

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 31, 2008

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, March 31, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, Town Hall with the following member present: T. Jalkut, L. Donovan, M. Hickey, C. Lane, S. Kelliher, R. Knobel, M. Gallivan, J. Stadler. Also in attendance was Town Administrator M. Boynton

7:40 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman T. Jalkut.

May 5, 2008 Spring Annual Town Meeting

Recreation Department and Article 20

Present for discussion was S.Murphy, Chairman of Recreation Committee, Recreation Committee Member R. McCarthy and J. Cole, Recreation Director.

J. Cole spoke to the department runs programs for the residents of Walpole, but spoke to concerns over the cost of running the pools, other recreation programs are subsidizing the cost of running the pools. They feel that they can't do any further adjustments on the user fees. Department is out there doing as much as they can, but do need help from the Town to support the pools. Recreation Budget was reduced \$25,000, they would like to see this restored as the department is open 35 hours and would like to keep the Recreation window open during this period.

Committee would like to see more general support of the department, they are looking into working with more agencies. They need to hire a Program Director.

Committee questioned whether it was necessary to keep two pools open. The funding of the pools is a different issue. They are looking into increasing the charge for the pool tags. Last year they sold 1600 tags.

FinCom members spoke to the Recreation Department offering a lot of programs, goal of the department is to make it more self sustaining. Recreation has changed as mothers are no longer at home. Department does make money on swimming lessons. Cost of lessons pays for the staff, there are no cost saving economics as they are regulated by the Board of Health.

J. Cole – needs support for the pools. They don't feel they can increase the revolving fees as programs are priced too high, and they don't end up having the enrollment and people then do private. There are things they aren't doing due to lack of money.

Brochures weren't sent out in Fall, this affected program enrollment. Some people went elsewhere as they didn't think Walpole was going to offer programs. More than half of the families in Town are in the data base. Data base is handled off site.

Town Administrator spoke to the need to get a better handle on this budget. He will discuss the \$25,000 request with J. Cole. Some of the Revolving Funds are in deficit. Summer Recreation is an extremely busy time of year. They have to anticipate revenues in November for the following year. A Revolving Fund allows you to draw check, with expectation that the money will be coming. Recreation is suppose to be 100% self sufficient. They could look at setting up a separate municipal program and doing away with Revolving Fees. Programs do generate fees and money could go back into the General Fund. Recreation is well run, they will be looking at all the options to see what works the best.

Department uses Gift Accounts and receives Grants. They don't have Friends of Recreation similar to other groups in Town. They can't advertise in the brochure as this would require them to pay double the postage. Programs operating in schools are subject to custodial fees. Recreation Department pays user fees for electric, gas and oil, at Blackburn. Building Maintenance pays for the part time custodian out of there budget. There has been an increase in expenses since they have taken over the East Walpole Civic Center. Teen programs are difficult to have, don't get the enrollment.

Committee Members spoke to not being in favor of subsidizing pools. Policy decision of the Board of Selectmen. Recreation should look into developing a Friends group, it has been successful for the Library, Adams Farm and Council on Aging. Problem is that all the Friends groups are targeting the same people, they are not done with the high school field, they are gearing up on soccer fields.

Article 45 – Rezoning AQV to Highway Business

P. Macchi , Attorney, represented the petitioner, P. Verderber. It was explained that in the year 2000, wanted to rezone property to residential, and Town felt it was better to look at it as a business. They came back in 2006, at that time, changed the property to Highway/Business and be used for an Age Qualified Village. Town Meeting approved, and Section 3 of the Zoning By-laws was rezoned to be allowed to be used for AQV. Ruling from Town Counsel is that you can't cross property line that is residential, this excludes the AQV, and have filed an article to correct, if property is rural adjacent to Highway/Business would allow them to go forward.

It was explained that there is no land on Route 1 that is Highway/Business adjacent to Rural up to the Zarba property at Route 1 and Common Street. (This property abuts Sharon Country Day).

This will allow the Verderber's the opportunity to do this, likelihood of the Town losing commercial property at this location is mute. This rezoning does not prejudice any other commercial properties. Taxes on property are \$800. Proposed zoning would not allow for any apartments or other types of housing, it would have be over 55 community.

P. Verderber spoke to their goal is to have a low end community (\$400,000) Permitting would have to go through ZBA and would need approval from them prior to going to the Planning Board to get Site Plan Approval. They would also need to go to Conservation Commission. This will take more than one year. Plans haven't been drawn up, they are talking a build out for 2009-2010. They already have a waiting list of people for this community. They don't feel that there is a market for a 40-B at this point. Project will have a lot of open space along the river. Project would have be 30 -50 units and would depend upon grade of land. Estimated tax revenue \$380,000 and would be based on tax rate at that time. Town would not have to maintain roads, trash, only thing to be provided would police and fire. It would be no burden to the taxpayer. At the Planning Board hearing, only one neighbor came and it was in support of project.

Article 42 – Walpole Mall – Coney St. Attorney Macchi spoke to this article. approved 8/13/2007, received Site Plan approval on 10/20/2007, and have received all approvals from Zoning Board and Planning Board. Clients went to Mass Highway, asked to move entry way back for a better flow of traffic, approved by Zoning and Planning Boards Board of Selectmen did not have any problem, Roadway easement, will provide a green strip and sidewalk, Town Engineer has no problems with project language approved by Town Counsel and Town Engineer. He is asking that the Board of Selectmen accept grant of easement. No cost to town. Entrance will be easier, will have a traffic light. Two exits on Route 1 will remain. Mall is creating a number of jobs with contractors. All stores will create jobs. Committee questioned if the developers do something to help town. Attorney Macchi stated that at this point want to get done within budget, anticipate they will become more involved in the community in the future.

Article 41 – Mylod Street – Attorney Macchi spoke to this article, represents Toll Brothers. Project was approved in 2003. Part of the plans stipulated roadway improvements, They wanted to provide a better flow for land, and offsite improvements, agreed to do it Project pretty much all built, Mylod Street is a connector road, They have talked to police in Norwood and Walpole and they didn't have any problems. Bond was posted. Town Counsel recommended going to Town Meeting, giving the Board of Selectmen the authority to the grant of easement for sidewalk. Selectmen, Town Engineer or Town Administrator have no problem with this. Work has been completed, Town has asked for the easement as it is a piece of the roadway. Housekeeping issue.

Reserve Fund Transfer – Fire Department

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MOTION MADE by R. Knobel, Seconded by J. Stadler to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$89,507, for Fire Department – Salaries, Motion Approved, (7-0-1) (L. Donovan abstained) (8 voting)

MOTION MADE by R. Knobel, Seconded by S. Kelliher to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m., Motion Approved, Unanimous (8-0-0) (8 voting)

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Secretary