sports groups and the parent teacher organization.

**The study outlines the following:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Current Field capacity and conditions | • Identifies fields in need of major renovation |
| • Who uses the fields and when          | • Cost estimates                                |
| • Exploring new field possibilities     |   |

Sharon school and youth sports organizations are in need of new and improved field space to conduct and accommodate their athletic activities. The last new field space was created in 1993; two soccer fields at Gavins Pond, when Sharon had a population of 15,517 in 1990. Sharon’s 2010 population grew to 17,612 and is expected to grow further to 19,089 by the year 2030. During the past twenty years a new sport to the town, lacrosse, was organized and now boasts an enrollment of 200 boys and girls but does not have dedicated field space. Sharon residents have formed an adult cricket club that will also need outdoor field space and they would like to organize a youth cricket team. Organized school and youth sports programs rely heavily on well-

maintained school and town owned facilities. Growing programs are struggling. Approximately 40% of school-aged children participate in field sports.

Land to build new fields in Sharon is scarce. The town contains approximately 15,600 acres of total area; however approximately 40 percent, or roughly 6,700 acres, is restricted use by conservation restrictions, conservation easements, agricultural land, wetlands, Lake Massapoag, Borderland State Park, Moose Hill Reservation, and Massachusetts Audubon reservations. There is no land available at the five public schools in Sharon to build new fields. A soccer field or a football field or a lacrosse field requires only two acres of land. We can surely find the space and the funds to create a safe environment for the children of Sharon to enjoy the countless benefits of athletics.

In 2007 the town undertook a study to update its Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). In addition to addressing the community's desire to preserve open space within the town the report also assessed youth athletic needs. In particular the study found "Sharon also hosts a thriving athletics environment for competitive team sports, including sports of the public schools and independent youth athletic leagues. Among these, football, lacrosse, softball, baseball and soccer have gigantic demand. These programs are growing, with both baseball and soccer now holding sessions in both fall and spring. Competition between sports groups for practice/play space has created heavy use of existing field areas, motivating many townspeople to seek to create new active-recreation areas. This documented need for additional field space has been unmet to date. The report further addresses the need to adequately maintain existing athletic facilities.

The analysis undertaken to prepare this report has clearly demonstrated the need for additional field space as well as improvements to existing fields. The football and lacrosse teams practice on undersized and poorly maintained fields. The soccer teams, both recreational and travel, practice on overcrowded fields. Fields at the Sharon Middle School have suffered from deferred maintenance along with the lack of proper irrigation. The Sharon High School fields are over used and provide poor playing surfaces. Heights and Cottage Elementary Schools have no available land to develop full sized playing fields. The fields at East Elementary School are in need of rehabilitation and maintenance. The fields at Ames Street suffer from poor drainage.

The population of Sharon has grown since the last new field space was developed in 1993 and will continue to grow. Sharon's excellent educational reputation and the town's social diversity should be matched by similar opportunities to excel at athletics.

The recommendation from the report is to build two new fields at the Gavins Pond and rehabilitate the fields at the high school, middle school, East Elementary, Ames Field, Gavins Pond and implement a stronger maintenance program for all fields. This plan will be put into place over a three-year period, which will allow the work to be done in stages to lessen the impact of taking field space out of service.

Mr. Heitin reviewed appendix D of the study, which outlines the multi-year plan and cost estimates. He noted that the budget is over a year old and may need to be updated. He would like to go over the numbers again with *Sports Turf Specialists*- the company that helped with the study. The estimate for the 3-year plan is approximately 1.9 million dollars. About one million of that budget will go toward the construction of two new fields. Mr. Heitin noted that the Committee understood that resources are scarce so they intend to apply to the Community Preservation Committee and gather support from the Capital Outlay Committee. They also plan to raise funds through private donations and fundraising efforts by various sports groups in town. Mr. Heitin noted they have challenged the groups to raise \$350,000 in private funds toward the project. Mr. Heitin explained that only the new construction involved in the fields project would be eligible for CPC funding.

The School Department has requested \$50,000 for a study to rehabilitate the fields at the Middle School, which Mr. Heitin believes could possibly be reduced by sharing some of the information from the study done by the Fields Committee. He would like for the Middle School fields to be phase 1 of the project with East Elementary as phase 2.

Mr. Heitin wants to get updated quotes and review the project with the Town Administrator to solidify a number to at least fund phase one of the project. The Committee discussed the 3-year plan. Mr. Heitin the plan could take up to 4 years depending on scheduling. He said the committee took into consideration the areas of greatest need first. They want to work closely with the sports groups to stage these projects so that they will have the least impact on the programmatic use of the field.

Mr. Linehan asked about *Sports Turf Specialists* and Kevin Weber noted that Denis Brolin has been in the business for over 25 years and they do both natural and artificial playing surfaces. He is well renowned and has done other work in town. The committee discussed natural playing surface versus artificial turf. Mr. Heitin noted you get 3x the wear out of the artificial field, but the cost is nearly 100% more than a natural surface. He also noted in the past there have been health concerns about artificial surfaces, which he believes have been overcome by enhancements to the materials. The turf field's lifespan is 10-15 years. It is less expensive to do a well-maintained grass field.

Mr. Gladstone asked about the \$165,000 in the budget for the maintenance of the fields. Mr. Heitin noted that the current budget is roughly half that. Mr. Turkington explained that phasing the project allows the maintenance item increase in the operating budget to ramp up over time to cover additional costs. Mr. Weber doesn't anticipate the cost to increase that dramatically. He said giving the fields time to rest results in overall less wear and tear. The maintenance includes items such as: fertilization, aeration, and over seeding. Mr. Gladstone asked if the youth organization pay a fee to contribute toward the maintenance of the fields. Mr. Weber said that each group does pay a fee to the town based on extent of use.

Mr. Samson Liao of 12 Turning Mill Road was present and noted that he lives two streets away from the soccer fields at Gavins Pond. He said the entire neighborhood is greatly impacted by the current traffic caused by the soccer fields. Mr. Liao has spoken at Town Meeting against the addition of fields and parking facilities at this location in the past and plans to do so again. He believes he represents his neighbors in speaking against this project as traffic has gotten continually worse and fears it will become an even greater problem. Mr. Liao believes the traffic and parking along the street is a safety issue. He also raised concerns with the financial impact on the maintenance budget. Mr. Liao believes the focus should be on increasing the maintenance of the existing fields rather than construction of additional fields and the environmental impact of new fields must be considered. Mr. Liao said he would like the Town to consider alternative locations for new fields. Mr. Driscoll noted that moving the location is quite costly and could potentially be up to one million dollars more. Mr. Heitin noted that they have considered other locations and that years ago locating three fields at the old dump site was going to be about 1.9 million.

Mr. Gladstone asked if the Conservation Commission or Water Management Committee had any input on the impact of the project. He noted that all but the fields at the Middle School have irrigation, so the impact will not on water will not be that significant and the overall project impact will be minimal.

### **Recreation Department Request**

#### **FY'17 Request - Ames Street Playground Renovation \$248,489**

Recreation Director Amanda Levasseur presented the department's request to renovate the Ames Street Playground. She explained that her intention is to apply to CPC for funding and present to Capital Outlay as a backup if for some reason they do not fund the project.

The project will repair and replace existing playground equipment and surface. The playground will be restructured to continue use of existing structures, add new play structures, and create accessible surfaces. Mrs. Levasseur noted that the playground will be repaired and improved to expand the life of the play structures, create an accessible surface and safe environment for existing playground users. The estimated cost of the project is \$248,489.00. Playground plans and cost estimate were provided to the committee.

## **Council on Aging Request**

### **FY'17 Request - Vehicle (car) \$18,000**

Council on Aging Director Kathleen Medeiros was present to explain the department's request for a new car. The vehicle will be used to transport seniors to medical appointments, spousal visits, volunteer employment and Adult Center Programs. The vehicle will replace a 2008 Crown Victoria, which currently has over 109,000 miles on it. It is rear wheel drive which poses dangerous driving conditions in the winter. The vehicle is town maintained. Nancy Weiner noted that volunteers are the primary drivers of our cars. She explained that in October of 2014 former COA director, Norma Simmons Fitzgerald submitted a Capital Outlay request for a new lift equipped van for FY'17. Nancy said they would like to delay that request for at least one year. Given the age and condition of the vehicle the department is seeking to replace, it is more urgent to request a new car rather than replace the van at this time. The estimated cost of the new vehicle is \$18,000.00.

## **Library Request**

### **FY'17 Request - Furnace Replacement \$75,000**

Library Director Lee Ann Amend was present to discuss the Library's request for a new furnace. The current gas-fired Weil-McLain Boiler and Power Flame Burner are 49 years old. The system shuts down 2-3 times per week during the cold season. Angelo Plumbing came out six times in 2014 to reset system and troubleshoot at no charge because the system started right up. The cost of the new system is approximately \$75,000. She provided estimates from Angelos Plumbing and Wilkinson. Ms. Amend noted that she was approached by other companies, but prevailing wage was an issue. She noted that Mass Saves has a rebate of up to \$7,500 and state aid may be available.

## **Civil Defense Request**

### **FY'17 Request - Emergency Power Dist Equipment \$13,000**

Michael Polimer presented the Civil Defense Capital Outlay Request for emergency power distribution equipment.

Four years ago, by using grant monies, matched with end of the budget year Fire Department & CD excess capacity plus some good luck we were able to acquire a very beautiful 100Kw 3 phase, Caterpillar diesel generator. Civil Defense volunteer designed and built a heavy duty trailer for transport and put it into service the following year.

Under a subsequent Capital program the lower level of the Community Center was wired up to be separately powered by this machine and be used as a small scale emergency shelter. While excellent for that specific application, the aforementioned Caterpillar 100Kw generator, is a "one trick pony" because it is only configured to hook into a building that accepts the large 3 phase, 400 ampere, 120/208 volt Cam-type cables.

Our 2017 project would allow us to purchase two, 3 phase to single phase converter boxes and associated cables and connectors. This, when combined with lower amperage distribution equipment we already have, would effectively give the Town a 100Kw end-to-end power distribution system that could replace an organic power distribution system should it fail due natural or manmade disaster. We would be expanding our cable inventory to allow us to be able to power multiple locations separated by up to 1,000 feet.

As always, the cost of buying this equipment is beyond the capacity of the \$10,000 Civil Defense yearly operating budget. As an example, the converter boxes cost \$1,500 each and the 3 phase cable is \$22 per foot. Single phase cable costs \$5 per foot. Buying 50 foot cables one or two at time out of Operating funds wouldn't ne the Town anything meaningful for many years. If properly protected the equipment will last 25 years or more and there are no further costs involved. Everything will be color coded and keyed so that even untrained personnel will be able to hook it up correctly and safely. Also included is \$1,000 for heavy duty storage shelving as the cables weigh at least one pound per foot.

Mr. Polimer provided a preliminary spreadsheet listing equipment and costs as well as informational sheets outlining the equipment specifications.

Mr. Polimer noted that adding this power equipment will give Civil Defense town wide connectivity for their large generator. Currently, the Community Center is the only town building with the same connectivity for use of the generator. There was a discussion about installing a connection point at the new public safety building.

Cindy Doherty is going to verify this request can be bonded.

### **Adjournment**

**MOTION:**      **(Heitin-Roach)** To adjourn the meeting at 8:55pm - unanimous  
**VOTED:**        **(6-0-0)**