

2023 AUG 21 P 3: 15

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND TAXATION**  
**THURSDAY, March 2, 2023 7:00 PM**  
**School Committee Conference Room, Stoughton Public Schools District Office**  
**31 Pierce Street, Stoughton, MA 02072**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Agenda items may be taken out of order at Chairman's Discretion**

1. Mr. Vaughan Enokian, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM .

Mr. Enokian thanked the School Committee for offering space for the meeting given the damage to the town hall, result of a water sprinkler break.

2. Mr. Enokian asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Mr. Anzivino made the motion to open the Public hearing, seconded by Bob Desmond. The motion passed.

Present: Vaughan Enokian, Chair, John Anzivino, Vice Chair, Eric Anderson (arrived 8:12pm), Robert Desmond, Dianne Dolan, Laura Gunn, Elliot Hansen, David Lurie, Mark Struck, Joel Wolk

Absent: Chet Collins, Adam Iacabucci, Kerry Marrocco, Dr. Jess Miner, John Walsh

4. Article 27 Community Preservation Committee FY2024 Budget/Report Michael Barrett, treasurer of CPC, Mark Zamanian, Chair, Barry Kassler, Program Administrator

Mr. Barrett using a slide presentation explained the format of the budget and the report. He said 11 projects had been recommended by the annual town meeting, the cost \$2,370,100 cash.

The 11 projects fall within the categories of recreation, open space, and historic preservation. He said there were no housing projects. He pointed out that a stabilization fund had been established at the request of the Select Board.

The debt schedule includes 15 projects now bonded at a cost of \$2,952,000. He indicated that Glen Echo and Capen Reynolds were bonded FY23 in June. Mr. Barrett explained that bonding of the railway station was not in place pending an established use for the funds. He explained that the decision had been made to pay off the BAN for the train station rather than carry the loan. Article 69 was discussed with Article 27 at the request of the Finance Committee.

The total funding for the year is \$1,051,259 distributed as follows: \$126,000 open space, \$310,000 historic preservation, \$516,000 for housing. Administrative expenses estimated at 4.99% as permitted by the State.

Mr. Wolk asked about the unissued debt service for high school tennis courts, track lighting.

Mr. Zamanian responded that these items had closed last year.

Mr. Lurie asked for a clarification of the BAN for the train station.

Mr. Zamanian responded that originally the CPC was going to town meeting with article 69 to convert the BAN of \$320,000 to a cash article. But, after consultation with Mr. Rowe, it was better for the town to pay off the BAN. Mr. Zamanian said the 9-member committee voted unanimously. He continued further that funds not yet issued have a 2-year shelf-life, and spending has to begin. But because the definitive use had not been determined, the bonding could not begin, so it was decided to pay off the BAN.

**Committee on Finance and Taxation Open Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 2, 2023 7:00 PM.**

Ms. Dolan asked for breakdown of funds spent on the train station.  
Mr. Zamanian responded that funds were spent on rehab.  
Mr. Desmond inquired about ending balances.  
Mr. Barrett responded a bit over \$6,000,000 with \$2.4 million to be spent.  
Mr. Lurie asked if there was a schedule indicating when debt balances end.  
Mr. Barrett said yes.  
Mr. Zamanian said that it usually comes from Mr. Rowe.  
Mr. Kassler said he could provide that information.  
Mr. Lurie asked about paying cash and not bonding any of the articles.  
Mr. Zamanian said the process is monitored carefully, as there is a benefit to using cash.  
Mr. Anzivino interjected that approved articles are the town's obligation, and it is the town that backs the funding.  
Mr. Barrett said the borrowing obligation goes through CPC.

5. Article 28 Capen Reynolds Dog Park and Community Gardens Mr. Richard Terry, Mr. Mark Zamanian

Mr. Zamanian said the cost of this article is \$463,000 to be paid in cash.  
Mr. Terry, on the Capen-Reynolds committee since 1995 reviewed the historical progress and funds spent. He explained the concept is to build a dog park, and a community garden. Originally, they had thought to build it under the high voltage wires, but had been refused a right-of-way by the electric company. Mr. Terry said the project was approved the same year as the Glen Echo project but had been delayed, as the town engineer had not been able to assist the Friends of Capen-Reynolds. A consultant had been hired cost \$40,000, to re-design , expand the scope.  
Mr. Terry said \$50,000 has been pledged by the Friends, \$30,000 by the conservation committee. He said the group has applied to the Stanton organization that awards grants for dog parks.  
Mr. Terry explained approval of this article is the first step.  
Mr. Hansen asked if the wetlands had been delineated.  
Mr. Terry said the 50' markers were in place and the document has been approved by the Planning Board. He said there is access except for the vernal pool.  
Mr. Lurie asked about the relocation and the relative size of the dog park.  
Mr. Terry responded behind the barn doors, near the stone wall in the tree area. Mr. John Linehan added that some trees need to stay, white pine, red oak, cherry. As to size, the park in Randolph is 1 acre, Stoughton will be .35 acres. He said it is a state requirement that the park not be too large, owners must be able to keep their dogs in sight.  
Mr. Lurie asked if there could be a connection between Capen-Reynolds and Glen Echo.  
Mr. Terry responded not at this time, as much of the connecting property is privately owned. He said a 10-spot parking lot is being planned.  
Mr. Lurie asked about maintenance.  
Mr. Terry explained that there are waterlines and that the facility will be on the town's trash pick-up schedule.  
Mr. Wolk said it would be helpful to provide a visual of the site-layout.  
Mr. Zamanian said it was available.  
Mr. Enokian asked that the site layout be emailed to him.

Mr. Anzivino said he had objected to the original proposal because it was located under the power lines.

Mr. Zamanian complimented the efforts of Mr. Terry and said the project has been moving forward under his capable direction.

Ms. Stephanie Carrara, town meeting representative, asked if the new plan had been presented to town counsel.

She said town meeting had approved the original plan, and now it was different.

Mr. Zamanian responded that this plan had not gone before town meeting but had been approved by the Planning Board. Mr. Zamanian said the previous request had not been tied to a specific location.

Ms. Carrara asked if the DPW had been contacted.

Mr. Zamanian said the CPC asked DPW about trash and received an answer in writing.

Ms. Cynthia Walsh said she thought for town meeting, it would be a good idea to provide site maps for the following articles 28,29,30,31. Full-sized maps outside the auditorium would be helpful to the town meeting representatives.

Mr. Zamanian said he would do his best to provide.

Mr. Enokian expressed his concern over the delay so far, monies spent and the little progress.

Mr. Zamanian responded that CPC is working on a policy to ensure monitoring of the various projects, time-lines and sunset clauses on funding.

6. Article 29 Rehabilitation of Denison Athletic Complex, Design Phase Mr. Mark Zamanian, Mr. Matt Cauchon, recreational director

Mr. Zamanian said this request is for \$37,000 and meets the requirements for CPC projects under the category of recreation. He said this is a cash article.

Mr. Cauchon explained further that this request was for fields between the Wilkins and the High School. He said the fields should be brought into the modern era and are heavily used by children and adults. The fields are used for flag football, STYOAC, the high school. He said the fields were built in 1985 and have been used for varsity football as recently as 5 years ago. The surface is stone dust, which is a poor surface to play on. Today's fields are built on clay. He indicated that the request would permit the addition of dug outs.

Mr. Wolk asked for a clarification of the request.

Mr. Cauchon said the project will go out for bid.

Mr. Lurie expressed his support.

Ms. Dolan asked if there would be additional lights for the fields.

Mr. Cauchon responded no.

Mr. Anzivino asked why not make a request for all of the work to be done.

Mr. Zamanian replied that there were too many variables, too many aspects to the total work to be done.

Mr. Anzivino expressed support for the project.

7. Article 30- Lighting and Scoreboards for Miller, O'Day and Goff Fields Ms. Heather Trocki, Ms. Liz Giordano

Ms. Trocki, president of Stoughton Youth Baseball said the request for \$145,000 is for the installation lights at the back of Miller Field.

Mr. Zamanian said the project received a vote of 5-1, explaining that he had originally voted against because the Select Board had added the requirement for an annual permission. He said the Select Board has now removed this restriction, citing if there are neighbor complaints, there are other avenues. Mr. Barry Kassler remarked the lights would be installed on the Elm Street Complex and would be used for tournaments in June and July. He said Stoughton Youth Baseball would bear the utility cost. In addition, the request would permit the replacement of two existing scoreboards.

Ms. Trocki, president of SYB commented that Miller field is the center field, located lower and that lighting would have little impact on the neighborhood. She added that SYB is celebrating 70 years. Ms. Giordano, sponsorship, and head of funding said the games are finished by 8 to 10 PM.

Mr. Wolk asked if the town would procure services.

Mr. Zamanian responded that SYB was a private applicant and would defray costs.

Mr. Wolk confirmed that as a private party, all maintenance would be the responsibility of the applicant.

Ms. Gunn asked if any consideration was given to lights for days other than the weekends.

Ms. Trocki responded that could be a consideration.

Mr. Anderson asked the life span of the lights to be installed.

Mr. Wolk responded 25 years.

Mr. Anzivino pointed out that the lights would be used approximately 2 months out of the year, meaning the life span would be longer. Mr. Anzivino also said as the lights will face inward onto the field, there should very low impact on the neighbors.

Ms. Dolan expressed support for the article and asked if the neighbors had been contacted.

Ms. Trocki responded yes and said historically there has been very good rapport between SYB and the neighbors. She added that she had grown up on Elm Street.

Mr. Zamanian credited Ms. Trocki for her efforts on behalf of SYB and her relationship with the neighbors.

#### 8. Article 31 Renovation of Marks Field, Design Phase

Mr. Zamanian explained that this article is from STOYAC, cost \$12,500 cash. He said that CPC had voted 11/2/2022, 8 in favor and 0 no. He said this request is for the design stage.

Mr. Mike Toopin stated that Marks Field needs work, leveling, irrigation and increased parking.

Mr. Zamanian added that he had walked the field and confirmed that the field is in poor shape. He said off-street parking is essential to lessen the impact on the neighbors.

Mr. Wolk asked if this was a third-party request.

Mr. Zamanian responded that the grant would go directly to STOYAC.

Mr. Struck asked about emergency access as this is on a dead-end road, and if there would be other uses.

Mr. Zamanian responded no other formal sports were considered.

Mr. Hansen suggested signs reminding residents to pick up after their dogs.

Mr. Lurie asked the duration of the season.

Mr. Toopin responded March through June.

Mr. Wolk said it would be helpful to include the estimate and a site plan in the article.

Mr. Enokian confirmed the field needs work.

#### 9. Article 32 Office Storage Equipment for the Old Stoughton Music Society Ms. Renee LeBlanc, Mr. Ed Quigley

Mr. Zamanian noted this request falls under the category of historical preservation, cash article for \$7,500. The CPC voted in favor 8 yes 0 no.

Ms. LeBlanc said the office is housed in a basement room. Over the years, more music has been acquired, many documents are 100 years old, and vulnerable as they are stored in cardboard boxes on an unfinished cement floor. She said the society is 237 years old, the oldest in the country. She said the group has not requested funds in 20 years.

Mr. Anderson admitted that he had been contacted by the group and apologized for his non-response. He asked the number of members in the society.

Ms. LeBlanc responded 22 members. She said the society has endured through WWI, WWII, Spanish Flu. She said the society has sung at Copley and Charwell recently and expects to sing at town meeting.

Mr. Anderson asked for a breakdown of the cost.

Ms. LeBlanc responded funds are needed for 5-drawer file cabinets.

Mr. Anderson suggested adding supportive documents.

Mr. Zamanian suggested conferring with Ms. Fran Bruttaniti or Mr. Rowe.

Mr. Anzivino commented that the file cabinets should be protective against water damage.

Mr. Lurie said he was looking forward to the performance at town meeting and asked if the society had checked with the archive room at the library.

Mr. Zamanian replied that the archive room is at capacity.

Ms. LeBlanc said the society has a member with archival experience. In response to a question from Mr. Hansen, Ms. LeBlanc responded that Stoughton's Music Society is listed as the oldest in the country and is noted in the Guinness Book of Records. She said the society has roots back to 1722.

10. Article 33 Preservation of Town of Stoughton Vital Records Ms. Stephanie Carrara, town clerk  
Mr. Zamanian said this article conforms to state requirements under historical preservation, cost \$35,000 cash. He said the CPC voted 7 yes 0 no to support.

Ms. Carrara thanked CPC for increasing the amount of her request. She said the project of record preservation had begun two years ago. She said Kofile, a company that assists with the archival process, had been hired for a trial. They took 3 street listings for bounding. She said the result was a great job and a great experience. Ms. Carrara exhibited the deterioration of a 1944 volume. She said the ultimate goal was to digitalize.

Mr. Struck asked the location of the existing storage area.

Ms. Carrara responded some upstairs, and some downstairs in a vault. She said the current storage is okay. She said there are documents dating back to 1600's. She mentioned the interest in genealogy. During the water break, Ms. Carrara said census documents had been rescued through a drying-out process on a clothesline in the town clerk's office.

Ms. Carrara said the department is researching laser-fiche, due to the importance of preserving text and penmanship of the documents.

Ms. Dolan asked if the public would have access.

Ms. Carrara responded no. She said Mr. Dave Lambert had taken photos. Documents will be scanned and uploaded onto the website. She said there is interest in the ancestry of the Mayflower.

Ms. Dolan asked if there were any town residents with ancestral links to the Mayflower.

Ms. Carrara answered that Ms. Virginia McGrath, former employee at the town hall now deceased, was listed as a descendant.

Ms. Walsh thanked Ms. Carrara for her efforts to preserve the census documents.

11. Article 34 Cedar Hill Golf Course Renovations Mr. Victor Barruzza, Superintendent  
Mr. Zamanian said the request for \$125,000 cash would be spent on the repair or replacement of tee boxes. On 12/7/2022 the CPC had voted 8 yes 0 no to support this article.

Mr. Barruzza said the repair needed is a direct result of an increase in players. He said there has been a 46% increase in play, the course serves approximately 120,000 rounds annually. He said the tee boxes are small, with little opportunity to create more space. Mr. Barruzza stated that irrigation on the 1<sup>st</sup> fairway, quoted at \$150,000 was increased to \$170,000 per the suggestion of CPC and the recommendation of the engineering department.

Mr. Wolk asked who would write the bid specifications.

Mr. Barruzza responded Ms. Bruttaniti or himself.

Mr. Anzivino asked the importance of the fence.

Mr. Barruzza responded to keep carts out of some areas, to guide players to the club house, and to prevent golfers from walking on the course without paying.

Mr. Enokian asked if this was a request that should fall under maintenance.

Mr. Barruzza responded that the request was for the repair of tee boxes on 1,3,4,5 and 7.

Mr. Barruzza explained that currently there is \$306,000 in retained earnings. He said \$20,000 would be used for this article at the request of CPC.

Mr. Barruzza said it is proposed to use \$130,000 for gas storage and \$50,000 for small equipment storage.

Mr. Zamanian in response to Mr. Enokian, stated that CPC can fund renovations but not maintenance costs.

Mr. Lurie asked the CPC vote.

Mr. Zamanian responded on November 7, 2022 the CPC had voted 8 yes 0 no in favor.

12. Article 36 Parking and Trail Head Construction at Atkinson Ave. Ext. Mr. Gerry MacDonald, Chair of the Conservation Committee

Mr. MacDonald explained that this article refers to 100 acres off Ryan Road, 88 acres were donated and 4-5 acres were purchased to construct parking. He explained the article will pay for parking, trailhead and a small marker designating the donor of the acreage. He said there will be kiosks for community announcements. He explained that the cost estimate is recommended by the engineering department.

Mr. Wolk requested a sketch of the area.

Mr. MacDonald said a sketch of the area is available.

Mr. Anzivino commended the Conservation Commission on its negotiating skills in securing the 4-5 acres. Mr. Anzivino expressed his support for the project.

Mr. Struck asked if the parking area off Atkinson Ave would have lighting.

Mr. MacDonald responded that it is a small rustic lot, and no additional lighting is planned, expecting that usage will be daytime.

Mr. Struck cautioned that there could be problems with no lighting.

Mr. MacDonald replied that the parking will be very close to the road, and a gate may be considered to keep ATV's and cars out of the area.

Mr. Zamanian concurred with Mr. Struck, adding that a gate will be a good idea.

Mr. Lurie added his support of the article and asked if the article covered only the preliminary phase.

Mr. MacDonald responded that this particular area is an access point following the memorial requirements of the donor. He said the next step will be to map the trails, which should not require funding from the town.

Mr. Struck asked if a crosswalk is planned to connect Bird Park with this access point.

Mr. MacDonald said no.

Mr. Anzivino asked about a barricade/fence to discourage ATV vehicles.

Mr. MacDonald said the commission is sensitive to unauthorized use and the design will prohibit access for ATV's.

Mr. Enokian expressed his support and noted his appreciation for the efforts of the Conservation Commission to make possible this public access to walk trails.

#### 13. Article 37 Acquisition of property off Benson Road

Mr. Zamanian said this qualifies for CPC funds under the category of Open Space. On January 4, 2023, the committee voted 7 yes 0 no to support this article. He said the requested amount is \$220,000 cash. He explained that this article had been suggested by a resident, Ms. Paula Grubenskas.

Mr. John Linehan, chair of the Open Space committee was pleased to introduce Ms. Grubenskas.

Ms. Paula Grubenskas said she requested this article in the interest of protecting the land, and the animal habitat.

Mr. Linehan said it is critical to maintain open space. There are approximately 12 acres. He said Ms. Grubenskas offered the 12 acres at a cost of \$165,000. He said the town owns 50 acres that abut this land, and an appraisal is pending. Once the appraisal is in hand, the conservation commission will need to grant an easement to protect the wildlife habitat.

Mr. Struck suggested that better maps are needed to assist town meeting members in locating the parcel.

Ms. Grubenskas said the property is at the end of Benson Road, borders the hospital field, near the Dorchester Brook.

Mr. MacDonald said this area abuts 50 acres of protected land, and acquisition of the 12 acres will provide additional access.

#### 14. Article 38- Depot Stabilization Fund

Mr. Zamamian explained that this article was requested by the Select Board and falls within the guidelines under the category of historical preservation. He said it is an article for \$200,000 cash. He noted that the train depot is listed on the National Registry. The article requests funds for interior repairs, heating to facilitate use of the building and water to provide a bathroom. He said perhaps some locks and some window repair. Mr. Zamanian stated that Mr. Paul Giffune, DPW superintendent is the applicant, expecting that most of the work will be done in-house.

Ms. Gunn asked if there was a long-term plan.

Mr. Zamanian said there needs to be an assessment of all town-owned buildings. He said the train depot is the centerpiece of the town square. He said the residents through the survey conducted by Ms. Pam McCarthy had indicated a strong interest that the depot be rehabbed and made available for public use.

Mr. Lurie said the belfry had been freed of birds, and the boiler was modern and in working order according to National Grid. Mr. Lurie said he was glad to see the work starting. He said he hoped that some of the celebrations for the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary could take place in the depot. He said some weeks ago, they had held a fund-raising yard sale to repair the heat and the floors. A second effort had been thwarted because there was no heat.

Mr. Zamanian said the town needs to designate whether the building will be private or public to facilitate bonding. He said it is important because the town is nearing the end of the Urban Renewal Plan. Mr. Zamanian thanked the Finance Committee for its patience, hearing the large number of articles presented by the CPC. He said the committee will provide the information requested such as location maps.

15. Article 69 Stoughton Depot Rehabilitation Cash Payment of Previously Authorized Bonding (discussed with Article 27 previously)

16. Any other matters relating to FY24 or FY23 Budget and Town Meeting Warrant Articles- none

17. Mr. Anzivino made the motion to continue the public hearing until March 8, 2023 7:00 PM to be held in the School Committee Conference Room, Stoughton Public Schools District Office. The motion to continue was seconded by Ms. Dolan. The motion passed.

18. Mr. Anzivino made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Anderson. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 10:46 PM.

