

Town Council Minutes 11/20/2013
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AVON TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
November 20, 2013

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Avon Town Hall, in the Selectmen's Chamber by Chairman Zacchio. Members present: Mmes. Samul and Maguire and Messrs: Evans and Pena.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Zacchio.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

IV. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: None

V. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE: None

VI. COMMUNICATION FROM COUNCIL

Mrs. Maguire reported that Roaring Brook School had a fundraiser on Friday night, a movie night, with the book fair going on simultaneously; to kick-off movie night they showed Morgan Platt's roar video. She noted that there were approximately 250 students there with parents.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

12/13-64 Appointment: Natural Resources Commission (R – 12/31/2013)

On a motion made by Mr. Pena, seconded by Mr. Evans, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council table agenda item 12/13-64 Appointment: Natural Resources Commission (R – 12/31/2013) to the December 12, 2013 meeting.

Mmes: Samul and Maguire, Messrs: Zacchio, Evans, and Pena voted in favor.

13/14-11 FY 14/15 Budget: CIP Budget Presentations

a. Recreation and Parks - a power point presentation is attached and made part of these minutes

Glenn Marston, Director of Recreation and Parks, reported that the presentation is not much different than what you have seen before; they have been waiting on a number of projects and moving slowly on a few of them, in particular Fisher Meadows. He noted that at the Recreation and Parks Committee it was suggested that we push forward with the Fisher Meadows project in some way shape or form because we believe this will serve a large audience in terms of consolidating a great deal of their field operation into one location, being able to recapture facilities that we already have that are being underutilized because we are trying to put smaller size fields on larger size fields, etc. He added that this plan has been on his book since 1990-1991 and it was not until we actually bought the Fisher Farm that we were able to move forward with this. He reported that the budget number for fiscal year 2014/2015 is terrifying; they do have money in the Fisher Meadows Fund but until the Town makes some kind of commitment this or any of the projects that they are recommending it is going to be difficult to get grant money until they know that they are going to move forward at some particular time and commit to do those things. He noted that they thought they would do the Fisher Meadows project first, higher greater good for the largest number of people.

Mr. Marston reported that the Spring Lake/Willow Pond connection is still something that we are talking about between the Engineering Department and Town Manager's Office; we are trying to figure out if there is a benefit to doing this or have any value because we did have the pipe viewed and it is crushed from both ends all the way across the street.

Mr. Marston reported that the Sperry Park site has been cleaned out and looks very good; however parking has been an issue there forever. He reported that the pool painting is a cyclical process; we currently have money in this budget to paint the pool in the spring. He noted that all of the other item

requests are cascaded. He added that the three elephants in the room, so to speak, are Fisher Meadows, Sperry Park parking lot, and the Thompson Road Facility. He reported that the Recreation and Parks Committee is in concurrence that this is the priority order that we would deal with these items. He noted that since the old Towpath School was taken down there is adequate parking at Sperry Park but very unofficial; that is a decision that someone will need to make in the not too distant future, perhaps it stays that way. He added that the two biggest projects and biggest issues are Fisher Meadows and the Thompson Road Facility. He noted that nothing has changed since last year. Mrs. Samul commented that there was a drainage issue for the soccer fields last year. Mr. Marston responded that was taken care of. Mrs. Samul asked for confirmation that had nothing to do with the crushed pipe between the two ponds. Mr. Marston responded that it does not; those are two different issues. He added that there is no change in the order of the projects. He noted that close to \$100,000 has already been spent or committed to the planning for the Fisher Meadows project; we currently have approximately \$250,000 in the Fisher Meadows Fund which can only be used at Fisher Meadows; we have already spent close to \$125,000 out of that Fund. Mr. Evans questioned how much the project cost. Mr. Marston responded that the total project cost is \$1,381,188; we have already spent approximately \$80,000 on the project. Mr. Evans commented that if we have \$250,000 in the Fund already we do not need the remaining balance requested. Mr. Marston responded that it would depend on how Town Council and the Board of Finance decided to use that \$250,000. Mr. Evans questioned if grant money has been explored for this project. Mr. Marston responded that there is grant money but most of them are through the State and very little Federal money and require that there be some commitment to move forward on the project otherwise they continue to get pushed back. Chairman Zacchio questioned if we are at the point with the Fisher development in terms of documents we have to be able to apply for grants at this point if we were moving forward or is there more work to be done. Mr. Marston responded that a number of the fields that currently exist are underutilized because they are used for different things. He showed Council the proposed design. He noted that Avon High School has a lot of use on this property as does youth soccer, youth lacrosse, baseball, and softball.

Mr. Marston reported that the topic of the day is the Thompson Road Facility. He noted that he cannot see any way that we can use financial resources on a baseball field and would be better off putting whatever resource we have onto a couple of the facilities that we already have. Chairman Zacchio commented that the baseball folks would agree that there is no need for a baseball field there; it was a conceptual drawing at the time and has been involved with all of those conversations; the baseball coach has no interest in a new field there, he is happy at Buckingham. Mr. Marston commented that the next phase would be to put this together in a different fashion and how do we get in, how do we get out, does a multi-purpose stadium stay that close to Thompson Road, do we take the space where the baseball field is, do we put a naturally field there for either practice space or overflow parking. He noted that one advantage with this site is most of the utilities are there; there is water up to the building that already exists there. He commented that it is a fairly remote site which has good drainage and everything that we need to do. He noted that the decisions on how these things go, as he will not be here a year from now, he is giving them his recommendations as to what he thinks we should do which is somewhat agreeable with the Recreation and Parks Committee; it is really up to the Town with how they want to proceed with these things.

Chairman Zacchio commented that he has been at some of those meetings as well. He noted that in 2006 there were some monies that were pledged to build an athletic facility at Avon High School; it went as far as the Council applying through Planning and Zoning for permitting, there was conversation about the lights and the number of events that might take place there over two semesters; it did not ever happen and the monies that was being pledged at the time had vanished; this land when it became available, the conversation started up again after the pollution piece was remediated to see if there were still people interested in making a donation that helps to make this happen sooner than what we might think in terms of capacity on the bond cycle over the next five years. He added that there is

this group that is talking about it and a lot of discussion over location. He commented that the question will be whether or not this group wants to raise some funds to help make that happen and then that decision falls with the Council in terms of how we want to move forward. Mr. Evans commented that we are talking about artificial turf fields as opposed to Fisher Meadows which will stay regular grass. Mr. Marston reported that we have had three or three floods at Fisher Meadows in the last two and half years which does not make sense putting a turf field there. Mr. Evans questioned that if we were to add the number of fields suggested at Fisher Meadows, do we also need artificial fields and if so, why. Mr. Marston responded yes; the Fisher Farms project serves a practice need. He noted that there are eleven field teams at the High School in the fall; there is no way that they can practice on one site every day and if you dealt solely with the High School you would lose all of the support of all of the youth leagues who are used to at least getting a portion of what is out there; it will solve game problems, it will put our athletic teams on a competitive balance with many of the other towns. He noted that coaches are finding fewer natural surfaces to play on; the youth organizations are starting to find the same thing when they go into the State cup and Lacrosse tournaments. He added that you can play game after game on one facility almost regardless of the weather conditions which also causes transportation problems for the kids and for the schools. He noted that they are two completely different things, one serves a greater good for games and the other solves a problem of maintenance by bringing a lot of what is all over Town into one place. Chairman Zacchio commented that he envisions it as a game facility with a track; the pressure comes from most kids that are playing on artificial surfaces elsewhere like Granby, Canton, and Farmington. He noted that there is the thought of having Friday and Saturday night games and have more of a community focus.

Chairman Zacchio commented how great the Sycamore Hills tennis courts look. Mr. Marston credited Bruce Williams, Director of Public Works, for running that contract from beginning to end with Public Works.

b. Board of Education – a power point presentation is attached and made part of these minutes Bill Stokesbury, Chairman, Board of Education Capital Budget Committee, presented the Board of Education capital budget requests for FY 14/15. He introduced John Spang, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations and Gary Mala, Superintendent of School, Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, and Peggy Roell, Chairman – Board of Education, Kathy Zirolli, Chairman – Board of Education Committees for Finance and Policy and soon to be his successor as liaison to the Board of Finance.

Mr. Stokesbury reported that their budget requests this year continue their long standing practice largely by necessity of focusing on bricks and mortar projects and using proposals directed at improving education. He gave a brief review of recent work: they bought one bus for \$7,000 which is basically running non-stop and Mr. Spang is scouring the landscape looking for a similar bus hopefully with a handicap accessibility lift. He added that they re-equipped the Middle School media center with new furniture paid through the operating budget funds; they installed lobby furniture at the High School and funds came from the Student Activity Fund; they have done major flooring projects re-doing corridors as needed at all of the schools and some classrooms at the Middle School and Roaring Brook; and they have undertaken a significant security upgrade throughout the schools last year.

Mr. Stokesbury reported on the Board's FY 14/15 capital budget requests at a total of \$623,137 for nine projects; each of these estimates would be subject to further refinement if approved and then as part of the vetting/bidding process. He highlighted each item. Chairman Zacchio questioned that we have \$62,500 already designated for the Roaring Brook School fire alarm system. Mr. Stokesbury responded yes, this is the balance. He reported that items two and three were proposals that came from the Avon Clean Energy Commission and would like to honor their hard work and good thought.

Mr. Stokesbury reported that with item #4 the lower level of the Middle School is often damp and over the last few years there have been increased episodes of water infiltration during storms; some remediation work has been done following their consultant's recommendations; they snaked out the

exterior drainage system, installed a sump pump but unfortunately they still have a problem. He added that in 2013 they have had three separate incidents of mold growing in isolated locations within the lower level. Mrs. Samul sought clarification that the drainage system from the building that goes downhill is backing up. Mr. Stokesbury responded no, there may be some water coming through the sidewalls or up from the foundation but he does not believe that we have a situation where the drainage system itself is percolating up and backing up into the building. Mr. Gaski added that when there is a heavy rain the water will pond down below on the athletic fields so the school is considerably higher than the athletic fields so it does not backup that far; all of the water is typically groundwater that comes up through the bottom of the building which infiltrates the main electrical gear and a stairwell. Mrs. Samul questioned what has changed since the building was built that the water is now percolating through the foundation. Mr. Stokesbury responded that the first issue is that the school is forty years old so lots of things could have changed; they thought it may have been the exterior drainage system which is why they snaked it out. He noted that there is now a major housing project on top of the hill behind the school. Mrs. Samul commented that forty year old houses do not necessarily percolate even in high water tables so that one she is not comfortable with; something maybe changed the drainage. She questioned if there is another structural item going on and if they are looking to put in footing drains around the exterior of the foundation. Mr. Stokesbury responded that the proposed project would be exterior increased curtain drains. He added that in the last five years we have tremendous rain storms. Chairman Zacchio questioned if we have talked to the Department of Public Works (DPW) about solutions for this and the estimate in general. The Town Manager responded that DPW or Town Engineer has taken a look at it in the past. Mr. Stokesbury reported that the estimate of \$65,000 is from their outside engineering consultant recognizing that hopefully as they move forward with the project we are going to take advantage of obviously our homegrown Town, both from the Engineering Department and DPW, to see if use of their time is appropriate or not and obviously a budget issue on the Town side. He added that they tried to alleviate the problem with a sump pump and found in at least one storm that it was an insufficient fix and there is still some minor flooding. He added that it needs a more proactive repair.

Mr. Stokesbury reported that educators have recognized the need to re-focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) so our students can meet the challenges of 21st century business and excel. He added that the Town and the Board has already made major advances in bringing new and appropriate technology into the classroom; it is now appropriate to turn their attention to the science labs. He reported that the request is for seed money to obtain an in-depth third party review of the rooms and equipment to determine what work, if any, what changes, if any, would be appropriate to help deliver a modern science curriculum to the students. He added that the work to be done may not be evenly divided between the High School and Middle School; the study will have to tell us how these rooms would be used given the current teaching techniques, more computer work and more hands on. He noted that based on the review they would anticipate coming back in the upcoming year with one or more related proposals. Mr. Evans questioned that they are looking for money in order to do architectural and design work or to study the actual needs of the district in regards to the science labs. Mr. Stokesbury responded that they would use an outside professional to focus on the ways the rooms are laid out, what equipment should be in a modern middle/high school science lab, and how that room would be configured. Mr. Evans questioned if they have already in place specifications on curriculum goals that would guide what the budget would involve. Mr. Stokesbury responded that they are developing curriculum changes now for the common core so it would be dovetailing into the most recent national requirements. Chairman Zacchio questioned who does this type of assessment. Mr. Stokesbury responded that it is a subset of an architectural firm that is active in schools, no different than laying out a need for a new Middle School or new lab. Mrs. Samul suggested that verification of ADA compliance be sought.

Mr. Stokesbury reported that the High School track is used by residents and student athletes year round,

almost 24/7; it needs to be resurfaced now in order to avoid further decay and the need for total replacement. He noted that resurfacing costs is \$55,000; replacement cost is \$300,000; the cost avoidance for accidents and injuries is priceless. He added that the 5-7 year cycle is a known maintenance requirement for this type of surface. Chairman Zacchio noted that the track with donated with 100% private money.

Mr. Stokesbury reported that Roaring Brook School floors and ceilings need to be replaced; sixteen classrooms need new flooring and twenty-six classrooms need both flooring and ceilings. Chairman Zacchio questioned if these are the classrooms that have carpeting. Mr. Stokesbury responded yes, they would be replacing a lot of the carpeting with rubberized product which helps indoor air quality and moisture control. He reported that ceiling tiles are bowing and cracking. He noted that the ceiling work should be done before the floor work since the room has to be emptied anyway. It is a huge request with half of their budget request but it does address the need in their oldest building. Mr. Evans questioned if this was in last year's capital budget request as well. Mr. Stokesbury responded that flooring was in there. He noted that we have done corridors in all of the schools where there was no rubberized product and four classrooms at Roaring Brook School.

Mr. Stokesbury reported that at the Middle School Media Center they replaced the original furniture, and re-painted the room this past year; however they did not have funds remaining to replace the flooring, a combination of carpeting under the seating areas and rubberized product in the corridor sections of the room.

Mr. Stokesbury reported that Roaring Brook School is their oldest, active school; given its age and condition many of the systems are getting tired. They have determined that a comprehensive third party review of the physical components of the building would benefit us in analyzing how to move forward in a coherent long-term project rather than addressing them only as immediate needs arise. He noted that the last major work done was in 1993. He added that the report would assist them in prioritizing the work, coming back to Town Council in the out years as to how to undertake that work. Mrs. Samul questioned when the furnace was replaced. Mr. Stokesbury responded that it was replaced in 2008. Mrs. Samul commented that some work has been done since the 1990s. Mrs. Samul questioned if asbestos was removed. Mr. Stokesbury responded that asbestos was removed from the boiler room. He added that we did seven roof-top units last year but the core structure has not been touched.

Mr. Stokesbury reported that we have a lot of roof-top units. He advocates for a more comprehensive plan to replace these critical infrastructure components in a systematic way in order to avoid the risk of untimely failures. He noted that they have been very fortunate that they have not had a major failure during a school year. He would like to see as a long range plan work to replace items before they fail on some systematic program.

Mr. Stokesbury offered to members of the Town Council, Board of Finance, and Town staff the opportunity to tour schools with Board of Education staff to look at these issues. He noted that we did this a few years back and it was helpful to put some meaning behind the request. He thanked the Council for their time. Mr. Evans questioned if the capital budget items are listed in priority. Mr. Stokesbury responded that they are in order of priority as adopted by the Board of Education with first being the highest.

13/14-27 Appointment: Natural Resources Commission (R – 12/31/2015)

On a motion made by Mr. Pena, seconded by Mr. Evans, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council table agenda item 13/14-27 Appointment: Natural Resources Commission (R – 12/31/2015) to the December 12, 2013 meeting.

Mmes: Samul and Maguire, Messrs: Zacchio, Evans, and Pena voted in favor.

13/14-30 Review, Discussion, Set Public Hearing: Fisher Farm Lease (East Side of Tillotson Road/North of Fisher Meadows)

Chairman Zacchio reported that a farmer is leasing the Farmington property as well as the forty-seven

acres on the west side of the property and will continue to do that under the old lease program that we had for years under the dollar a lease program to keep the land open but was unable to handle the property on the other side; we went out to RFP and received bids from more commercial farming that will use that land for crops. He added that we were waiting on DEEP and others to give us feedback on what is in the lease in terms of the herbicides that would be used and the Town Manager has finished that assessment and is now comfortable with us moving forward with setting a public hearing. Mr. Evans questioned if the lease amount is annually or over the three years. The Town Manager responded that it is over three years. Chairman Zacchio commented that Farmington has a number of properties that they lease that are farm related and they do not look to profit from any of that land, they just hope to keep it maintained and typically they lease somewhere in the realm of \$30 to \$35 per acre. He noted that this lease for Avon is approximately \$75 per acre. He added that he talked to Doug Thompson about the lease amount as well. He commented that we will have two operating farms with three different farmers. The Town Manager reported that Logue will be a great fit as he has a lot of the big equipment, a lot of experience in farming, and is more than happy to help the other farmer to the extent that he can. Chairman Zacchio reported that the \$25,000 goes to an Open Space account within Fisher Meadows that can be used for the improvement of or purchase of open space in other parts of Town as well but theoretically we would keep it within the Fisher Meadows Fund.

On a motion made by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mr. Pena, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council set a public hearing to be held at the December 12, 2013 meeting to consider and authorize the proposed Fisher Farm Lease located on the east side of Tillotson Road and to the north of Fisher Meadows.

Mmes: Samul and Maguire, Messrs: Zacchio, Evans, and Pena voted in favor.

Mr. Pena questioned if the monies can be used for maintenance and not to purchase open space.

Chairman Zacchio responded that it can be used for any betterment of the property or can be transferred to another open space parcel that the Town owns for the betterment of that. Mr. Pena questioned if we can utilize the special fund that Planning and Zoning has that they get for open space. The Town Manager responded that this is specifically the Fisher Meadows Special Revenue Fund (Fund 12) specifically for use at the Fisher Meadows property. Chairman Zacchio added that this ties back to the federal money that we utilize to purchase that in the first place. The Town Manager reported that he will give Council a copy of the policy statement for the Special Revenue Fund that explains what it can be used for. Mr. Pena questioned how much we have in that Fund right now. The Town Manager responded that there is approximately \$157,000 in the Fund which includes the revenues from the Avon Water Company.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

13/14-36 Resignation: Natural Resources Commission (D – 12/31/2013)

On a motion made by Mr. Pena, seconded by Mr. Evans, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council accept with regret the resignation of Daryl Worobow from the Natural Resources Commission.

Mmes: Samul and Maguire, Messrs: Zacchio, Pena, and Evans voted in favor.

13/14-38 Appointment: Natural Resources Commission (D – 12/31/2013)

On a motion made by Mr. Pena, seconded by Mrs. Maguire, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council table agenda item 13/14-38 Appointment: Natural Resources Commission (D – 12/31/2013) to the December 12, 2013 meeting.

Mmes: Maguire and Samul, Messrs: Zacchio, Evans, and Pena voted in favor.

13/14-39 Appointment: Recreation & Parks Committee (R – 12/31/2013)

On a motion made by Mr. Zacchio, seconded by Mrs. Samul, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That Town Council appoints Todd Donovan to the Recreation & Parks Committee with a term to expire on December 31, 2013.

Mmes: Maguire and Samul, Messrs: Zacchio, Evans, and Pena voted in favor

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT/MISCELLANEOUS

The Town Manager reported that there will be a grand re-opening of McDonald's in Simsbury on December 5th at 10 a.m. He added that First Selectman Mary Glassman will be cutting the ribbon but he will be standing there with her and both will speak. Mrs. Samul questioned the status on the contaminated piece next to McDonald's. The Town Manager responded that he does not know of any plans for that. He can find out if there are any further developments.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

XI. ADJOURN

On a motion made by Mr. Pena, seconded by Mr. Evans, it was voted:

RESOLVED: That the Town Council adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Mmes: Samul and Maguire, Messrs: Zacchio, Evans, and Pena voted in favor.

Attest:

Ann L. Dearstyne, Town Clerk