

**Advisory Committee
Meeting #6
October 7, 2009**

Peter Cory, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Those present included Judi Donnelly, Virginia Ferko, Rick Hill, Kathy Macdonald, Barbara McMahon, Maura Murphy, Rich Page, Caren Parker, Derek Redgate, Steve Simons, Steve Sykes, and Marc Taylor. Absent: Jason Whittet

Citizens Speak. No one was present.

Minutes. Caren, Steve Simons second – 9/30 as written. KMAC, JD 9/23 minutes approved as amended – 7/6/1 abstention.

Warrant Articles. Mr. Cory distributed and reviewed the list of Warrant articles for the 2009 Special Town Meeting. He provided explanation of each article expected to be moved at Special Town Meeting. Assignments were made for article write-ups. The Selectmen reviewed the articles at its last meeting, but did not vote on the Warrant. It is expected they will take action on Friday, October 9th.

Mr. Cory referred to Article 4 and explained that the Selectmen are concerned that based on the economic environment there may be draconian reductions to Section 9C. So they would like Amend article 8 of the 2009 ATM to make reductions or liberate free cash to meet the deficit that may occur if there are draconian 9C cuts and if they are announced before Special Town Meeting. If they need to proceed with this.

The schedule for submitting write-ups was reviewed.

Planning Board Articles. Mr. Sykes reported he met with Planning Department staff to discuss all three articles. Expressed Advisory's concern that there is no definition of small scale alterations or changes to a property under the motion for pre-existing non-conforming properties section. Planning does not have this yet.

School Committee. The Advisory Committee was joined by School Committee Chair Ilissa Povich, Vice Chair Suzi Newman, members Suzy Littlefield and KC Kato, and Superintendent Bella Wong.

Ms. Povich informed the Committee that the School Committee, after reviewing its options for addressing the Middle School enrollment and classroom capacity issues, has voted not to address funding for these alternatives at the Special Town Meeting. This decision was made based on several factors, including the concern with costs involved in the reconfiguration of the Central Administration offices into classrooms and the subsequent leasing costs for the relocated Central Administration offices, and the need for further information on several of the options presented to the School Committee by the consulting architect. The School Committee's decision does mean that some WMS classes might exceed class size guidelines in FY11.

Ms. Povich explained the educational program at the Middle School at the various grade levels. Ms. Kato reviewed enrollment projections from FY03 through FY12.

She reviewed the space needs to meet guideline of 22 students per classroom through FY14, and reviewed class sizes if no action is taken. She noted in FY12, the proposed addition of two classrooms for use by the Special Ed Program that would accommodate students presently placed out of district to be placed within district.

Questions were raised concerning taking advantage of possibly under-utilized non-classroom spaces within the Middle School. It was acknowledged that the eststructure of the student houses and clusters as well as the diversified structure of class schedules for these three grades does result in some space inefficiencies which have been reviewed. Additional review of scheduling flexibility will be considered, along with other alternatives that have been preliminarily explored including modulars, additions and more efficient use of the Middle School's existing building footprint.

Ms. Povich indicated the next steps include determining whether funds will be requested at Special Town Meeting for further study of alternatives; formation of a School Building Committee, which is required in order to be eligible for MSBA funding; presenting a Statement of Interest to the Board of Selection for approval and subsequently filing it with the MSBA; develop a communications plan for residents and Town Meeting members; and present a plan to a future Town Meeting.

STM Warrant Articles. Mr. Cory reviewed possible articles for the Warrant including the Selectmen's article on the local option meals tax; three potential articles from the Planning Board; and it appears there may be no article from the School Committee for conversion funding, but there may be a request for funds to further study alternatives for the Middle School.

Mr. Sykes and Ms. Ferko reviewed the three Planning Board articles as outlined by the Planning Chair at the Advisory Committee's September 23rd meeting. The articles involve an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw concerning review of improvements to nonconforming structures to bring it in compliance with a recent case judgment; the second article concerns the definition of retaining walls and setting limitations and regulations for construction of such; and the third article amends the sign bylaw to address 'moving signs' placed on large vehicles.

The group discussed the articles. There is concern that the article regarding nonconforming structures will put an extra burden of time and cost on small homeowners, as well as providing additional work for the ZBA. Questions were raised as to the "small scale alterations ..." exemption and the delegation of this process to the ZBA, and the implications of non-action by the Town on this article. Mr. Sykes and Ms. Ferko will follow up with Town Counsel on the latter question.

With reference to the retaining wall article, it was noted that a previous attempt to have a bylaw amendment concerning retaining walls failed by a small margin at Town Meeting. The previous proposal was not a specific regulation for retaining walls but a definition of structure to include retaining walls. In addition, the previous proposal only addressed retaining walls at property lines, but the present proposal also includes retaining walls that are internally positioned on the lot.

Walls that are more than four feet high will require a permit; walls that are 7+ feet will require a design review which would include materials, landscaping and overall design to create less of an impact to surrounding properties. Questions were raised as to whether the bylaw review would provide for additional safety considerations for 7 + feet walls, and whether the bylaw would apply to the reconstruction of existing walls. Ms. Ferko explained it would apply to existing walls only if there are significant repairs or changes.

Mr. Cory asked members to submit questions and comments concerning write-ups to the appropriate liaisons.

Ms. Donnelly will circulate formatting information for write ups.

Schedule. Mr. Cory reviewed some schedule changes including Advisory's public hearing on the Warrant scheduled for Thursday, October 15, 2009. After the hearing, the Committee will continue with regular business. The regularly scheduled meeting for Wednesday, October 14th, is cancelled.

Adjournment. Upon a motion made by Ms. Macdonald and seconded by Ms. Donnelly, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Adeline G. Doherty
Administrative Assistant