

**TOWN OF DEDHAM
450 WASHINGTON STREET
DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE AND IN-PERSON
MAY 4, 2022, 7:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS:

James A. MacDonald	Chair
Kevin R. Coughlin	Vice Chair
Dennis Teehan	Member
Dimitria Sullivan	Member
Erin Boles Welsh	Member

TOWN OF DEDHAM STAFF:

Leon Goodwin	Town Manager
Nancy Baker	Assistant Town Manager
Doreen LaBrecque	Administrative Assistant

Minutes prepared by Mary-Margaret Scrimger of Minutes Solutions Inc. from an audio/video recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Board recited the pledge of allegiance. The Chair, Mr. MacDonald, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. INFORMATION SESSION: ARTICLE 13

Dr. Teehan noted that *Article 13* is a once in a lifetime opportunity. If this article passes, it will ensure that there is a green space accessible to all Dedham citizens. It was noted that nothing has been decided and the group will work with citizens to create a final product. *Article 13* appropriates funds for the total cost of design, engineer, construction, and outfitting of the town green.

Ms. Porter, of the Planning Board, noted that the old police station became vacant in 2022, which created an opportunity for its potential use. After two years of exhaustive study, the Dedham Square Planning Committee (DSPC), which was created to assess different uses for this space, recommended the lot be used as a town green.

There were numerous meetings to engage stakeholders; citizens and experts were consulted, and an economic analysis was done. The volunteers on the DSPC donated more than 1,000 hours.

Other options considered were a mixed-use building, to sell the parcel, or to turn the parcel into parking. To sell the property, there would not be significant returns because there was asbestos

contamination that would need to be addressed, and remediation would be detrimental to returns, which would similarly impact a mixed-use building.

To use the parcel for surface parking would cause an increase in congestion and while, typically, parking is considered a way to support local businesses it is not accurate. A town green would support local businesses in a better way. The town green has high economic, community, and environmental benefits. Nearby commercial property values increase with greens space.

Ms. Porter noted that 68% of money spent at a local business stays in the local economy. With an increase in traffic to local businesses, this would increase business and in turn increase the taxes collected, benefiting the local economy. With outdoor space for gatherings, the community will benefit from performances, gatherings, and other events. Green space also offsets the heat generated from roofs and asphalt, and increases the air quality.

Ms. Sullivan noted that, on January 20, 2022, the Select Board voted to proceed with the town green. On March 24, 2022, the Select Board voted to recommend *Article 13*. She noted that a phased approach is the fiscally prudent approach. This allows for future growth while working with the current financial limitations.

Curb reconstruction disproportionately increases the project cost, and any changes to traffic must be studied, which also increases costs. There are uncertainties with underground utilities and to mitigate the risk that this would increase costs, it was decided to not disrupt utilities at this time.

The Select Board voted on April 13, 2022 to create a town green working group that consists of six members. Five will be appointed and one will be nominated by the DSPC.

Ms. Boles Welsh explained the ideas to concept. The community feedback work that the DSPC completed should be considered a gold standard. There was significant citizen feedback that generated a list of elements to include in the park, and includes community porch with power, seating areas, specimen trees and shaded trees, appropriate lighting, bike racks, etc. This all was considered within the \$2.5 million budget.

There is a plan to keep momentum with the Town Green Working Group. The role of this group will be to work with the town manager to develop a request for qualifications to solicit designers, develop criteria to be used to select a designer, to develop and execute public outreach, provide updates to the Select Board, and work with town staff to recommend final design plans.

Mr. Roberts addressed the financial side of the town green. Demolition of the police station is \$800,000, design contract documents is \$150,000, construction and materials is \$1,550,000, and a traffic circulation study is \$50,000. This totals \$2.55 million. It is a \$14.88 per year increase to residential tax papers over the next 20 years if the entire project is bonded. However, it is the intention to aggressively pursue additional funding.

There are opportunities via the Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities grant program and other state and federal grant programs. Private funds will also be raised.

Dr. Teehan discussed different options for next steps if *Article 13* is approved or not approved. If it is not approved then a strategy on how to proceed will be created by working with stakeholders.

One of the challenges with waiting on this project is rising construction costs. Delaying would increase costs. This parcel is central to the town and would be detrimental to the town if it became an abandoned building. He reinforced that this green public space would be a jewel of Dedham for the future.

The floor was opened to questions.

A citizen asked for more detail regarding the concept plan incorporating the Horizon land parcel. **Dr. Teehan** noted that the parcel is no longer available, but there will be continued effort to receive the parcel.

A citizen noted their support of *Article 13* and asked why the Planning Board is not directly included in this process.

Dr. Teehan noted that the full design has not been decided and that approval will include the Planning Board. *Article 13* is to approve the concept. There will be considerations such as parking, traffic, etc. Conservation also needs to be involved.

A citizen asked if *Article 13* does not pass, would the working group still exist.

Dr. Teehan noted that the working group could still exist, and this should be discussed with the working group.

A citizen asked what would happen to the old police station lot after it is demolished. There is liability associated with the parcel and to decrease this the lot should be walkable. He also asked if the Select Board would have the final approval of the design concept.

Dr. Teehan noted that the Select Board would have the final approval.

Mr. Fred Civian noted that he is part of the Finance and Warrant Committee. He voted against *Article 13* in the committee because he had concerns that the Select Board was fully invested in creating the town green. He noted that the Select Board has worked hard in the last few weeks to show their commitment.

A citizen noted that she does not know how large the parcel is. She felt that *Article 14* was engaging the entire town, and noted concern that *Article 13* is not a concrete design.

Dr. Teehan noted that approving the initial concept is due to costs and noted that the park will be approximately 14,000 square feet.

A citizen asked that the design process not just be a review of qualifications but be a competitive process.

It was noted that the selection process will not just be the lowest cost but the highest quality, and the group discussed traffic and working with neighbors to ensure traffic is appropriately considered.

Ms. Anna Kiosk asked about the grant that was not received and why it was declined.

Dr. Teehan explained that they don't know why, but suspect it was due to funding fewer projects than in previous years. Mr. Goodwin will meet with the administrator. This is a once-a-year grant that the town can apply for again.

Ms. Sarah MacDonald asked what would happen if town meeting voted for more than what was needed.

Dr. Teehan noted that the money would not be borrowed.

Mr. Michael Leahy asked what to expect from the Select Board in their intent for the town green. **Dr. Teehan** believes that a great green space can be created with the current budget. **Mr. MacDonald** noted that the Select Board will take positions for the majority of the articles and warrants going to the town meeting.

Ms. Melissa Sadaro asked about the differences between the two concepts. **Dr. Teehan** noted that they had similar amenities but different layouts. The concepts are two possible designs, but the final designs will have concrete ideas.

Mr. Fred Civian noted his skepticism that when the finance and warrant vote occurred, but that the Select Board has put significant effort into the project. He asked about the private fundraising. **Dr. Teehan** noted that private fundraising will be carried out to improve the project. Alternate aspects can be built into the project if funding comes through.

A citizen noted that grants are not dependable and are competitive. He also asked if a 51C would be set up so that the town has a charity for donations.

A citizen asked about sidewalks. **Dr. Teehan** noted that pedestrian safety is extremely important, and the sidewalk study will provide more information on what is financially responsible as well as safe.

Ms. Susan (inaudible) asked for clarification regarding an area that is private property that may be perceived as town property. **Mr. MacDonald** noted that the conceptual plans may cause more confusion than clarity. He noted that a different approach may be needed, and this will be discussed by the Select Board. **Dr. Teehan** noted that nothing is off the table until the larger study is done.

A citizen noted that a working group of six people is not large enough. She was glad that parking will be investigated, especially with the parking meter issues.

Mr. MacDonald thanked everyone for their participation.

3. ADJOURNMENT

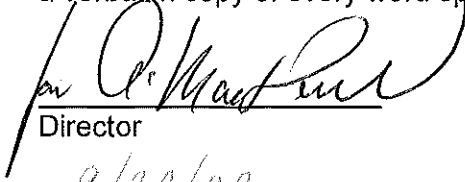
A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn. A roll call vote was taken:

Dimitria Sullivan	Yes
Erin Boles Welsh	Yes
James A. MacDonald	Yes
Kevin R. Coughlin	Yes
Dennis Teehan	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting of the members of the Select Board. This document shall not be considered to be a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.



Director

9/22/22

Date

Director

Date