



BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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David A. Gagliardi, *Chairman*
Robert B. Accomando, *Vice Chairman*
Michael S. Rosa, *Secretary*
Andrew N. Deslaurier, *Member*
George J. Simolaris, Jr., *Member*

EXECUTIVE SESSION JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN, SCHOOL COMMITTEE, AND SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

JULY 29, 2013

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An Executive Session Meeting was held with the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, and School Facilities Study Committee in Room 210 on July 29, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. to explore the possibility of using Gilson Hill as a possible location for the new High School.

Present were Selectmen David Gagliardi, Chairman, Selectmen Robert Accomando, Vice Chairman, Selectman Michael Rosa, Secretary, Selectman Andrew Deslaurier, Member, Selectman George Simolaris, Member; Adam Bossi, Conservation Director, Town Counsel Patrick Costello; School Committee Members Daniel Cugno, Chairman, Joanne Barry, Vice Chairman, Kim Conway, Secretary, Maryann Haring-Laurendeau, Member, Mark Efstratious, Member; The Facilities Working Group, Tim Piwowar, Superintendent of Schools, John Curran, Town Manager, Cathleen O'Dea, Assistant Town Manager, Tom Aquavella and Kevin Heffernen, Don Walter and Michelle Rogers from Dore and Whittier. Absent were Mary McBride and Sam Rippin.

The following exhibits will be attached to and go with the Minutes.

Exhibit-A (photo of Winning Rd flooded on July 25 2013 1 page)

Exhibit-B (topographical map with school and fields laid out 1 page)

Exhibit-C (Field notes taken during June 4, 2013 site walk 2 pages)

Exhibit-D (hand out by the superintendent of schools titled B.O.S. meeting high school options 7/29/12 4 pages)

Exhibit-E (Memorial High School Site Plan Cole & Carberry Architects 1973 double sided)

Exhibit-F (Memorandum from John Curran to: B.O.S. Dated 7-29-13 2 pages)

Exhibit-G (Map Cabot Property Buildable Acreage Outside the 50' wetland Buffer Zone with Flood Zones 1 page)

Exhibit-H (Map Cabot Property Buildable Acreage Outside the 100' wetland Buffer Zone 1 page)

Exhibit-I ((Map Cabot Property Buildable Acreage Outside the 100' wetland Buffer Zone with Flood Zones 1 page)

America's Yankee Doodle Town

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Exhibit-J (Topographical map showing lot lines, Green Flood Zone, Wetlands and more 1 page)
Exhibit-K (Map Holland Properties 1 page)
Exhibit-L (letter from Mary McBride)
Exhibit-M (Secretary's notes)
Exhibit-N (Assistant Town Managers Notes)
Selectman David Gagliardi, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen called the meeting of the Joint Session to order at 7:30 p.m.

Town Counsel Patrick Costello stated that this was a duly posted Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. The Facilities Working Group could participate; however, because the School Committee inadvertently did not post for the meeting, they can be present as guests of the Board of Selectmen, but cannot participate. They cannot communicate or deliberate on any part of the meeting.

Attorney Costello added that this was an informational meeting for the purpose of transferring a particular parcel of land for the possible site of a new High School.

If considered, there are several hurdles present:

1. The land is under the jurisdiction of the Division of Conservation and Recreation and removal of the Conservation restriction would require special legislation which frequently happens where School projects are concerned.
2. Should the land prove to be viable, the Town would need to compensate the State with other open space and recreation.

The Town Manager has identified a suitable parcel comparable in size and amenities.

Attorney Costello re-iterated that this meeting does not present any violation of the Open Meeting Law.

Attorney Costello further cautioned those present about the confidentiality of Executive Session.

Superintendent of School Tim Piwowar that they were there to explore the possibility of State Forest land being feasible as a potential site to locate a new High School. The Superintendent reviewed the strengths and challenges of the three options.

1. Renovation on the existing site.
2. New Construction
3. Locke School site.

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The Working Group only explored publicly held land. However, the feasibility study will look at both publicly and privately held land.

Superintendent Piwowar stated that an SOI was submitted to the State expressing the Town's interest to partner with the State to explore all options. Superintendent Piwowar identified the State Forest and the Cider Mill property as options as well as any other unknown possibilities.

Town Manager John Curran pass out pertinent information to those present to help them better understand the process and how it got to this point.

The Town Manager explained that the House of Correction mitigation presented an opportunity to leverage State support for the land. He explained that the two agencies whose approval would be required for the land swap would be DCAM and the Governor's Office, and that both agencies had an interest in seeing the House of Correction expansion realized.

The Town Manager stated that the State Forest site encompassed 130 acres and this project would require 41 of those acres.

The proposed High School site is located in the Northwest quadrant of the parcel.

Given that there were limitations on the property, an additional piece of land owned by Robert Holland was also of interest to the Town.

The Town Manager informed those present that a portion of the parcel was deed restricted and that restriction reverted back to the Appalachian Mountain Club if it was not to be used for Forest Land. Accordingly, it was decided to stay away from that area. This would assure that Gilson Hill would not be built and 90 acres and 90 acres would remain untouched,

The Town Manager stated that the site was desirable because Treble Cove Road was equipped to handle the traffic.

He reported that Administration and Finance was open to the swap. He added that the land was not used by the public very often because of accessibility and that the school was interested in doing an Environmental Curriculum on the site. The Town Manager suggested two areas that could serve as a potential swap. One would be the Cabot 38 acre site and the abandoned airport site. Mr. Curran noted, however, it had less conservation value.

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He reported that the Cabot property would satisfy the one-to-one swap requirement. He also stated that the owner of the Holland property would be amenable to transferring property to the Town.

Mr. Curran reported that while the site has a great deal of potential, it still needed to be determined if it was a good option for the Town. That while it was the Board of Selectmen's ultimate decision, the Town Manager felt it was important to get input from the School Committee and School Facilities Group. He added that he was not seeking a commitment, but rather wanted input on the willingness to continue to pursue this as an option. He noted that the next step would be to sit down with DCR and see if they are on board, if DCR was amenable. Site investigation would be necessary and borings would need to be done to determine where the bed rock is and what the wet lands situation is. However, preliminary site and soil studies performed by Engineers and a Soil Scientist showed promise. At this point it would require a reaffirmation of the board of selectman to pursue it does not mean we are going to do it. It does not mean it is going to happen. It means we recognize that we are taking it to a different level, start meeting with state agencies and start spending money for the borings. When you are talking about one hundred and sixty million to two hundred million project. I asked Dore & Whittier to look at what the cost might be before borings on the site. Dore & Whittier has engineers looking at it but they don't have a cost. I think it would be a good investment whether it pans out or not.

Selectman Michael Rosa stated he was not supportive of using Gilson Hill as it is a natural resource in the town. Contrary to the Town Manager, Gilson Hill is used. If you look at the topographical map there are points that are 205 ft. peak and 198ft. peak. The water flows off and feeds this stream which is not shown here but it flows down and there are other wetland pockets that are not shown here. I was up there on July 25 th. This picture of what I am calling trail one which shows the amount of water runoff. This is not the stream, this is the trail which goes to show the amount of water coming off trail one. The stream had even more water in it. I believe the stream is spring fed because with the hundred degree days we've had there is still water in it. Mr. Curran is correct, there is another wetlands pocket in the upper left hand corner it is significantly bigger than what is shown here it is a large wetland mass that is fed by other pocket that flow down. There is all this water flows through this wetlands network that we would be disturbing, not to mention this is a 305 ft. high peak. You are proposing putting a school here after you level these two peaks. The water still has to flow through. I see this as a huge issue. We have an opportunity to protect Gilson Hill and build a new high school. I will not support a new high school on this site because it destroys this natural resource. We have another option. This map represents the property that the town owns. The current high school site is 19.4 acres. There is a lot here that is 8.25

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acres and an additional 4 lots of are 2.5 acres. The school has 19.4 acres that is contiguous with this 1 acre lot which connects to this 43 acre parcel. The 43 acre parcel abuts the Concord river and there are wetlands. I have the maps to show these wetlands, but there is probably 20 acres of uplands based on the topographical map. It is also important to point out that the B&M railroad runs through here and that's where the potential bike bath will run. Not only could you have the high school centrally located in town, you could have access to the bike path if it goes forward. You talked about forestry programs. the Concord river is right here and we could have programs at the high school that are relative to the river. We could petition the State to put a boat launch in. the State is looking for docks and access on the Concord river. Take it one step further, this is the Parker school right here and the high school here. This is the Cabot land, which is approximately 40 acres consisting of 13 to 14 acres of uplands, based on when the Cabot Land Re-use Committee looked at it. Look how close these properties are. You have the ability to have fields through here that could not only be used by the high school, but also the Parker school. I think this would make a lot more sense than destroying a 130 acre parcel that is a great resource for the town to have for open space. Selectman Rosa proceeded to go through all of the steps necessary to build on the Gilson Hill site and further stated that we should keep the High school at its current location. Noting its central location, access to the bike path and its proximity to the Parker School. He further proposed taking the Hallenborg Rink and using that site as supplemental land. If we do that we could take back the Forum which we lease to Chelmsford. When I met with Tim Piwowar He asked me what do you look at when you want to improve the town? My answer is I never want to hurt one segment of our community to build up a different segment of our community. ie the high school vs destroying Gilson Hill. That's not a win for the town. We have an opportunity to build an unbelievable complex on the current location. That is something I could get behind and so wouldn't a lot of other people. Where I come from, I will not support destroying Gilson Hill when we have a viable alternative on the current site. I hope we keep the high school in place and we go forward as a unified group to promote all the positive aspects of the current site.

Engineers from Hale and Whittier described how they arrived at their findings for the sites, noting that 1971 drawings for the current High School were 40 years old and wetland configurations had changed over that time.

Conservation Director Adam Bossi reported that he had walked the site and that if this was to be a viable option, additional topographical studies would be necessary.

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Tom Aquavella commented that the Feasibility Study was where these issues would all be vetted, adding that the Gilson Hill site should be including that investigation.

Selectman Andrew Deslaurier stated that he had an opportunity to go threw the site with selectman Rosa. The site is tremendously up and down and I'm not a expert but it does seam that some of the projections from a financial statement that this is a more acceses able site than some of the other seams inappropriate to say at this time that there would be any savings from a development stand point.

Dore and Whittier responded that it would be definitely more expensive site to develop this site is more expensive than some of the other options.

Selectman Andrew Deslaurier asked about the MSBA decision on making time lines.

Superintendent Tim Piwowar provided him with a review of the MSBA process and timelines.

Selectman Deslaurier verified that any agreement with the State regarding the House of Correction expansion would not short-cut the DCR review process.

Selectman Michael Rosa questioned the cost of site prep at the various locations.

The Superintendent provided rough level estimate for the cost of potential sites, noting that the current site would pose a 3 ½ year disruption to students.

Town Manager John Curran commented that give the high cost of the project, the Town should get a complex that included both schools and fields. He also commented on issues associated with the Locke School site, particularly given that it is a two school project.

Selectman George Simolaris stated that he wanted to have a great High School for residents. He said that he was familiar with the site, but that the height of the land at Gilson Hill would require a great deal of site work. He does not think that given the terrain it would be a viable option.

Selectman Robert Accomando stated he lives across the street from the site and feels it warrants investigation. He commented that each site has issues so we need to look at all of them.

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Kevin Heffernen stated his experience with the MSBA is that they want to see that the Town has explored all options. He added that issues with each site will be ironed out in the Feasibility Study and feels it is too early to eliminate an options.

Selectman David Gagliardi believes that we cannot take any options off the table. Noting, that we are a town of 40,000 people which requires land. He stated that everyplace in Billerica has been built on something that had a prior use. Building on Gilson Hill would still leave 100 acres for recreational purposes. He noted that trading Cabot Land was a good option because the Cabot property had limited useable space.

Selectman Michael Rosa asked about clarification on the Appalachian Trail Land.

Town Manager John Curran provided that clarification.

Selectman Rosa questioned how the demolition cost would factor into the total cost of site prep for the new High School. Selectman Rosa articulated the process necessary to sell the current High School, stating that selling that parcel was not an option.

Selectman George Simolaris felt if the state released the Conservation restriction, it might be at the cost other mitigation items.

Selectman David Gagliardi read a letter into the record from Mary McBride in which she articulated her support for keeping Gilson Hill a viable option.

Selectman Gagliardi stated that he felt it was an option worth pursuing.

Selectman Deslaurier expressed concerns but did not discount it from being an option.

Selectman Rosa stated he was absolutely dead set against it and would not support it.

Selectman Simolaris stated he did not think it was good site for the High School and did not see it as a feasible option.

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Selectman Accomando supported going forward to get more information and to look into each option in detail.

Chairman David Gagliardi, poled the board to see if the Town Manager should pursue Gilson Hill

Roll Call Vote:

Selectman George Simolaris – No
Selectman Michael Rosa - No
Selectman Robert Accomando – Yes
Selectman Andrew Deslaurier – Yes
Selectman David Gagliardi - Yes

Selectman Robert Accomando, seconded by Selectman George Simolaris made a motion to adjourn.

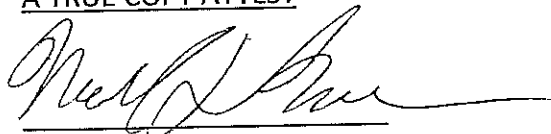
It was voted

Selectman George Simolaris – Aye
Selectman Michael Rosa - Aye
Selectman Robert Accomando – Aye
Selectman Andrew Deslaurier – Aye
Selectman David Gagliardi - Aye

Chairman David Gagliardi adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Selectman Michael Rosa made a motion to adjourn from regular session seconded by Selectman George Simolaris the vote was 5 in favor zero opposed at 9:31 p.m.

A TRUE COPY ATTEST



Secretary Michael S. Rosa