

MEETING DATE:
MEETING PLACE:

Wednesday, March 29, 2023
Zoom Online Meeting

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

TOWN OF NEWINGTON
MILL POND PARK POOL PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING

- I. Call to Order – Chairperson John Donahue called the special meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.
- II. Roll Call –
Members present via Zoom: Councilor Donahue, Councilor Camillo, John Bachand, Jay Bottalico, Garret Havens, Philip Knowlton and Don Woods.

Others Present:

Mayor Beth DelBuono
Bill DeMaio – Superintendent of Parks and Recreation
Michael Fortuna – TLB Architects
Lauren Rhines – Director of Administrative Services

There being objection, Councilor Donahue opened the floor to public participation.

Bernadette Conway stated that she wanted to give full comments at a later point in the meeting.

Dana Havens of Stoddard Street questioned if / where additional parking would be recommended; she noted that the master plan presentation was hard to find, and she questioned whether the plan would maintain a level of open space.

Rose Lyons of Elton Drive asked that the discussion in item 3 detail how the current plan differed from the plan of 2021.

- III. Review current Master Plan.

Councilor Donahue opened the item to being reviewing the current proposed plan; he noted that in 2021 the council opted not to move forward with the project so the project stalled and was being brought back into the forefront now.

Michael Fortuna of TLB Architects, who helped draft the master plan, provide an overview of the project: scope, need, and potential locations. He noted that this was still in the very early planning stage and would need to move to a design phase with

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additional presentations in the future. Mr. Fortuna provided options for location of the new pool and noted the limitations or drawbacks for each location, including: noise, groundwater levels, and parking needs; summarizing that the location on Garfield Street posed the least number of drawbacks in his opinion.

Regarding parking needs, Mr. Fortuna provided a few ancillary sites that could be used for parking and drop off areas with the installation of new sidewalks.

The committee posed several questions to Mr. Fortuna and to Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Bill DeMaio, including:

- Would the public have access to the facility after or before staff hours?
Mr. DeMaio responded that the splash pad would be controlled by a timed bollard that would not allow us after/before the programmed hours.
- What is the water table at the current location?
This was unknown at the time of the meeting; an answer will be provided at the next meeting.
- Is the proposed building too big for the needs of the Town?
Mr. Fortuna stated that the building complies with state standards as dictated by the ratio of the size of the pool. He added that the materials, and formal design concept all take the lead from the design of the Town Hall and are meant to compliment that design. The showers and fixtures all comply with the occupant load of the pool. Also, when the pool is closed but the splash pad is open, the building can be partially closed as well.
- Can the new pool be installed in the same location as the current pool?
This is possible but would result in the closure of a pool at this location for at least one, but likely two, summer seasons.

The Committee and official present also relayed their concerns and thoughts on the project. Mr. Bachand stated that he would like to see Garfield Street left alone and would like the pool to be installed in another location. Mr. Woods stated that he didn't understand why the Garfield Street location was disliked and stated that he hasn't heard an opinion of why this location doesn't work outside of "I don't like this location". Mayor DelBuono stated that many people fought to save open space on Garfield when the Town Hall project was being considered. Also, she stated that the location on Garfield Street may lead to visitors using the library parking lot and that this lot was paid for and owned by the library. She added that in 2021 the Council stated that they did not want the pool on Garfield Street and that the cost to install the pool in another area, compared to this location, would have to be considered. She asked for a cost comparison to be presented. Mr. Knowlton stated that he liked the idea of the pool moving further from the pond to leave the pond area as true open space. He prefers the location next to the playscape but that this location would pose a noise issue for the residents nearest the playscape. He added that the location on

Garfield Street made sense as it was close to the Parks and Recreation offices and would be easy access for their programming and camps. Mr. Bottalico asked for the impact that the Garfield Street location would have on the Extravaganza and Mr. DeMaio stated that those plans would pivot based on the proposed location of the pool.

Mr. DeMaio also stated that eventually the state may mandate that municipal camps be licensed and that should that day come, the Churchill Park camp would not be able to run at that location; upgrading the Mill Pond Park pool would provide a new space for the camp. However, Mayor DelBuono questioned if the on-street location would lead to more complaints by residents.

In the end the committee members stated that more information was needed before any presentation or location could be recommended to the Council. They asked for a cost comparison of the potential locations to be presented at the next meeting (tentatively scheduled for two weeks from this date).

IV. Potential action to move recommendation to Town Council.

There being no objection the Committee tabled any action.

V. Public Participation


Bernadette Conway thanked the Committee for reviewing the project in an attempt to move it forward. she stated that the location on Garfield Street made sense to her; she liked the idea of open space in the park and added that using the existing footprint did not make sense to her.

Rose Lyons stated again that she wanted to know what the changes were between this plan and the 2021 plan; also, what are the costs associated with this plan. Also, is the proposed plan the entire project or is it Phase I of a larger project? She added that at the last Council meeting, Councilor Manke stated that this project should go to the Permanent Building Committee. She also questioned when the Town would know the amount of state funding awarded to the project; adding that using the proposed \$4million in ARPA funding seemed an unfair use of ARPA funds when there are other worthy projects to consider. She also questioned of the Parks and Recreation Board had presented the project to the public in the right way.

VI. Adjournment.

There being no objection, the Committee adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Lauren Rhines

Director of Administrative Services