

**TOWN OF CANTON, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
Wednesday, February 3, 2010**

A Special Town Meeting of the Town of Canton was held on Wednesday, February 3, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Canton High School Auditorium, 76 Simonds Avenue, Canton, CT. James Bixler, Moderator, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The Town Clerk, Linda Smith, read the call of the meeting and the return of notice.

Richard Barlow began the discussion on:

the acquisition of approximately 9.25 acres of property known as 5 Cherry Brook Road for the purpose of locating a future Highway Garage and possible other municipal structures and the appropriation of \$900,000 from the Town's undesignated fund balance to fund such purchase.

Richard Barlow, First Selectman, reviewed a brief history of the Highway Garage situation. Over the past 20 years there has been a recognized need for a new location for the garage. The Planning Commission has given a positive '8-24' reply to the proposed location. Peter Reynolds, Chairman of the PMBC, will speak about the process of selection of the property. Robert Skinner, CAO, will speak about the timeline of the project. In addition, cost of demolition of the existing site and the environmental assessment will be discussed.

Peter Reynolds, Chairman of the PMBC, introduced the other members of the PMBC. In 2007 the PMBC was charged with the highway garage project that included 1) removal of the underground storage tank; and 2) a master plan process to relocate the garage.

One of the first projects he was involved with was the school project. The challenge there was to expand the schools to meet the Town's needs on land and with buildings that the Town already owned. All projects start with defining needs. What we need in this highway garage project that is unique is a place to build the garage. The PMBC began with a broad look of Town parcels. Available lots as well as properties not for sale were evaluated. After more than a 60 parcel search, in June 2009, the PMBC reluctantly recommended to the Board of Selectmen the property at 51 River Road. The reluctance came with their concern over the size of the space, utility setbacks and the residential neighborhood it sat in. In the fall of 2009, 5 Cherry Brook Road became available. It was, by far, the most preferable spot for the garage needs.

The PMBC did not feel that any of the Town-owned properties were ideal options. Their interest is in the acquisition of the best site. Currently, this is a site process, not a project process, and we are confronted with the opportunity to acquire a private parcel that might not last on the market. The Plan of Conservation and Development identified 4 areas of concern: the Library, the Police Department, the schools and the garage. The Town has addressed three of these four areas that need attention. Using 51 River Road goes 'backwards' by absorbing ball field space. The property at 5 cherry Brook Road gives us additional land to create other fields in the future.

Jeff Alberti of Weston & Sampson Engineers used a power point presentation to discuss what has been completed to date. In 2007, a feasibility study was done which concluded that the existing site was not feasible for expansion. It is located within the Farmington River 100 year floodplain. Salt and fuel storage could negatively impact the environment. DPW, as one of the Town's first responders, would not be able to serve the community during a flood. Construction of a new building in the floodplain would be cost prohibitive and would compromise the Town's ability to get insurance. The inadequacies of the existing structure include: an outdated and inefficient building, undersized facilities, lack of storage space, limited public accessibility, and poor working conditions. An analysis/facilities study determined a need for six areas of a new building: administration, employee facilities, work shops, vehicle maintenance, wash bay and vehicle/equipment storage. This would fit into 25,000 square feet of space which is consistent with industry standards. This proposed building could fit onto 2.4-3.0 acres of land.

The site selection process looked at over 60 sites and did a fatal flaws review of each one. That list was reduced to 10 potential sites. These sites were ranked with weighted factors and reduced to 3 sites: 51 River Road, 100 Commerce Drive and 5 Cherry Brook Road (which was initially

removed due to private development). An ideal location was not identified. There were restrictions that have to be addressed such as lot size, abutters, wetland issues, drainage detention basins and declaration restrictions. When 5 Cherry Brook Road came back on the market, they looked at the benefits/issues and determined that it was the preferred site for the garage needs.

Robert Skinner, Chief Administrative Officer, explained the timeline of events. In September 2009, 5 Cherry Brook Road became available for purchase. The owner wanted \$1.1 million. The Board of Selectmen authorized an appraisal that came back at \$875,000. Going back to the owner, they settled on \$900,000 which is within 2.8% of the appraisal value. A purchase and sale agreement was negotiated and brought to the Board of Selectmen which they approved pending Board of Finance and Town Meeting/Referendum approvals. On January 12th the Board of Finance gave its approval and on January 20th the Board of Selectmen voted to bring it to tonight's Special Town Meeting and a referendum on February 10th from 6am-8pm. The Zoning Commission is reviewing the zone change this evening and the Planning Commission gave a positive '8-24' review in accordance with the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development. Soil samples were conducted and came back with no concern.

Richard Barlow stated that there was an open house at the town garage last Saturday in which approximately 50 citizens showed up to take the tour. Implications of what happens if we don't build the new garage include:

- We store our salt in Burlington. Each storm requires four to six trips to replenish, wasting two to three hours of time transporting product to Canton.
- Twenty minutes are wasted warming each truck up for a total of 3-4 hours of downtime per storm.

Jeff Alberti stated that the demo costs to remediate and remove the old garage site would be \$40,000-\$45,000.

Dick Ohanesian, Chairman of the Board of Finance, stated that the \$900,000 would come from the fund balance and STEAP Grant. We have leeway in the fund balance. We don't know how much the cost of the new building will be but we will move forward when that comes before us.

Discussion and comments were made by:

Lance Perry-Barbourtown Road
Barry Dickstein-Queens Peak Road
Chris Eckert-Camille Lane
Ken Humphrey-East Hill Road
Bill Cooper-Boulder Ridge
Lowell Humphrey-Canton Valley Circle
Steve Roberto-Pine Acres Drive
George Thimot-West Mountain Road
Gilles Giuntini-Morgan Road
Carrie Sinish-Dyer Ave
Bob Bessell-South Street
Vince D'Addeo-Highfields Drive
David Sinish-Dyer Ave
Mary Tomolonius-Bahre Corner Road

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07pm to a referendum to be held February 10, 2010. The polls will be open from 6am-8pm at the Canton Town Hall. Absentee ballots are available from the Town Clerk beginning February 4th.

Linda Smith
Linda Smith, Town Clerk

Received for record February 5, 2010

Linda Smith
Linda Smith, Town Clerk