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Select Board, Attendees Weigh In on Proposed Parcel B Process



At its July 1 meeting, Select Board revisited the topic of Parcel B as a possible revenue-generating opportunity and site for a Parks & Recreation facility.

Select Board Chair Gus Murby kicked off the discussion by presenting a revised version of his proposed process for moving ahead, including his stated purpose/objective which reads, in part, “To identify a plot of land south of Hospital Road that can be made available to a developer to develop a recreational facility that meets the identified needs/interests of Medfield residents.”

Murby noted the February presentation by a Dover developer who offered to build a Parks & Recreation building allegedly for free, in exchange for his ability to construct a commercial basketball facility, was what motivated him to sketch out a possible process. Ultimately, he said he hoped to bring forth a 2026 town meeting warrant article that would authorize the Select Board to dispose of the property.

Murby's proposed planning process would involve creation of a work group that includes Select Board members, and a “requirements committee.” According to Murby, memberships on both resemble “fantasy football team rosters” (i.e., no invitations to serve have yet to be extended). One roster would be for a working group consisting of individuals with knowledge about the site. The second would be a committee comprised of key stakeholders with representatives from Parks & Recreation, Medfield Outreach, school athletic department, Council on Aging, and youth sports organizations among the members. From there, a Request for Proposal would be developed.

At a prior meeting, Murby explained that anyone who is against the proposed facility and favors open space would not be able to serve on the committee, but would have the chance to weigh in at town meeting.

After about a half hour of discussion, with Select Board member Pete Peterson remaining quiet while Murby and Select Board member Eileen Murphy talked, Peterson requested the chance to talk.

Peterson said he needed to push back on the plan as presented and shared three points: He's not in a rush to sell parcel B because he believes it will increase in value once Trinity develops the main Medfield State Hospital campus; he likes keeping the site as open space; and he wants to know what residents want to do with the property.

In response, Murby noted that he believes Peterson “compromised his ability to be involved” on the committee by expressing his bias. Murby added that his biggest concern is “people trying to get on the committee to try and derail the process because they are predisposed to a certain viewpoint.”

After about 10 minutes of interruptions and sometimes contentious exchanges, Peterson wrapped up his comments by stressing the importance of determining what residents want, versus what he perceives as pushing a basketball facility forward.

Of the dozen or so meeting attendees, the first to speak was Hospital Road resident Tracey Hogan, who said to Murby, “I take umbrage with what you said to Pete, when the committees that you've planned here have no one on them representing open space or Conservation Commission. Yet you seem to be putting your viewpoints forward on what you think is needed for a committee.”

Hogan added, “You also do not have the main stakeholders involved," and cited Bay Circuit Trail representatives as an example since the trail passes through parcel B.

Bill Massaro, an Evergreen Way resident and consultant to the Select Board on Medfield State Hospital environmental issues, also shared his concerns about the various requirements passed down from the state that would then be required of the town if it were to sell 12 acres of the larger 40-acre parcel B property. Massaro stressed that given possible environmental issues with parcel B, it will be challenging for the town to determine which 12 acres are suitable for a project.

“I've been on this merry go round (with Medfield State Hospital) now for 16 years…We need to know what’s there (on parcel B),” said Massaro, adding that years ago, the Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance, did not conduct a total site assessment of the area, including identifying the presence of possible super hazardous material. “The town's going to have to spend some money to find out what's there.”

At the meeting representing Parks & Recreation Commission was Mel Seibolt, who noted he’s convinced the commission has the community support to approve a new recreational facility, and that the state hospital property was a good site for it.

Murby wrapped up the prolonged discussion that provided more insight on his thought process, but no clear indication of next steps.

"This wouldn't even be on the agenda for discussion in my mind if we were talking about funding the construction of a Parks and Rec building. The only reason this ever showed up on my radar screen is because an idea came up out of the blue that potentially gave us an opportunity to move ahead with the Parks and Rec building without having a financial impact on taxpayers. I am very concerned about where that piece of this is going," said Murby. "(This) was just my best shot at a process that I thought could get us somewhere. I would welcome other people with other plans on how to do that."

The recording of the July 2 Select Board discussion is available via **Medfield TV.**