

Town of South Windsor

Park and Recreation Facility Planning and Implementation Committee Special Meeting Minutes

Wapping Park and Recreation Facility, Banquet Hall

Monday, September 12, 2022

Meeting Called to Order: 6:31PM by Committee Chair, Matthew Montana

Committee Members in Attendance: Andrew Paterna, Daniel Chavez, Kathy Daugherty, Stephanie Dexter, Paul Macchi, Drew Mabey, Matthew Montana.

Also in Attendance: Erica Evans, Molly Keays, and Michael Maniscalco

Approval of Minutes: Motion made to approve minutes from August 8, 2022 by Kathy Daugherty and the motion was seconded by Paul Macchi

- Prior to the discussion starting on the business, Matthew Montana brought up the fact that the committee should look into a replacement for Drew Mabey as he is in college. Erica Evans noted that she could look into reaching out to the BOE to make another appointment of a high school student. Kathy Daugherty voiced her concern that Drew Mabey has not been in attendance to any meetings after the first meeting and that the committee has progressed a decent amount in that time frame so to bring a new member up to speed may be difficult. By the time of a new member getting approved by the council there may not be many meetings. Stephanie agreed with Kathy's comment. Andy Paterna stated how it would be valuable to have that high school members perspective when it came down to what could be in that building. Stephanie noted that if the process could be done quickly she agreed with Andy. Erica will be taking care of the new member.

New Business:

A. Review and Approval of Colliers' Bill:

- There were three invoices noted to be reviewed and approved. Colliers was not in attendance to speak more on the bills being reviewed. Matthew Montana asked the group if the bills wanted to be reviewed separately or all together. Daniel Chavez noted that the \$250-dollar bill dated for July 28, 2022 was previously discussed and approved in August.
- Kathy Daugherty made a motion to approve the Colliers' bills 760479 and 767401. Matthew asked to state the totals and Kathy Daugherty stated that bill 760479 is a total of \$2,125 and bill 767401 is a total of \$11,961.46. Paul Macchi seconded the approval of the bills. Motion is approved.

B. Discussion/Approval of Parks and Recreation temporary use of Old Orchard Hill School

- Matthew Montana stated that the committee needed to make a motion if they were all in favor of vacating Wapping and making temporary use of Old Orchard Hill. Kathy stated that she believed the committee already had approved this in prior meetings.



- Matthew was unsure if we needed any other approvals to bring to the Council and the Town Manager clarified that if it was formally voted on then the committee is all set. The committee made another motion as they wanted to make it clear they are making a motion to approve the temporary use of just the Old Orchard school and not the grounds. The turnover from the BOE will be similar terms as the agreement with Wapping. Kathy and Daniel agreed to the statement. Matthew noted if they come up with a plan through Colliers it could be different if it was a master plan as they want to ensure the fields for the Middle school will not be affected by potential construction or use. The committee agreed and made a motion to approve the approval of Parks and Recreation temporarily using Old Orchard Hill.

C. Updates from Colliers and option moving forward.

- Matthew opened with stating how the committee needs to have a brief discussion regarding the options moving forward. He stated how he looks at it as the committee has two true options and potentially a third and the committee should be deciding whether they are in favor of the options or not.
- Matthew noted that option one is a new facility with the Parks and Recreation Directors program plan and square footage. The location would either be Nevers Road or Old Orchard Hill. This would be 60-70,000 square feet. This would be estimated 60-80 million dollars for new construction
- Option two would be taking the approval of moving the Parks and Recreation department to Old Orchard Hill and putting band aids on the space to make it similar to Wapping school and not expand the program. Matthew noted that this decision is truly based on what the committee's comfort is with a price ticket to bring to the town. Does the committee advocate for a new facility or are we looking into other options as we don't have the money in the town to build new so we rather spend the money to fix up Old Orchard Hill. The Third option which was noted that the committee knows it was taken off the table but to split up the program and doing 5 million into LA Fitness and upgrading part of Old Orchard Hill. Matthew asked the committee are you comfortable with any of these options and going to referendum? An open discussion was requested.
- Andy wanted to hear the Parks and Recreation Director Molly Keays view on the space needs of La Fitness and how it would fit their program. Molly presented a document she created titled 100 Cedar Ave Space Assessment that highlights her original facility proposal and an overview of 100 cedar ave space. Molly Spoke about how based on her original proposal for space needs, the facility on 100 Cedar Ave would be a solution for some of our growing community needs as the facility would support the health and wellness aspect of recreation. This facility however, would not be a facility solution for their administrative offices, any of their youth development, preschool, camp, and community programs. We would have to consider renovation of this space to re-purpose some of the racquetball courts into multipurpose classrooms for our programs, to build an addition onto the pool, and to create a second floor to allow for administrative offices. The pool is also not large enough to host the high school team meets or their recreation league meets. It could be a benefit for lessons, small aqua classes.

- Matthew mentioned to Molly that moving to Old Orchard Hill is similar to Wapping as it is not designed for their program but asked if it was feasible knowing that Old Orchard Hill had fields and facilities putting some of the program there and putting some of the program at another location or if she was opposed to that idea. Molly Keays noted that she was not necessarily opposed to splitting the program but in terms of administrative costs it would be expensive and were opening two facilities. Regardless we are looking at an increase in costs for staffing as part time staff would double but having two locations would mean even more staff to clean, maintain, and operate the buildings.
- Stephanie Dexter asked Molly if La Fitness does not have everything would Old Orchard Hill if there was minor renovations and Molly stated potentially. Daniel asked if we would be able to take LA Fitness as is and Molly stated that she has not been in that facility in over a year and it is not in terrible condition but it is not necessarily equipped for our program so there would be renovations needed to fit the program and there was question whether there was equipment. Molly noted that if it had come fully equipped that it would be a easy decision as it would be a way to offer things we don't currently offer for the community and would generate revenue. Molly said the facility truly just lacks space for offices, youth and camp programs, preschool, and green space.
- Town wise and monetarily does it make sense to operate two facilities, renovate OOH, or build new is what Matthew asked the group. Daniel then commented that he has concerns with LA fitness as it is \$5 million to purchase as we have to renovate that and we will have to pay millions to make it a permeant space. He felt the only thing we gain for the program is a small indoor pool as we could make wellness space at Old Orchard. Daniel stated that he believes its important to keep the full program together and it could be difficult to manage if we split it up. Matthew then added he can appreciate those thoughts and would rather have a pool that the high school swim team could utilize instead of going out of Town. Paul Macchi noted that the department currently operates programs off site so it isn't impossible.
- Kathy asked to take the options one at a time and look at this from a global lens as she notes that we all want a new building but we have the referendums to think about the streets and potentially the high school. The Town Manager stated he is not aware of the high school referendum and Andy noted that the High School does not need to go to referendum as that is the purpose for taking over Wapping. The point being is that it is heavy on tax dollars. Kathy noted her concerns on all of this and the community's appetite to spend this large amount of money. Stephanie asked if we do the referendum for a new facility but in the meantime, we move to Old Orchard hill for temporary what happens if it fails. If we know we have to do plan B and fix up the space and then in ten years from now we could look into referendum. Stephanie noted we are a small town not a large town and applauds the effort but rather go with something we know will pass.
- Matthew noted we all have to understand the price tag for new. Paul Macchi brought up wanting to get the community involved for the next steps. He wanted to reach out to other local groups and agencies and have a community meeting to educate the community to see what option we should move forward instead of just the committee continuing to talk about the same three options. Paul noted it is important for the outreach to allow the community to know what is happening, read through the options

and understand the price tag. Andy noted we could do an open forum at Wapping for the community. The committee debated how many options to present to the public. The Town Manager asked if it made sense if Colliers put together the presentation for the community. Kathy questioned why we didn't offer the new option and a LA Fitness option as the community would rather a pool space regardless of it being small or large would be beneficial.

- The committee continued conversation about options and what to put forth.
- Matthew and the committee agreed that next steps is that they reach out to Colliers for what the cost would be to do a public outreach and presentation and then to get the committee together next Wednesday for everyone to attend. The committee agreed.

Meeting Adjourned: at 7:52pm- Motion made by Kathy Daugherty and was seconded by Matthew Montana.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katherine Senerth
Executive Assistant