

CIAC - Capital Improvement Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2019
6:40 PM – 7:30 PM
DPW Meeting Room

Present: Susan Abrams, Tom Travers, Jamie Gossels, Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi, Joe Scanga, Michael Cooper

Absent: Matt Dallas

Also Present: William Barletta (Sudbury Combined Facilities Director), Len Simon (Board of Selectmen), Dan Carty (Board of Selectmen), Pat Brown (Board of Selectman) Maryanne Bilideau (ATM/HR Director)

Chairman Gossels, following acknowledgement of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 6:40PM. There was only one item on the agenda.

Item 1: Camp Sewataro

Jamie reviewed some of the basic details of the proposed purchase of the Sewataro property.

Major points related to the purchase include:

- Price
- Plans for how the town will use the land have not been determined so the decision to purchase will need to be made prior to that information being available. This means that the costs going forward are unknown.
- The alternative to the town's purchase of the land appears to be development, which also has costs to the town.

Committee Discussion:

- Selectman Simon had requested a chance to speak in opposition to the purchase. Because there were three selectmen present it constituted a quorum and if any business were conducted it would be a violation of the Open Meeting Law. A request that either Dan Carty or Pat Brown leave the room was turned down by both of them. Consequently, Len Simon was not able to present his position to the committee. He provided a copy of his concerns regarding the purchase for the committee.

The committee was clear in expressing it's disappointment in the Selectmen and this situation, as well as the fact that the proposed purchase had never come before the CIAC as is the process for expenditures over \$100,000.

- In response to the question of whether an inventory had been completed on the property Bill noted that he had toured the property but had no projections of the cost to get the property to be available for public use, particularly ADA compliant. This would require money for a study to assess the issues, including compliance, general maintenance, and other things such as heat. Then there would be funding needed to for a plan to address the identified needs.
- There was a concern that there was no business plan for 12 month use of the property.
- A question/concern was also raised that the town is paying over the assessed value for the land.
- The biggest concern, which was echoed in much of the discussion, was the lack of a plan of how the property would be used going forward, which directly impacts the financial impact of the purchase beyond the initial price. The town knew about the potential sale of Sewataro in

February of 2018...why wasn't a study commissioned to identify the potential of the property and the additional costs?

- One perspective that was shared was to look at the purchase as a business opportunity, which comes up without a plan but doesn't preclude the purchase. It was agreed that the process was wrong but one member questioned whether we should use that as a reason to pass up the opportunity. Purchase of the property would give the town control over the disposition of the land and, given past history with developers, they have not generally had the town's best interest in mind when they bought large parcels. This could be looked at as an investment and the land could be sold later. Another member noted that the town shouldn't be in the investment business though.
- There was a short discussion comparing the cost to the town if we purchased the land and maintained it versus the tax benefits if it was developed. The latter could end up being net neutral.
- There are several costly projects coming up (Senior Center, Fairbanks, fire stations, Town Hall) and does the town have sufficient funds to take care of all of this or do we need to prioritize and make difficult choices.

A vote was taken:

Opposed to the purchase: 4 Tom Travers, Michael Cooper, Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi, Susan Abrams

In favor of the purchase: 1 Joe Scanga

Abstention: 1 Jamie Gossels

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted, Sue Abrams, Clerk

Handouts:

Statement from Selectman Len Simon