

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

March 25, 2024

Page 2 of 5

ITEM NO. 6 ON CALL: APPOINTMENTS OF JAMES R CAISSY (U) AND MAUREEN GREENBERG (U) ALTERNATES TO THE FAIR RENT COMMISSION TERM NOV. 2023-2026

Scott Nickel, District 7 moved this item, duly seconded.

James Caissy spoke about his commercial real estate experience and how it would be an asset to the commission. Maureen Greenberg explained she has run and owned many real estate brokerage firms which will benefit the commission.

VOTE: The appointments of James Caissy and Maureen Greenberg Alternates to the Fair Rent Commission were approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 7 ON CALL: APPOINTMENT OF LISA CALLAHAN (D) TO THE ETHICS COMMISSION TERM JULY 2023-2025 (TO FILL VACANCY)

This item was on the consent calendar.

ITEM NO. 8 ON CALL: APPOINTMENT OF JOSEPH A VALLE (U) TO THE HVAC INDOOR AIR QUALITY BUILDING COMMITTEE (TO FILL VACANCY)

This item was on the consent calendar.

ITEM NO. 9 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: "RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, 'A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$130,000 FOR THE COSTS OF A NONRECURRING CAPITAL PROJECT AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION,' BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED."

This item was on the consent calendar.

ITEM NO. 10 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: "RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, 'A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$3,260,200 FOR THE COSTS OF CERTAIN NONRECURRING CAPITAL PROJECTS AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION,' BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED."

Jay Wolk, District 5 moved this item, duly seconded.

In response to Steve Berez, District 7 Parks & Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese explained \$350,000 is for Top Tracer (TT) \$200,000 is for the short game area. TT equipment is \$50,00 for electrical while \$50,000 is for licensing. The annual fee of \$50,000 is included in the operating budget. There is a 5-year guarantee. To the best of his knowledge the TT technology will not be obsolete in 5 years.

Jeff Steele, District 3 said we have one of the top 5 municipal courses in the state; but the driving range has not been updated in decades. It needs work along with the short game area. The investment will increase revenue and will be paid off in a few years. He reiterated this is not a TT facility.

Mark McDermott, District 9 said he had concerns about the security of the facility which Mr. Calabrese agreed with.

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

March 25, 2024

Page 3 of 5

Kerry Berchem, District 8 said the proposal is not reasoned or reasonable. She cannot, will not and does not support the proposal.

Michelle McCabe, District 4 asked if there are plans for security; Mr. Calabrese said it would be discussed with the consultant. Ms. McCabe asked that the use of propane be reconsidered.

Dave Rock, District 2 said he is a resident of Hoydens Hill and an avid golfer but believes TT is over the top and an exorbitant expense. There is a handheld app to analyze golf swings. TT changes the behavior of golfers and it becomes a place to hang out. There was no traffic study given the close proximity to the Merritt Parkway. He noted that Hoydens Hill is a scenic road of 1.6 miles with 50 homes, and 1 fire hydrant. He said that Tim Bishop the Conservation Director has not seen any construction plan to date but did not believe it would be an issue as Conservation has no jurisdiction over the driving range. Mr. Rock indicated he is in favor of everything but TT.

Jennifer Barahona, District 6 spoke in favor of the sidewalk connectivity project in the McKinley School area.

Sharon Pistilli, District 5 asked about the Conservation process. Mr. Calabrese said the concept became two phases. \$275,000 for Phase 1 was approved by the 3 bodies unanimously. The bids received were much higher than anticipated even with value engineering but could not get under \$275,000. So far Phase 2 has been unanimously approved by the BOS and BOF. He has already spoken with Tim Bishop about the project several times in their monthly meetings among DPW, Engineering, Conservation and Parks & Recreation. It is not Conservation property and it meets "dark sky" requirements. It does not require Conservation Comm or Town Plan & Zoning Commission approval. Building permits are needed along with the fire marshal's sign off.

Ms. Pistilli asked for clarification on the netting replacement. Craig Curley, former Golf Commission Chair said the nets need replacement; Conservation had expressed concern about birds getting caught in the netting. Upon investigation for the entire season less than 5 birds were discovered.

Dru Georgiadis, District 9 said she supports the project as it is the next step following the upgrade to the clubhouse. She is an avid golfer who uses TT technology that has helped improve her game. She noted that more emails were received in support of the project than against.

Chris Carroll, District 8 asked when the work would begin. Mr. Curley said it is shovel ready and would begin prior to the start of the next FY.

Chris Shea, District 2 said he appreciated the questions and answers provided by Mr. Calabrese and the emails from residents regarding the proposal. As a builder, he said it is safe to bury propane tanks as it's done frequently.

Jay Wolk, District 5 asked why there was no Conservation Commission involvement. Mr. Calabrese said the regulations had been updated and now the distance to the body of water is not an issue. Interim CFO David Becker noted that there's a ¼ mile to the fire hydrant and the firetrucks carry 1,500 feet of hose.

Mr. Curley said the driving range has been neglected for years. It will increase revenue and effectively pay for itself and not be a burden on the taxpayers.

In response to Mr. McDermott, Mr. Calabrese said the driving range is not being lengthened. Mr. Rock asked why the driving range closes at 6 PM to which Mr. Calabrese said staffing and the cold weather.

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

March 25, 2024

Page 4 of 5

Melissa Longo, District 1 said if we are going to upgrade an asset then we should upgrade it properly. We now have a safe streets program that could assist the Hoydens Hill area but it is a separate issue.

Mr. Steele noted that 90% of the emails received were in favor. Laura Karson noted that TT provides more information than the hand-held application. Rob Blanchard, District 6 said he supports the many amenities in town especially where revenues can be increased without raising taxes.

Public Comment: Speaking in opposition were Gerry Rosenberg, Hoydens Hill Rd., Denise Christie, Hoydens Lane and William Dehler, Hoydens Lane.

MOTION: Dave Rock moved to reduce the \$3,260,200 appropriation by \$110,000 to \$3,150,200, duly seconded. Mr. Rock said this would eliminate the funds for propane and TT.

Ken Astarita, District 1 said there is a desire to make our facilities the best they can be such as the pavilions, parks and turf fields. Jeff Steele said the way to make more money is to extend the season for hours of play. There are 3,000 golfers who can use and enhance their game because of this.

Tara Cook-Littman, District 2 said this is a reasonable amendment. She does not feel the revenue will be that great if \$50,000 is spent annually.

Christine Ludwiczak, District 8 spoke in opposition to the amendment noting that although safety is a valid point, removing the funds will not affect that.

Ms. Christie spoke in favor of the amendment.

VOTE: The motion to reduce the \$3,260,200 bond resolution by \$110,000 failed with 8 in favor and 31 opposed.

IN FAVOR: Cook-Littman, Rock, Straus, Wolk, Berez, Kuhn, Berchem, Ambrose

OPPOSED: Astarita, Britton, Longo, Sparacino, O'Shea, Shea, Hartigan, Steele, Waldron, Karson, McCabe, Spolyar, Garskof, O'Neill, Pistilli, Barahona, Blanchard, Donne, Graceffa, Delgado, Nickel, Carroll, Colburn, Ludwiczak, Georgiadis, Havey, McDermott, Wackerman, Contratto, Horton, Ratzki

Jennifer Barahona asked if the netting would be included in the operating budget. Mr. Calabrese said it is in the operating budget and delivery is expected in May in response to Mr. Carroll's question.

VOTE: The \$3,260,200 bonding resolution for certain non-recurring capital projects was approved with 38 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstention (Berchem).

ITEM NO. 11 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: "RESOLVED, THAT A BOND RESOLUTION AMENDING AND RESTATING A RESOLUTION ENTITLED, 'A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$3,717,899 FOR THE COSTS OF CERTAIN NONRECURRING CAPITAL PROJECTS AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION,' TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE JACKY DURRELL PAVILION UPGRADES PROJECT DESCRIPTION, BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED."

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

March 25, 2024

Page 5 of 5

Jay Wolk, District 5 moved this item, duly seconded.

VOTE: The bond resolution amending the \$3,717,899 for the expansion of the scope of the Jacky Durrell Pavilion upgrades was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEMS NO. 12 & 13 ON CALL: ORDINANCE REFERRALS TO L&A

The amendments to Chapter 95, Article III of the Code of the Town (Tax Relief) and a proposed Ethics Ordinance were referred to L&A and are currently held in committee. A special meeting will be scheduled prior to the April RTM meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

RTM Budget hearings will be held on April 8 & 24.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne, MMC, MCTC
Town Clerk