

SPECIAL MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
May 17, 2012

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the special meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present: Keane, Lindsey, Moran, Paterson, Paulhus, Ryan, Schaefer, Shapiro

Excused: Kochenburger

Also Present: Brandon Handfield of Anchor Engineering, Director of Facilities Bill Hammon, Sustainability Committee Members: Lynn Stoddard, Kristin Schwab and Bill Lennon, Director of Planning and Development Linda Painter, Richard Lawrence of Lawrence Associates, Tom DiMauro of Newfield Construction, Superintendent of Schools Fred Baruzzi

II. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, requested the Council table the entire school project due to the uncertainty of projects occurring at this time.

Kathleen Paulhus, Middle Turnpike, Member of the Board of Education, speaking as a citizen is concerned about several issues and feels the information residents are receiving is too vague.

Christopher Lapsis, Candide Lane, urged the Council to maintain the three amazing neighbor schools.

III. OLD BUSINESS

1. School Building Project

a. School Siting Considerations

Engineer Brandon Handfield, gave a presentation on each of the three elementary schools and reported that the septic suitability was adequate for each of the schools. Based on the topography, soils and groundwater depths at Southeast School the site would adequately accept the wastewater flows for an 800 student school. Data obtained and preliminary calculations at the Goodwin and Vinton sites also showed adequate wastewater flows for a 375 student elementary school.

Bill Hammon, Director of Facilities and State-certified small water systems operator, reviewed his findings on the water systems at the three elementary locations. Currently the water-delivering systems in the schools are adequate for 400 students and have an excellent rating. The water is tested quarterly for bacteria and annually for metals.

Lynn Stoddard, Sustainability Committee Member prepared a matrix which includes the committees' recommendations to optimize the educational potentials; environmental performance; use of the existing infrastructure and community resources. The committee felt it did not want to limit the site selection to the existing school sites but to two community-centered hubs in Mansfield.

Kristen Schwab, Sustainability Committee Member, summarized on the conclusions the committee arrived at consisting of a northern and southern school site; the proximity to existing community uses and amenities; plans for future community/civic features if the site does not have surrounding community uses or complete streets; additional sites other than the existing school sites; and an alternative plan for phasing and siting on the existing school sites.

Ms. Moran voiced her concern that an entire section along the western watershed was excluded from the study. Ms. Schwab speaking for the committee, said they did not deliberately exclude the Vinton area from the process, but thought the sites would be most sustainable in the definable hubs consisting in the north and south.

Ms. Painter reviewed the school siting considerations by mapping out the school districts by location of students and housing units including population density within a one mile radius of the current schools. The highest population density is located in and around the UConn area with the highest density per census block in the area bounded by Maple Road on the north and Mansfield City on the South, and the Freedom Green area in the southeast. This area also has the highest concentrations of children under the age of five. The area potentially suitable for low density residential development is located south and west of Mansfield City Road, and along Route 32, north of Route 275. Goodwin Elementary currently has the best access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Funding is not yet available for a pedestrian walkway to connect Southeast Elementary to Mansfield Center. The demographics were taken from the 2010 census and information from the town's tax assessment.

Rick Lawrence reviewed test fits of schemes for the building sites at each of the three current schools which would allow for construction without disrupting the existing schools. Mr. Lawrence stated that these are early stage concepts, and further considerations will need to be made at each of the schools to accommodate the new construction.

b. Review Timeline

Town Manager Matt Hart reviewed the timeline for the project, and suggested that a project description (general overview) referral be sent to the PZC; web-based technology be included in the direct mail to residents and business owners; bond authorization be made a minimum of 60 days in advance to the referendum date; an explanatory text sent to residents and business owners and scheduling of public information sessions prior to the referendum on 11/6/12.

c. Council Deliberations

Council members decided to refrain from deliberations at this time given the amount of information presented and the need for further review of the materials submitted.

d. Next Steps

Mr. Hart suggested the next steps in the process to include: scheduling the next workshop (May 31, 2012) to identify sites to take to referendum; cost of additional land needed at Goodwin; more specific information on the repurpose of the current buildings; and obtaining information from the Town Assessor on the impact of property taxes and comparative values for private and municipal uses.

Mr. Hart also added that a list of questions/answers raised by members of the public will be available on the town's website.

Superintendent of Schools Fred Baruzzi voiced his appreciation to the Council for their deliberations. Mr. Baruzzi spoke to the facilities usages on the site plans presented by Mr. Lawrence as making the best use of the current buildings, playing areas and ball fields and retaining the use of the septic fields without interrupting structural programs. He also noted the savings on the new water systems due to the proximity of the current wells.

Mr. Shapiro moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to move into Executive Session to discuss Sale or purchase of real property, in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(D).

Motion passed unanimously

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Sale or purchase of real property, in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(D)
Present: Keane, Lindsey, Moran, Paterson, Paulhus, Ryan, Shapiro
Also Present: Matt Hart, Linda Painter

V. ADJOURNMENT

The Council reconvened the meeting. Mr. Shapiro moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Elizabeth C. Paterson, Mayor

Christine Hawthorne, Asst. Town Clerk

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