**Capital Expenditures Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, February 25, 2015, 6:15 PM**

**Lower Conference Room, Dedham Town Hall**

**Members Present:** Peter Springer, John Heffernan, Michael Podolski, Amy Paxson, and Susan Fay.

Mr. Springer called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM

**Public Comment Period**

Jim Maher was present from the Manor Neighborhood Association. He expressed concern about the Sprague Street project being cut. He explained that he had a meeting with the Town Manager, and then he provided history on the project. He said it has been a crazy process with so many people coming and going at Town Hall. He explained that at any given time you could have five cars at that intersection. Representative Coughlin filed an article to have funding for this article. Losing parking caused an issue with the neighborhood. David Field went back to the drawing board to find a solution that would not impact the restaurants. Mr. Maher explained some information on the history can be found in the 2008 Selectmen minutes. There were many meetings, and they were always told there was support of the project but there was no funding; it was all earmarked toward Dedham Square renovation. They currently have the support of the entire Board of Selectmen, and now he learns it is being cut again by the new Town Manager. This is a standalone project being done for safety reasons.

Mr. Kern explained that a member of the Board of Selectmen, DPW and Engineering met to go over this. It is not only one person who decides, it is a collective effort. He commented that the Manor Fields project does not require this redesign. Mr. Kern would like some time to talk about this instead of it being that the plan as it is, is the plan. He explained that the Director of Engineering feels that the safety as a result of the project would be wash.

Mr. Maher explained that the neighborhood association still feels this would be an important project for their neighborhood. They fight for what they think is right.

Ms. Paxson commented that what she thinks is unfortunate is that there were a lot of promises made, because the CEC is evaluating the project based on their understanding of the project, and the priority and the available budget. She is evaluating the project based on its own merits, and how critical it is as compared to every other critical project. If it is a beautification project that is one thing, but last year she specifically asked for more data on the safety issues, and she still has not seen much data to back that up. If it truly is a safety issue, she would like to see the other alternative that could resolve or somewhat resolve the safety issues.

Mr. Maher responded that the Town Engineer stated clearly that “the design is the design that is best for that area”.

**6:37 PM: Final Q & A with Department Heads for FY16 Capital Requests**

Schools

John Heffernan asked what impact it would have if the CEC chose to fund the Chromebook initiative only partially. He also questioned why they should be convinced to move forward with Chromebooks all at once, considering it is something they have not had experience with.

Don Langenhorst, Director of Technology, was present to discuss his request for computer replacements. He explained that Dedham Schools have been recognized as one of the leaders in technology. He has been to other schools and has seen full and partial implementations. When the implementation is only partial and it is implemented in phases, it creates a case of the haves and have nots. The phase-in-approach slows momentum of effectiveness, and expectations become inconsistent which is more difficult for the Technology Department to support. The Chromebooks will be implemented in Grades 6-8. There will be a process to ensure staff education and professional development. They plan on holding a conference to provide the middle school staff the time and training they need to get comfortable with the Chromebooks. Some staff has already been using the Chromebooks and the feedback for them has been highly advantageous. The Chromebooks allow for full use of the Google classroom. Mr. Langenhorst explained that other schools have not been successful with implementing standard laptops. Dedham Schools have learned what they needed to with regards to the phase process as a result of the phased in implementation of iPads at the High School. Mr. Langenhorst added that he feels there is no risk in putting the Chromebook forward.

Mr. Heffernan commented that the Schools have a great technology program. It is clear to him that Mr. Langenhorst has fully vetted the Chromebook option; it sounds like the gold standard at the middle school.

Mr. Langenhorst added that the 8th graders will take Chromebook with them into the high school.

Ms. Fay asked about the new position created to support this initiative.

Mr. Podolski asked how much will this person will be paid. Mr. Langenhorst responded $40,000 and the role will be to support the devices, and answer questions. Mr. Podolski also confirmed with Mr. Langenhorst that if he had to choose between the video system and the 1:1 initiative that he would choose the 1:1 initiative.

Michael Welch, Superintendent of the Schools, commented that the Chromebook is half the price of an iPad, and since they have been vetting this out, the price has actually gone down. Mr. Langenhorst confirmed that they would be approximately two-thirds of the price that they are now. Mr. Welch continued that when you try to do an implementation like this piece-mail, it lowers effectiveness; he would like the opportunity to do it right. The iPads are planned to be repurposed allowing a longer useful lifespan.

Ms. Paxson confirmed with Mr. Langenhorst that he had taken into consideration the fact that the price of Chromebooks would be going to go down within the amount of money that he has requested; he would have a problem if the numbers didn’t go down.

Facilities

Denise Moroney, Director of Facilities, was present.

Ms. Moroney confirmed with Mr. Heffernan that they need to do more research with regards to the fire storage building and will likely bring back a solution next year.

Ms. Paxson asked about Library security. Ms. Moroney explained that the Library Director asked about getting swipe card entry.

Mr Podolski confirmed with Ms. Moroney that the priorities for the Facilities Department remain the same except that everything will move up the list since the East Dedham Fire Building is out.

Mr. Springer asked about the placement of the oil tank at the high school. Ms. Moroney responded that it was a DEP request and will be placed at the rear of high school parking lot. She thinks it would make sense financially to do the other projects at that location while they are also doing the oil tank removal. They are doing this as a result of a noncompliance letter that was received.

Mr Podolski asked how old the tank was. Ms. Moroney responded that she is not sure. Mr. Podolski expressed some concern about the removal process, and how big the tank is. Ms. Moroney responded that they would need to look into some of this information. Mr. Podolski requested to see the violation letter.

Mr. Springer asked why the oil tank wouldn’t have been taken out when they converted.

Ms. Fay asked if there would be a penalty for not removing the tank. Ms. Moroney was not sure.

Mr. Heffernan asked if they would be sampling the soil around the tank for contaminants. Ms. Moroney confirmed that they would be, and if they find the soils to be contaminated, there will be an additional cost.

**7:15 PM: Review of priority ranking results and deliberation on FY16 Capital Requests**

DPW-

The roads program will be recommended.

Ms. Paxson commented that the two cemetery requests are the lowest ranking. Mr. Podolski suggests not recommending them. The CEC agreed not to not recommend them, but to simply state they are the least critical for the DPW.

Gateway to the Manor:

Mr. Podolski explained that since this is a safety project he gave it a ten for public safety. Ms. Podolski added that he finds it hard to believe that this $550,000 is the only solution to the problem.

Ms. Fay commented that she doesn’t think they can say that this solution is not the best solution either. Ms. Fay attended a neighborhood meeting and learned a lot about the project. She explained her findings to the Committee.

Mr. Springer commented that 10 of his 23 rating points are due to the useful life category. He would like to see them be able to address the issue under $500,000.

Ms. Paxson commented that she drives through there often and has never had a problem. She was suspicious that this project only became a "safety issue" after they found it was not going to be voted for. She commented that she would never vote for it at $550,000.

Mr. Heffernan commented that there seems to be conflicting data regarding this project; he ultimately thinks something is going to happen there, but would like to hear a more unified and definitive. More work could be done on this before he votes on it.

Ms. Fay asked if they had ever been presented with the design, or pictures of what the finished project would look like.

7:30 PM: Town Facilities-

The Endicott Porch will be recommended.

The Endicott Lighting will not be recommended. The Committee confirmed with Ms. Moroney that it is just aesthetics.

Police Painting- Mr. Podolski abstained from rating this item as he doesn’t think it is necessary since the Police Department has plans to relocate, and he believes if it needs to be done they should take the initiative and do it themselves instead of paying someone else to do it.

Ms. Fay confirmed with Ms. Moroney that some of the changes to the Youth Commission office were mandatory.

Ms. Fay confirmed with Ms. Moroney the barn at the Endicott Estate would remain a barn with storage. Mr. Heffernan commented that the barn roof is a good example of something that is a lesser priority.

Library Security will not be recommended.

School Facilities-

The oil tank removal will be recommended, although Mr. Heffernan noted that if oil is leaking it may end up costing more later.

The Guidance Office renovations will be recommended due to mandatory privacy need, even though it did not score as high within the ratings.

The recommission repairs are only an estimate; they will need the study to know what is needed. Mr. Podolski suggested picking this up at the fall instead- can they pick up in Fall Town Meeting instead. Mr. Kern agreed. Mr. Heffernan commented that they know that there are going to be repairs needed, even though he rated it high, he would not recommend this until he has a number.

Mr. Springer asked if the abatement was mandatory. Ms. Moroney responded that it is not mandatory but once you touch one, you do have to take them all.

School Technology-

Mr. Podolski commented that while it is nice to have the gold standard, he is not the Chromebook initiative should be recommended.

Mr. Heffernan commented that he thinks it is key that the students will bring the Chromebook to the high school from the middle school.

Computer replacements were recommended. Video was not recommended as it is a lesser priority according to Mr. Langenhorst.

Engineering Dept-

Mr. Heffernan explained that the Infiltration item has been an annual request that has been a commitment in the Town. Mr. Podolski commented that it lessens what is charged by the MWRA

Mr. Kern commented that at some point they will be a diminishing returns/maintenance.

Ms. Paxson commented that she thinks an example of the failings of rating system is the Violet Avenue drainage project; it has a high score but she would never vote for it. Maybe they will need to include a value rating next year based on the amount spent for what you are getting.

Colburn St. Dam- Mr. Kern commented that Massachusetts does a poor job maintaining dams, and with the Town being a recent acquirer of a dam, there is a good chance that it is not in good shape. He would like to recommend this project, as he believes it is going to be required.

Mr. Heffernan commented that after the study the Town will be committed to the results.

Town Clerk-

Mr. Heffernan commented that the booths are space-savers. They will recommend both requests.

Parks and Recreation-

Mr. Podolski commented that he thinks public safety should get a higher rating. Mr. Springer agreed.

Mr. Heffernan commented on the retaining wall; the area bowing-out is not the entire section, just one section. Putting up a stone retaining wall will be expensive. If it were lower than four feet he thinks they could more easily use it for seating. He explained that while he ranked it highest, he would not recommend it.

Fire Department-

The Ladder is no longer being recommended due to truck storage issues, but they are recommending the rescue equipment.

Police-

Mr. Heffernan commented that Chief D'Entremont does a good job level loading his spending requests, and if you wait to approve some of these things, it will just continue to add up.

Discussion-

Mr. Heffernan confirmed with Mr. Kern that the process they have gone through is helpful to him.

Mr. Kern explained the process will be that he puts together a list, and presents it back to the CEC to be voted.

Mr. Heffernan commented that the ratings need to go to the Finance Committee on March 24th.

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Paxson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 22nd and October 6, 2014, seconded by Ms. Fay, UA.

Ms. Fay commented that she wants to be sure she is more prepared for the Finance Committee presentation.

Mr. Podolski made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM, seconded by Ms. Paxson, UA.