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Town of Acton
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
May 13, 2013
At 7:00 p.m.
Francis Faulkner Hearing Room

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Board of Selectmen to take position on Special
Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Chairman Adachi opened the meeting at 7 PM. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to take positions on Town Meeting articles, so we will not have our normal time for citizen's concerns. The Selectmen will need to restrict the special Town Meeting to one night due to factors outside of the Selectmen's control; asked that the Selectmen consider this and use their discretion as they consider articles for the meeting.

Article 1-3

Peter Ashton gave an overview of the financial model for school regionalization with Boxborough. (See attached) Each tab of the spreadsheet showed a different scenario. One would need to consider them all to make a thoughtful decision. The tabs reflect Don Acardi's numbers of approx 3% annual budget increases across the board for Acton and Boxborough. The spreadsheet is based on increases smaller than what ALG shows (built in reduced expenditures) as lower enrollment is expected until 2020. Peter continued to explain the reason each tab exist on the spreadsheet, such as a cost sharing formula for the first 5 years. In conclusion, we need to look at the big picture; Acton will save even the first year. Those savings might go to the tax payer and the voters will decide this at future Town Meetings. Administrative savings are real. It will be Acton's decision; they have the votes on School Committee. There is a reporting process outlined to see how the costs align with predictions. Retirement savings from Blanchard are real.

Selectman Clough questioned the decline in enrollment and why that would need regionalization. Peter corrected that his numbers show a 429 student decline not 520, which in 2020 it goes back up to 529. Selectman Clough would like to see savings. Peter explained that it is too short of a decline to close any elementary school temporarily. David commented that it comes down to trust, he needs some answers. Acton is fine not broken why put it at risk?

Selectmen Green implored that we can help Boxborough, they will not be sustainable for long term. Look at the educational value, not just money. Don't underestimate the educational benefits and the addition of another building another choice in Acton. Katie will vote yes for the regionalization.

Chairman Adachi is not so sure what is in it for Acton. What is the real cost savings in administrative sharing; is it saving money or cutting benefits. If I lived in Boxborough of course I would want it. I am still on the fence.

Steve Noone: Point of clarification, he did not use school's numbers, he used DESE numbers for current years and the school's projected enrollment numbers for subsequent years. Steve thinks the number is 520 students, whichever number you use, we are talking a school. People feel they need to endorse School Committee and regionalization. But if you are voting yes, you are voting for the increasing assessment of 106% of the increased cost for at a minimum the next 8 years. We do not have a broken school system; we do not need to fix it. Boxborough could vote to pay taxes to support sustaining the school but they do not in Boxborough and that is by choice. Wish there was a better deal for Acton

Paul Murphy: Think about kids with special needs? Really it gives another building for another use in Boxborough. You could specialize by use school buildings at various locations of choice. About 15% Boxborough now gets another choice program and for less money. Kids in the middle are affected, studies show that is all about class size.

Charlie Kadlec: There is an implication in Peter's study that if we didn't plan correctly we can do something about it to correct it. We can't go back.

Dennis Bruce: We need to look at what is trying to be accomplished not just the numbers, look at the end game, what is best for the town. Opportunities to make a group of three (AB, Region and Boxborough) unite and morph into something great. We need to expand on something that works to make all the schools more efficient. Think about accomplishing the grand plan. Don't just look at finances as that is how the whole thing started. We are trying to make the schools and the system better and more efficient.

Selectmen Gowing: The school system will be improved. People without children will bear the cost. What is the cost to them? The BOS represents everyone not just those with school age children.

Terra Freidrichs: Has anyone spoken to and asked the teachers? Selectmen Sonner responded yes.

Selectman Sonner I am voting yes, if we don't take advantage of it now we will pay later and regret it in the future. It is a tough decision and there are risks, there will be efficiencies and savings, I am voting yes.

Selectman Clough. Not at yes yet, not sure.

Chairman Adachi: Given that I am still not certain my tendency will be to vote against the article.

Selectmen Gowing is on the fence, I will vote a very soft yes.

Selectman Green will vote in favor of the article.

Article 1, Selectman Sonner voted to recommend, Selectmen Gowing seconds, the vote passes 3 to 2.

Steve Noone: asked about the articles to deal with the transfer of property, Steve Ledoux stated that it will be taken later in the spring on advice of Town Counsel it will not be taken up at this meeting. It will be taken up later as a separate article.

Peter Ashton, section 4 B talks about it but the MOA will come later. And there will be another separate vote. Charlie would like answers from Town Counsel.

Ann Chang, this regionalization questions with all its many intricate questions should limit this special Town Meeting to the one subject of regionalization.

Article 2, Selectman Adachi motion to Amend Town Charters, School Committee, and Selectman Green seconds: Selectman Sonner motioned to recommend, 4 voted in favor, 1 no vote.

Article 3, Selectmen Adachi motioned to amend town charter School Committee to recommend, Selectmen Gowing seconded, all in voted in favor.

Article 4, CPC Open Space Acquisition: to acquire the Anderson Property (presentation made by the Town Planner Roland Bartl). Steve Ledoux added that there is a restrictive timeline under chapter 61B of 120 days to be approved at Town Meeting, less 2 weeks since the offer was made. Selectmen Gowing moved to approve Selectman Clough seconded. Peter Ashton is concerned that even though the Open Space Committee has talked about it and rated it as # 2 of choice Acton properties over the years, it has not been discussed in public. It is a 40 acre parcel of which 20.7 acres are available to purchase. The other 20 acres might become available. 10 acres might be available as it backs up to wetlands so really is 30 acres for the price of 20. All voted in favor,

Article 5, Collective Bargaining Agreement: Fire FY14-FY16 contract, the Town Manager spoke to the funding of the contracts

Selectman Gowing recommended Selectman Sonner seconded. All voted in favor of the article.

Article 6, Amend Town Bylaw-Ice-cream Truck Permitting Fee: the Town Manager spoke to the reason for the permitting. The fees would cover CORI and finger printing checks. The estimated fee would be \$100.

Selectman Sonner motioned to recommend, Selectman Green seconded, all voted in favor.

Article 7 and 8, Extension of Quarry Road and Relocation of Kennedy Right-of-Way: Relocate by extension of Quarry Road.

Selectman Gowing moved to recommend, Selectman Sonner seconded, all voted in favor.

Article 9, Amend Town Bylaw- Establish a Temporary Moratorium on New Construction in Village District. Ann Chang, is it legal? The town Managers advised that the Article went under review by Town Counsel. Scott Kutil – a Windsor Ave. resident did the presentation, he and Wayne Freidrichs put this article together. A moratorium has to apply to zoning district, so this is a larger area than they are concerned with in total. The

purpose is to create a new zoning district, "The Village Historic District". Once the moratorium lifted it will only affect the village. Wayne and Terra Friedrichs spoke to protecting the area. Renee Robins spoke to the historic significance of the area and the importance of rezoning.

Selectman Sonner wanted to clarify that the zoning consists of 2/3 area in historic district 1/3 of the area outside of the district. Land is bought with the purpose of developing, in this case there are 2 lots one in each district. Steinberg wants to make it into 5 lots.

Selectman Clough, the 2 family built previously must have slipped through, not sure how that was allowed. Selectman Gowing the existing proposal is going forward. Wayne commented that we as a group understand that, what we want is to control the 5/6 acres that will be next from large development. We should really rethink the zoning issue. Selectman Green, Article 12 could deal with this and redoing the zoning would really take time, more than a year. Wish Town Counsel was here to advise and a working group could help. Chairman Adachi, although I am sympathetic, it affects more than the district and there is mixed housing on Windsor Ave. We need further information.

Renee Robins we are protecting a district that is 150 years old. If you take value from our district, you take money from me and my neighbors. Why does a business man not from Acton rate protection over an Acton resident?

Wayne Friedrichs we will not affect this building, but looking to the future we want to stop it from going north.

Renee Robins Really about Acton and the beauty that is special in all the historic districts.

Ann Chang, Trey Shupert took 3 years for just to develop a plan for West Acton. It will not be for 1 year.

Selectman Sonner moved to defer making a recommendation on the article, Selectman Green seconded; 4 votes in favor of deferring and Selectman Gowing opposes.

Article 10 and 11, Amend Zoning Bylaw-Signs and Advertising Devices and Typographical Corrections

Selectman Sonner recommends, Selectman Gowing seconded, all voted in favor.

The Chairman asked the Town manager what happens if Town meeting continues, we would need room alternative rooms. Acton T V is working to have cameras available in alternative rooms.

Some discussion on the order of Articles for presentation, Article 1 first, consent Articles in the middle and zoning at the end. Article 1 is a ballot vote, Charlie Kadlec noted, depending on how vote is taken it might take a lot of time.

Articles to be moved to consent:

Article #5 – Collective Bargaining Agreement Fire FY14-16

Article #6 - Amend Town Bylaw-ice-cream Truck Permitting Fee

Article #7 and #8 - Extension of Quarry Road and Relocation of Kennedy Right-of-Way

Article #10 and #11- Amend Zoning Bylaw-Signs and Advertising Devices and Typographical Corrections

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Article Assignments:

Article 1-3, Selectmen Green

Article 4, CPC, Selectmen Clough

Article 5, CB, Chairman Adachi

Article 6, ice Cream Truck Permit, Selectman Sonner

Article 7 & 8, Relocation of Right of Way, Selectmen Sonner

Article 10 & 11, Zoning Bylaw, Selectmen Clough

Article 12 and 9, Moratorium in W. Acton and Two family dwellings, Selectman Gowing

Selectman Gowing moved to close the meeting, Chairman Adachi seconded, all voted to adjourn.

Chris Joyce

K-E S. Gz

Mike Young