

From: Carrie Vibert April 16, 2012 11:03:18 AM  
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To: SimsburyCT\_PlanMin  
Cc:

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
MARCH 13, 2012  
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Michael R. Paine, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Tina E. Hallenbeck, Richard Cortes, Robert Kulakowski, Gary Lungarini, Ferg Jansen and Mark Drake. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, Janis Prifti, Commission Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. SEATING OF ALTERNATES as necessary

Chairman Paine appointed Commissioner Cortes to serve for Commissioner Rice and Commissioner Lungarini to serve for Commissioner Prell.

III. PRESENTATION BY THE TOWN ENGINEER FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR FY '12/'13 FOR CGS 8-24 REFERRAL, AND 6-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Rich Sawitzke, Town Engineer, provided the Commissioners with a Summary of the 6-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). He said the Town does a current year and 5 additional years, but in the budget process only the year they are presently dealing with is approved. He stated the Capital Improvement Project includes projects that are bonded and projects paid directly out of available funds and some will be transferred to various cash accounts. He added the program is referred to the Planning Commission under statute to review the Capital Improvement overall, and in 2 weeks after the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen determine which projects are going to be bonded, the Planning Commission will get bond counsel language back. He said they want to discuss the program in general and invite comments, but there is no choice in the bond counsel part, which is why they do a 2-stage presentation.

Mr. Sawitzke stated the first handout has all of the programs over 6 years

and they are subject to change - it is not his intent to talk about the out years. He said the 2nd package has fiscal year '12-'13 Proposed Projects; they use the general guideline that Capital Improvement Projects have to appear somewhere in years 2 through 6 in order to be considered; unless there is an emergency situation, they do not like a project to suddenly occur for the first time in the year under consideration and that is the case in this program. He said if you look at this year's CIP, there are some cases where you won't see a project - that means it appears in the Capital Non-Reoccurring Program which are generally smaller capital projects, generally equipment up to around \$100,000 with bonding kicking in over that amount and smaller pieces of capital equipment, such as computers, generally occurring in the operating budget under capital items with the only exception large infrastructure network switching cabling which occurs typically as a bonded project. He said this year's program was developed through requests from residents, boards, commissions and staff; then they prioritized all projects; and based on the guidelines mentioned before, found a home for them among CIP, the Capital Non-Reoccurring Program, or the Capital Outlay Program in the general budget. He said there are a number of cost guidelines the Board of Finance utilizes to decide which projects will be on the annual program. He said all projects in this year's program have been on past 6-year programs, with the exception of one program from the Capital Non-Reoccurring Program.

Mr. Sawitzke went through this year's program using the handout. He said the 1st project for Fiscal Year 2013 is Phase 2A of the Ethel Walker Open Space Acquisition Program, as approved a few years ago at a Town Meeting totaling 328 acres of Fee Simple and 53 acres of development rights. He said the first and largest phases have been completed and the next phase is to acquire an additional 49.8 acres and in year 2015 an additional 41.8 acres. He said this program was developed to account for the Town's ability to cash flow and bond and is memorialized in a 2007 agreement with the Ethel Walker School. He stated Ethel Walker School, in the opinion of many, is one of the prime pieces of open space acquisitions in the State; it is a nonfragmented area of forest with wetlands and stream belts and ties in with nearly 1400 acres of publicly-owned open space which when linked with Land Trust properties and the McLean Game Refuge creates virtually a continuous corridor of some 5000 acres north and south. He said this year's phase will cost \$2,050,000; they have \$691,000 in grants in place toward that; and the difference between total cost and the grants will be bonded.

Mr. Sawitzke said the 2nd project is a Police Radio Console Dispatch Center which was originally in Capital and Non-Reoccurring, but because it was somewhat higher than normally funded in that program, it was moved over to CIP. He said the heart of the system is 13 years old and the computer equipment has reached a point of no longer being supported. He stated it

is a critical operation for all dispatch, some community emergency operations, and backup systems shared with 2 neighboring towns, and an upgrade is definitely needed; the life of the replacement system is again expected to be about 10 years. He said while they will reuse workstations and furnishings, a major goal is integrating their GIS Location System, regular radio dispatch and the 911 system - currently, they have separate handsets to pick up calls. He said the project cost breakdown includes all design aspects, other costs, and bonding costs which are prorated. He said there is a Consolidated Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and projects are cash flowed out and assembled from various projects to sell a bond at the most opportune time in the market; it is very difficult to match up project costs with bond costs on CAFR unless you span several years. He said most smaller projects go to full bonding or full cash; larger projects, like construction market bidding on the high school, may have money left over and those dollars are never bonded.

Mr. Sawitzke said the 3rd project is for Emergency Generator Improvements which evolved from Hurricane Irene and Halloween Storm Alfred. He said they learned a number of buildings have stationary generator systems, including the Town Hall and the Sewer Treatment Plant. He stated some other buildings have automatic disconnects with hookups for portable generators, but emergency generators cannot sit there and become mini-power plants - they have to be taken down after about a week for fairly serious service. He said a mini-backup for the Town Hall and switching, circuiting rearrangement is needed. Also, he said they need to look at an emergency shelter in Tariffville - funds are included here to do that study; funding is also included for re-circuiting at Eno, the Library, and more importantly at the high school primary shelter. He said they found over time circuits are moved around in buildings and they have to assure circuits/breakers are available to run generators in an emergency. He said the total on the summary sheet is somewhat lower because the project was adjusted downward.

Mr. Sawitzke said the 4th project is a Wash Station for the Public Works Fleet Division which handles all of the Town's police cars, trucks, vehicles, and equipment. He said while they have not used much sand on roads this year and the chemicals used are less detrimental environmentally, the chemicals do eat up the equipment. He stated they now have to wash equipment after every storm and don't want that water getting into ground water; the Wash Station will recirculate and clean the water with a backwash into the sewer system. He clarified while overall groundwater is diluted and not the concern, the State does not want this water concentrated at the wash site. He said the large computer-controlled equipment wire contact points and connectors can corrode making equipment inoperable and this station will wash underneath. Chairman Paine confirmed the similar issues with his company's trucks.

Mr. Sawitzke said next are 3 projects to address maintenance, extension and improvements to sidewalks and multi-use trails. He said they are part of the transportation system and must be maintained. He stated this project includes redoing Owens Brook Boulevard walkway and upgrading it to a multi-use status from Hopmeadow to Hearthstone Drive and extending the missing link from Hearthstone to Firetown. He said they are also looking at West Street from Bushy Hill Road easterly because a lot of children cross the road in that area; the State will partner with the Town and put in pedestrian traffic heads and abutments - the Town will put in the sidewalk. He added the 3rd component is to redo a one mile section on the oldest phases of the multi-use path either at West Street from Hopmeadow to the High School or the trail section north of Iron Horse Boulevard north to Rte. 315 - the State will be working on West Street next year and they may want to coordinate that work and use subsequent funding to pay for it. He said they estimate a cost of about \$95,000/year to keep the trails in good shape.

Mr. Sawitzke said the next project is the Town Teledata Infrastructure. He stated the current computer system uses dialup with a lot of phone line problems and they are looking to use some wireless installations and fiber, especially in the center area to link the Library, Water Pollution Control Facility, and Town Offices providing common access to servers with the same access screens.

Mr. Sawitzke said the next project is the Wolcott Pump Station Rehabilitation which is being approved as part of Capital Projects but will be paid for by the Sewer Use Fund for the Water Pollution Control Authority. He said it is a critical station serving all of Tariffville and Granby; it would be environmentally harmful for this station to fail with tremendous fines imposed. He said the wastewater and naturally-created chemicals in handling wastewater are very corrosive and break down the electronic gear. He said basic building and underground guts will be retained, but all the electronics, generators and switch gear will be replaced. He said the station is designed and ready to go with the Sewer Fund having funds to pay for it.

Mr. Sawitzke said next is the Water Pollution Control Authority project paid for out of the Sewer Use Fund is the Farmington River Stream Bank Stabilization. He said the main trunk lines for the southern portion of Simsbury, as well as Avon, run along the Farmington River; the river is cutting away the banks underneath on the outside of curves and the sewer will settle. He said they will do a study, scoping and develop a plan of action and then apply for permits and perhaps funding from the New England Army Corps of Engineers; they must do the study step in order to apply for the permits and grants.

Mr. Sawitzke stated the last project is for Simsbury Public Schools for a District Network Infrastructure. He said they have a very robust system of operational computers and educational computers, extensive switching, networking equipment, and servers; this is a 2-year program to upgrade all of their systems. He said the School System is so extensive the dollars are significant and they have support from the Bond Counsel; it involves fat pipe technology and they partner with the State's CNN network for some data transfer and have a very extensive fiber network.

Mr. Sawitzke expects only the Ethel Walker Open Space Phase 2A and the School District's Network Infrastructure will be bonded; the other projects will most likely be funded out of transfers from reserves or if principal and interest payments have decreased in the Debt Retirement Fund, they will fund that at the same level and pay down directly as decided by Finance.

Regarding discounts from computer companies to educational institutions, he said schools get substantial deals and the Town gets lesser deals and there are cost savings in fiber networks. He will return in 2 weeks after a decision is made on what will be bonded.

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to approve the Capital Improvement Program pursuant to GSA 8-24. Commissioner Cortes seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Mr. Sawitzke invited the Commissioners to look forward in the 6-year program regarding preferences for projects. Chairman Paine asked Mr. Sawitzke to provide more detail on the outyear projects when he returns in 2 weeks, including bike paths. Mr. Sawitzke said this is the first time they've done a summary sheet of project costs, which deducts grants, provides a total, and percentage of the general fund budget which is the guideline to fit debt retirement into a program that does not exceed 7%. He said there are ways to phase the program so debt requirements come out properly.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### A. Discussion of Town Center Guidelines

Mr. Peck stated the Town Center Guideline consultant, Noré Winter, was in Simsbury 3/8/12 and held a workshop to discuss progress to-date. He said they have set up an overall outline of what they are working on and they have done mockups of some of the Design Guideline pages - he will try to

get those posted on the web. He said Mr. Winter would like to receive comments and questions, etc. in the next 2 weeks in preparation for finishing the 1st draft of the Design Guidelines in early to mid-April and return with the final draft by the end of June. Mr. Peck would like to receive the Commissioner's comments and questions as soon as possible. He said the Design Review Board questions included how these Guidelines fit into the existing Design Guidelines, how they relate to the Town Center Code, and how those two will interact. He said in order to know that, we must wait to see how this document comes out. He added one of the documents Winter & Associates provided was a guideline strategy with 3 categories of changes: 1) changes to the Town Center Code itself where during the stakeholder workshops in some cases 3 examples showed the Code could be misinterpreted by the way it's written and something unintended results, it should be corrected in the near future before a series of developments come in; 2) changes that could be Code changes and there could be changes to the Design Guidelines that the Design Review Board currently uses; and 3) changes to Design Guidelines only. He said how those will fit together and in which change goes in which document will be decided as they go through the process. He asked to receive comments on the 28-30-page draft in order to assure a transparent process and ultimately have documents people want to see for the Town Center. He said there is some money in the budget to do some village districts and some of these Guidelines may be used for that work as well; he asked for the Commissioner's thoughts on this as well. He thanked the Commissioners who attended or called in to the Winter meeting. Chairman Paine stated he supports this effort and that it is coming along nicely.

V. STAFF REPORT(s) on above items.

None.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Mr. Peck said the Design Review Board's recent discussion with a developer for a particular project did not go well. He said DRB had a discussion of the Design Review process and how it works and how DRB's comments and recommendations plug into what Zoning does and sometimes to Planning. He said DRB decided to have meetings with the Zoning Commission and the Planning Commission to decide how to improve communications between the Boards. He suggested DRB start with a small meeting of a non-quorum group of 2-3 people, Chairman, Secretary and another member of each of the Commissions, to discuss issues and concerns. He said they will be looking to set up a meeting with Planning and then with Zoning; this would be a meeting of 6-8 people, but not a quorum of each of the Commissions. He thought that DRB feels their recommendations are either misinterpreted or not paid attention to and offered to not be a part of the meeting and will

act to facilitate the discussion. Chairman Paine asked Mr. Peck to advise him of the potential meeting dates and stated a preference that he attend the meeting.

Chairman Paine stated he and Commissioner Drake will both be attending the CCROG meeting on Thursday night 3/15/12.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of February 28, 2012

The minutes were amended to change the spelling of "Mr. Gerard" to "Mr. Girard" wherever it appears in the minutes, and on Page 4 to change the spelling of "Burgess & Shaw" to "Bourgeois & Shaw". Commissioner Drake made a motion to approve the February 28, 2012, minutes, as amended. Commissioner Cortes seconded the motion, and it was passed with Chairman Paine and Commissioner Jansen abstaining.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jansen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Commissioner Lungarini seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

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Tina Hallenbeck, Secretary