

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2019

A meeting of the Finance Committee (FC) was held on Monday, November 18, 2019 at Douglas High School prior to Town Meeting. Mr. D'Amico called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: Howard D'Amico (Chair), Carol Gogolinski, Sandy Kuipers, Phil Landry, Heather Morin, Lynne Mussulli, Dick Vanden Berg

ABSENT: Michael Hutnak (Vice Chair)

NON-VOTING: Matthew Wojcik (Town Administrator), Jeanne Lovett (Finance Director), Bob Minarik (Economic Development Commission)

1. DISCUSS SPECIAL TOWN MEETING (STM) OF NOVEMBER 18, 2019

There was no discussion.

2. REVIEW WARRANT ARTICLES FOR STM

Mr. D'Amico stated that Article 5 has been tabled. If the need for these funds arises, a Special Town Meeting can be arranged. The Town could possibly ask for less than the approximately \$500,000 originally asked for in the warrant article based on just a first phase of a proposal received by the Town.

Mr. Minarik stated that he sponsored Article 5. There are three major areas in the Town for large commercial development: Pyne Sand & Stone gravel pit, McIntyre Sand & Gravel pit, and a 185-acre piece behind Granutec. The two pits have water and sewer close by. One prospect has already turned down locating at the 185-acre parcel because there is no water/sewer.

The EDC met with water/sewer commissioners to start the engineering process to bring water/sewer up to Granutec. The engineering would have two phases: one phase to design the pipe and the second phase to insure it is put in properly during the construction. The thought behind Article 5 was to show a potential prospect that the Town is doing something to bring water/sewer to the parcel.

The cost to actually run the water/sewer line is \$2.1 million. Once a developer has committed to a project and the Board of Selectmen have approved the construction of the water/sewer line, the EDC would approach MassWorks for a grant to offset the costs of that construction.

Mr. Minarik does not feel that there is time to put this engineering off. If this article is passed over tonight, the EDC will be behind schedule.

Mr. Minarik replied to Mr. Vanden Berg's question by saying that Article 5 is being passed over due to the verbiage. The verbiage stated the location as ... "...southeast portion of Town..." which is the corner near Rhode Island. Granutec is in the eastern part of Town. Mr. D'Amico feels that there is more to it. He feels it came out of the last FC meeting that the verbiage was not well done and the information was not put out well.

Mr. Vanden Berg asked if Article 5 could be amended on the floor this evening. Mr. Wojcik stated that Town Counsel has said that the motion would have to be on point with the article within the scope of the article because there is a failure of notice if the motion has more detail or corrects detail in the article. The site developer has a legally binding agreement locking up the lots and is in a position to sell to a developer. The developer interest does not have site control, hence the party investing the money does not yet have legal control over the real property. The Town has been in a holding pattern for 6-8 weeks.

Mr. Wojcik stated that they want to come to the townspeople with a solid plan. A Special Town Meeting can be held if needed.

Ms. Mussulli stated that she saw an email showing a reduced amount in Article 5. Mr. Minarik said that the \$501,000 figure was for the entire project; approximately \$250,000 is actually needed for just engineering.

Mr. D'Amico stated that what came out of the last FC meeting was that, before people come before the FC, they need to have their information prepared. Mr. D'Amico is not prepared to entertain a motion to suggest a vote.

Ms. Lovett clarified that, no matter the amount in the Article, \$500,000 or \$250,000, it would come from Free Cash.

Mr. Landry asked for a return on investment analysis. Mr. Minarik stated that the project would pay for the sewer line in three months. That information can be detailed once the developer shares his intentions.

Mr. Landry asked if there is a procedure where sensitive business operations can be discussed. Ms. Gogolinski replied that there is executive session. Mr. Wojcik stated that he would have to research whether or not the purpose of the executive session is to defend the town's negotiating position or to protect a corporate interest.

3. MINUTES: October 18 & 29, 2019

Approval of the above meeting minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Landry made a motion at 6:59 PM to recess the Finance Committee meeting until after Town Meeting, at which time the Finance Committee meeting will adjourn. Ms. Morin seconded the motion. Vote: Aye-7.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Wright
Recording Secretary