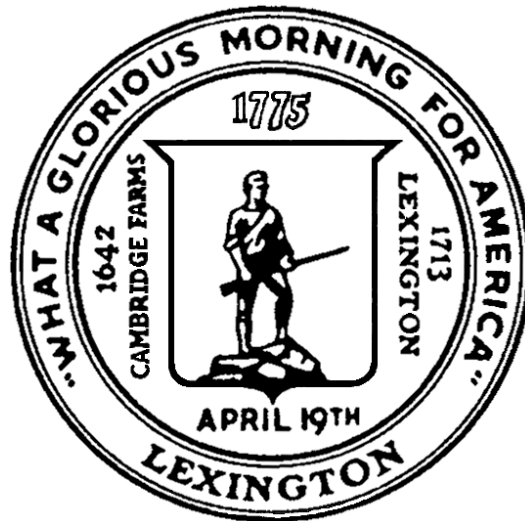


CAPITAL EXPENDITURES COMMITTEE
TOWN OF LEXINGTON



REPORT TO THE
2008 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING (STM)
November 17, 2008

Released November 13, 2008

Submitted by:
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To conserve paper, the report starts on the inside of this cover

Warrant Article Analyses and Recommendations

Article 3: Amend FY2009 Operating Budget (Only regarding Line 4200 Fire/ Medical Expenses)	Funds Requested	Funding Source	Committee Recommendation
	\$4,503	General Fund (e.g., Increased State Aid & Additional New Growth Above the Estimate at the 2008 Annual Town Meeting)	Approve (5-0)

At the 2008 Annual Town Meeting, under Article 15 (Appropriate for Municipal Capital Projects and Equipment), Motion subparagraph j, \$200,000 were appropriated to replace Rescue 2—currently the Town’s backup ambulance. The bid, however, has come in at \$204,503, so this request is to provide the supplemental funding needed to complete the purchase now. Normally this Committee would expect any additional funding for such a piece of capital equipment to come before Town Meeting under a Capital Article, but in the absence of such an Article at this STM, the relatively small amount involved (2.3% of the original appropriation), and—most importantly—the goal of having the replacement be in service consistent with the Fire Department’s need, we support this use of operating funds as an exception. (We also believe it likely that re-soliciting next calendar year would result in an even-higher bid.)

Article 5: Land Purchase—Off Cedar Street and Off Hartwell Avenue (Open Space)	Funds Requested	Funding Source	Committee Recommendation
	\$186,100 (\$140,000 for the land purchase plus legal [\$11,900], appraisal [\$4,600], & surveying expenses [\$29,600])	Community Preservation Act Fund (CPAF) (Cash)	Approve (5-0) contingent on Community Preservation Committee (CPC) approval

*“To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Conservation Commission to purchase or otherwise acquire...land shown as lots 6A and 8 on Assessors’ Property Map 73, now or formerly of Goodwin....”
[Town of Lexington Warrant to the 2008 STM, Page 2]*

This is the same land whose purchase was indefinitely postponed under Article 13 the 2008 Annual Town Meeting (ATM). Lot 6A: “This 9.5 acre parcel off of Cedar Street is largely wetland and completely wooded...The parcel is sandwiched between the Meagherville conservation area (~61 acres) and the Town-owned Pine Meadows Golf Course (~88 acres). While the parcel does have frontage on a paper street, it does not have frontage on a currently existing public street, and therefore the only practical access is through Meagherville and Pine Meadows.” Lot 8: “This 10.7 acre wooded parcel off of Hartwell Avenue is roughly half wetland and half upland...While there is currently no access to this landlocked parcel, there is a possibility of future access through abutting private parcels. This parcel abuts Katahdin Woods (~54 acres) and the Town’s composting facility (~68 acres) and sits between the Minuteman Bikeway and the Battle Road Trail, making it a key parcel for the West Lexington Greenway.” [Parcel descriptions provided by the Lexington Conservation Administrator, 24 Oct 2008]

With regard to the surveying, Town Counsel recommends that in the light of the absence of any recent survey on these parcels whose delineation dates way back, it is prudent to have them surveyed—even

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Lot 6A which is bounded by what is considered as already-Town-owned land and an on-paper-only street. As the surveying expense is based on a single estimate, an additional estimate from another firm is being obtained. If it is in hand before the Town Meeting, is lower than the one currently being used, and deemed credible, the motion under this Article would cite the correspondingly lower total amount.

And as with the cash portion of any CPAF project, just a majority vote of the CPC is all that is needed to revert any unneeded amount to the CPAF—making it available as proposed funding for another project.

Article 6: HARRINGTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUND (Recreation)	Funds Requested	Funding Source	Committee Recommendation
	\$35,135	CPAF (Cash)	Approve (5–0) contingent on CPC approval

“To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money, in addition to the money appropriated under Article 9(i) of the Warrant for the 2008 Annual Town Meeting, for the construction of the Harrington Pre-School Playground....” [Town of Lexington Warrant to the 2008 STM, Page 3]

This Committee unanimously recommended approval of that prior \$75,000 appropriation which, in conjunction with \$20,000 raised privately—that the Town planned to fund site preparation and site services (“site costs”)—was expected to fully fund the \$95,000 playground project. Two events this summer have made that prior funding insufficient.

First, when the project was put out for updated quotes, it was found that all the needed site costs could not be accomplished for the \$20,000. Then, in an attempt to reduce the necessary site services and, at the same time, avoid having to clear the woods on the original site and grade it, the project has been re-sited to a flat, cleared area. While that would provide a functionally better site, it entails additional costs (e.g., a sidewalk & extended fencing; and a Conservation Commission Submission due to proximity to wetlands). There has also been an inflation increase to the cost of the playground equipment.

This is a comparison of the request & appropriation at the 2008 ATM and the current estimate:

Category	Original Request & Appropriation	Current Estimate (including quote) †
Playground Equipment, Installation, & Surface	\$75,000	\$85,361
Site Preparation (excluding fencing & sidewalk)	\$15,000	\$4,200
Fencing		\$10,400
Sidewalk		\$7,174
Site Services	\$5,000	\$18,000
Contingency		\$5,000
Total Project Cost	\$95,000	\$130,135
Supplemental Funding Needed		\$35,135
† Prior to recent updated information, this had been \$3,365 higher—which would have needed \$38,000 in supplemental funding.		

Of the additionally requested funds, two elements may not be needed: The \$5,000 Contingency funding and approximately \$4,000 of the Site Services currently designated for the Conservation Commission Submission. (As noted above under Article 5, the CPC can vote to revert unneeded funds to the CPAF.)

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While we appreciate this supplemental appropriation represents a 37% increase in the project's total cost—and a 47% increase in the CPA funding—we find the purpose for this playground, the new site, and enhanced security and safety factors justify proceeding with the project. (If the above-cited, potentially not-needed, funding elements are ultimately not needed, then the increases would be 28% in total cost and 35% in CPA funding.)

To help avoid the need for requests for supplemental funding, we are pleased that the CPC is taking steps to require better cost data be presented before it takes final action on a project brought to it.

Article 8: APPROPRIATE FOR MUNROE SCHOOL FEASIBILITY STUDY	Funds Requested	Funding Source	Committee Recommendation
	\$35,000	FY2009 Operating Budget	Approve (5-0)

“This article seeks the appropriation of funding for a necessary conceptual study to provide for the programmatic needs of the Council on Aging. The study would include conceptual site, floor, and parking plan options; facilities audits; code compliance reviews; zoning requirements; and cost estimates.”
[Town of Lexington Warrant to the 2008 STM, Page 3]

A joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the School, Appropriation, & Capital Expenditures Committees was held on July 29, 2008, to discuss re-use of the “White House” site, the former Munroe School, the former Harrington School, and the Muzzey Senior Center. At that meeting, the Town Manager was asked to convene a task force to provide re-use options for those four sites. Representatives of that Board and of those Committees met on September 17, 2008. One of the seven findings and recommendations was:

2. The Town should request funding to conduct a feasibility study of the Munroe School as a potential site for a Senior/Community Center. This feasibility study should use the same programmatic data used for the White House feasibility study. With this information, the Town will be able to compare the White House site option to the Munroe site and whether the Munroe site can accommodate the same program, given the size of this site. [Report/Recommendations of the Town Manager’s Task Force on Capital Projects, October 1, 2008]

While the Task Force wanted the programmatic data to be the same as that used for the “White House” study so there could be an apples-to-apples comparison, it was recognized that data primarily addresses the needs of seniors. If new programmatic data were developed to address a broader use (e.g., a multi-generational community-center facility), those new requirements would need to be factored into the feasibility of the “White House” site as well as the former Munroe School site.

This Committee urges the Town Manager to expedite the contracting for the study with a delivery date that will permit review of the product well before the 2009 ATM by the general public, the relevant advocacy groups in the Town, the Town Meeting Members, and the Town government.