

**Town of Needham
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for May 25, 2010
Needham Public Library**

6:45 p.m. Informal Meeting with Citizens: No Activity

7:00 p.m. Call to Order:
A meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman John A. Bulian at 7:00 p.m. Those present were Gerald A. Wasserman, Daniel P. Matthews, Denise C. Garlick, Maurice P. Handel, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, and Recording Secretary Mary Hunt.

7:00 p.m. Public Hearing: Verizon Petition for Plymouth Road
John Callahan, Verizon representative appeared before the Board requesting permission to place a new pole East of existing Pole 102/15 to be removed.

**Motion by Mr. Wasserman that the Board of Selectmen approve and sign petition from Verizon to place a new P102/15 30' East of existing Pole 102/15 to be removed. The new pole is being requested by the homeowner at #104 Plymouth Road due to renovations.
Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

7:00 p.m. Public Hearing: NSTAR Petition for Bradford Street
Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, on behalf of NSTAR, requests permission to install 15 feet of conduit to serve 260 Harris Avenue, Needham.

**Motion by Mr. Matthews that the Board of Selectmen approve and sign petition from NSTAR to install approximately 15 feet of conduit @ Pole 112/12 Bradford Street, Needham. This work is necessary to provide new overhead/underground electric service @ #260 Harris Avenue, Needham.
Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 5-0.**

7:05 p.m. Cable Television License Transfer/RCN-BecoCom to Abry Partners:

Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick updated the Board stating that at its meeting on May 11, 2010, the Board of Selectmen held a public hearing to consider the transfer of the cable television license from RCN to Abry Partners. She reiterated that as Issuing Authority, the Board of Selectmen has 120 days from the filing of a completed Form 394 to take action on the transfer application, either granting or denying it. The Board voted to continue the hearing until May 25, 2010 to allow time for submission of written testimony. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated no written testimony, other than

that which was discussed at the hearing, has been submitted. Ms. Fitzpatrick recommends the Board approve the transfer.

Motion by Mr. Matthews that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve (i) assignment of the cable television final license for RCN-BecoCom, Inc. to RCN –BecoCom LLC and (ii) a transfer of control of the Cable Television License from RCN Corporation to ABRY Partners VI, LP. Second: Mr. Handel. Unanimously approved 5-0.

7:10 p.m.

Senior Center Feasibility Study – Public Hearing

Mr. Joel Bargmann, Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc., and Mr. George Kent, Chairman, PPBC, appeared before the Board outlining the progress of the Senior Center Feasibility Study. Mr. Kent presented slides from a Powerpoint presentation entitled “Senior Center Feasibility Study” and spoke about the factors affecting site selection, cost drivers, and the total project cost. Mr. Bargmann continued the Powerpoint presentation and spoke about each of the three sites selected for feasibility. He stated the purpose of the presentation is to show the audience what will happen on each site. A slide showing an overhead view of the current Greene’s Field was viewed and Mr. Bargmann then discussed four options available in constructing a 20,000 sq. ft. building on the land, along with either surface of structured parking. Mr. Bargmann discussed the total green space remaining on site, as well as the cost and key elements for each option. Mr. Bargmann stated Rosemary Lake has a wonderful view at the crest, but does have a steep grade from the street to the parking area. Advantages of the Rosemary Lake site, he stated, are that storm water problems could be remedied and senior programs could be on one level and integrated with Rosemary pool. Mr. Bargmann commented the Ridge Hill site had been considered a few years ago. He suggests either demolishing the current building and build new, or utilize the existing footprint. He stated the barn and field could become part of the site. Mr. Bargmann commented on the costs associated with developing Ridge Hill. Mr. Bargmann stated the next steps in the process will include a draft report due June 4, 2010, a final report due June 18, 2010, informational meetings and hearings will be held during the summer 2010, a recommendation by the SCEC to the Board of Selectmen in September 2010, with Board of Selectmen recommendation for design funding in November 2010.

Mr. Bulian stated this is a public hearing and invited comments. He asked those who wished to speak to please state their name and address for the record, and to keep their comments to no more than 60 seconds.

John Fountain, 64 Gayland Road, commented on a letter in the Needham Times suggesting Rosemary Lake as a Town center location, which he feels is a “relative term”. He feels the petition by the “Save Greene’s

Field” group is misleading in that many people have signed it believing most of Greene’s Field would be taken up with a new building. Mr. Fountain suggests sharing Greene’s Field. He states the downtown area is much more accessible and there is value and benefit for a group from the senior center to frequent the shops and restaurants of the area.

Jim Hunter, 59 Richdale Road, states the Greene’s Field option, with above ground parking, is the lowest cost option and could incorporate a basketball court and soccer field. He suggests the baseball diamond could be relocated. He stated Greene’s Field is used 16 hours a week and could still have a large open space. Seniors, he said, do not want the Rosemary Hill location as it is tough to access. He asks why spend \$12 million on an unwanted location when Greene’s Field, with all the upgrades would cost \$3.5 million less? He commented many people are under the impression green space would be lost, however suggests there is enough green space if the baseball diamond is moved.

Ms. Garlick asked Mr. Hunter to rank the 3 sites in order of preference. Mr. Hunter responded seniors are not interested in Ridge Hill, 90% don’t want Rosemary Lake, but the seniors want Greene’s Field.

James Hugh Powers, Town Meeting Member, Precinct F suggested political problems for any site selection going through town meeting. He also warned of transportation dangers surrounding the Rosemary Lake site as it is near one of the worst railroad crossings, and a collision between a train and a truck could be disastrous. He suggests caution if that site is selected. He remarked the selectmen must come up with the best proposal and that the public must understand the difficulties facing the Board of Selectmen. He stated the Board and the Town Manager have done a fine job this year, but next year will be a different story and that they must prioritize.

Carol Ditmore, 33 Rae Avenue, commented that senior citizens do not like stairs or elevators and prefer on-street parking. She suggests the “Save Greene’s Field” posters should say “Share Greene’s Field”.

Ruth Sutro, 757 Highland Avenue, said that she spoke on behalf of many senior citizens saying they do not want Ridge Hill or Rosemary Lake. They want Greene’s Field as the site for the new senior center.

Jeff Kristeller, 138 Elmwood Road, stated he understands why people want to save Greene’s Field, but he echoes thoughts to share the space. He stated he would not support spending more than \$8 million and feels a ball field is not worth it. He stated he has supported overrides in the past, and that seniors should have what they want.

Jennifer Lynch, 278 Edgewater Drive, thanked the seniors for their efforts and suggests the environment, exercise, and an intergenerational mix are important. She is in favor of Greene's Field.

Bill Betcher, 38 Oakland Avenue, stated he does not envy the Board of Selectmen in this process. He commented the traffic and use around the Greene's Field area is extraordinarily busy. He said he wished a location other than Greene's Field be developed.

Sumner Fanger, 21 Oakland Avenue, suggests that no one uses Greene's Field between December 1 and February 15, but plenty of seniors were using the senior center during that time. He asked what is the highest and best use for Greene's Field, and suggests converting the Rosemary Lake site into one or two baseball fields. He stated the highest and best use of Greene's Field (meaning the maximum number of people) would be senior citizen's who would utilize the space 12 months, not just 4 or 5 months.

John Kirk, 100 Warren Street, stated he attended the hearing at Broadmeadow School and received many emails. He suggests taking a step back to look at the reasons for a senior center. He stated the Save Greene's Field group understands the importance of a senior center, but using Greene's Field is a win/lose proposition. He commented the field has been left in disrepair, but those that want to save Greene's Field want to improve the field to make it more aesthetically pleasing. He said many people in town support building a senior center, but not at Greene's Field. He stated the Town can come together on this issue and that there are a number of other locations that would be vigorously supported. He would like the Town to find a location other than Greene's Field to bring townspeople together.

Rick Zimbone, 10 Woodbury Drive, Town Meeting Member, Finance Committee member spoke about the cost of the project stating the amount for the feasibility study was \$40,000 and there will be issues around Town Meeting when \$800,000 to \$900,000 is requested in November for design funds. Mr. Zimbone asked if the Town is willing to support an override? He stated a few years ago the project cost was \$4,000,000 and that is all the town can afford. He suggested looking at alternative and creative ways to fund the project, but it must be established early on in the process. Mr. Zimbone mentioned the Town's spirit of compromise on past projects and that Needham must live within its means.

Lee Hope Betcher, 38 Oakland Avenue, mentioned the project is important to her since she is approaching senior status. She stated that 10 years ago she worked with a group from St. Joseph's concerning the traffic in the area. She is concerned about families who live in the area and asks seniors to open their minds to the thought of Rosemary Lake as

the site for a new senior center. She stated that when she heard Rosemary Lake was a possible site it struck her that people would want to go to that location because of the pool. She also concluded that if the senior center were at Rosemary Lake, it would also allow the Town to remedy the water problems in the area. She stated that if 150 parking spaces are put on Pickering Street the area would become too congested and commercialized.

Russ Broad, 94 Mayflower Road, stated he thought Rosemary Lake was his choice for a new senior center, but has now been persuaded and feels Greene's Field to be the best choice for its accessibility to downtown. He commented that he has supported overrides in the past, but it is now time to spend money on the seniors.

Kalpana Shah, 19 Bradford Street stated she immigrated to the United States 10 years ago having come from a culture of compromise and sharing. She supports the Greene's Field location.

Carol Boulris, 203 Country Way, Historical Commission member, informed the Board that the Historical Commission voted last night that the 1906 house at Ridge Hill Reservation should be preserved if the site is selected for a new senior center. She stated that as more and more homes are destroyed, our historic fabric is also destroyed and asked the Board of Selectmen to keep this in mind should they seriously consider Ridge Hill as the new senior center site.

Larry Cohen, 77 Warren Street, stated that Ridge Hill is a lovely setting but is deteriorating. He commented that records being stored at Ridge Hill during the town hall renovation may also be deteriorating due to a leaking roof. He commented that Greene's Field should have been the star of the Town. He feels Greene's Field is a "gem" and it would be unfortunate to squeeze a building onto the land. He stated that Greene's Field is what it was 100 years ago and that it is the last "in-town" park and the Town should not squander the opportunity to put money into refurbishing the park.

Susan Abbott, 60 Otis Street, spoke about the deterioration of the Steven Palmer building. She stated this building is also a big responsibility for the Town and feels there are other uses for the property and building. She is in favor of Greene's Field being a playing field and a senior center. She commented the potential for the YMCA to move to another location, and the use of the Steven Palmer building is something to consider.

Guy Compagnone, 41 Guilford Road, commented he marvels at how things have changed over the last 30 years. He stated he is a former builder who built 160 units for elderly and 100 units on Cape Cod and

feels flat land is necessary for building. He feels Rosemary Lake is disastrous and that projects always amount to more time and more money than initially anticipated. He stated Greene's Field is a "gem" and makes the community what it is and feels it should be preserved. He suggests other adjoining properties in Town, perhaps along Chestnut Street, could be acquired through negotiation and would cost far less than the proposed sites.

Phyllis Fanger, 21 Oakland Street, supports the Greene's Field location and questioned the possibility of rooftop parking.

Colleen Schaller, 24 Avon Circle, SCEC member, emphasized the timeline and feels the time to build a senior center is now.

Ms. Garlick asked the Board of Selectmen for their questions and comments.

Mr. Handel stated he is saddened by the discussion he has heard this evening. It seems no one is willing to compromise, and if we are going to support a senior center we must come together. He stated it is disturbing there is no consensus and asked everyone reconsider the options.

Mr. Wasserman agreed with Mr. Handel. He commented Rosemary Lake is the leading site, but feels the Steven Palmer building is the correct site for a new senior center. He stated the Town does not own the building right now, but it is a viable option that would unite the townspeople. He stated he does not believe it would take a long time to take the building by eminent domain, but the process may set the timeline back. He believes the building must be seriously considered, as he feels it is the best solution.

Mr. Matthews commented a lot of work has gone into the process thus far, and thanked everyone for their participation. He stated he is convinced the effort must lead to a new senior center and that the Town needs to stay on task, but not necessarily adhere to the timeline. He suggested the Town must do the project at the lowest cost. He stated he wants to hear the report from the SCEC. Mr. Matthews feels Ridge Hill has potential for development, but understands that seniors don't want that location. In addition, he commented Rosemary Lake looks like a tough design with the parking, and cost is a big issue with the Greene's Field location, but it is easy to develop and he believes the field can be shared. Mr. Matthews expressed his concern regarding the Steven Palmer building and is not in favor of taking it by eminent domain. He stated the Town has an agreement to honor with 17 years left on the contract before the building reverts back to the Town. He stated there is the possibility the vendor

would exit before the contract expires. He stated it seems the seniors are in support of developing on Greene's Field.

Ms. Garlick stated she serves on the Board of Selectmen and the SCEC and has undertaken the task of bringing a recommendation to the Board. It is clear, she said, that people want a senior center and there is further work to be done, with some difficulties. She stated the Town must move ahead in 2010 and 2011. She is deeply concerned about the comments she heard tonight and stated that if we get stuck or slow down, the project will not happen. She commented on the difficulties of going to Town Meeting and getting a 2/3 vote to get money for funding, and that will only happen if there is a sense of partnership and collaboration. The SCEC she stated is a volunteer group who have endured and done the work and believed the community, given enough information, would come together. She commented on the \$45,000 already spent on the feasibility study and the PPBC who will give the pros and cons of each site. She stated each site is a win/lose proposition and people need to find a place that may not be the first choice, but the second choice. Ms. Garlick stated that people must figure out a choice so that the town can come together. She commented that while Rosemary Lake is not her choice, it is her preference and it meets the needs of many, many people. Rosemary Lake, she stated, is the center of town and sits between the library, Sudbury Farms, and the High School. She asked people to keep their eye on the prize, the prize being not the location, but a new senior center. Ms. Garlick commented the SCEC was instructed not to include the Steven Palmer building in the feasibility study. Considering the building now would extend the timeline. She asked everyone to rethink the possibilities and help the Board build a new senior center.

Mr. Bulian responded to a comment made by an audience member and stated that just because a field isn't used 12 months out of the year, it doesn't mean you have to build on the land. He stated he is not in favor of building on Greene's Field, and prefers the Steven Palmer building. He stated cost is a factor and that he is concerned. He also commented that the Board takes the issue of burdening taxpayers very seriously, noting that overrides do burden some residents. He stated he is not hearing a consensus tonight, but yet we need a senior center. He concluded that more information and consensus is necessary to move forward.

Mr. Matthews asked about the square footage and the possibility reducing it to lower the cost, with the potential for future expansion.

Mr. Kent said generally if you lower square footage, you lower the cost. He stated other possibilities can be considered.

Ms. Garlick stated the 20,000 square feet is based not on what is needed, but what is wanted. The cost she said is a serious issue, but that the town must move forward. The community, she said, has pulled together on past projects, and she believes it can pull together again.

9:25 p.m. Consent Agenda:

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve the Consent Agenda and Appointments as presented.

1. Accept the following donation made to the Needham Youth Commission’s Safe Surf: An Internet Safety Resource Guide from The Needham Exchange Club in the amount of \$1,250.00.
2. Accept the following donations made to the Needham Health Department’s Domestic Violence Action Committee Fund from: Kenneth Willis- \$25.00, Phyllis McCarthy-\$10.00, Michael P. La Rose- \$15.00, Briarwood Healthcare Nursing Center- \$100.00, Law Offices of Cox & Cox- \$25.00, Justine & Joseph Weisman- \$10.00, Richard & Sarah Ann Toran- \$50.00, Susan Abbott- \$25.00.
3. Approve One Day Special Wine & Malt Beverage license request from Karen Wetmore of The Needham Rotary Club to host a wine tasting and silent auction on Friday, June 11, 2010 at The Needham Historical Society, 1147 Central Avenue, Needham from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.
4. Approve One Day Special All Alcoholic Beverages license request from Scott Milliken of The Village Club to host a comedy night on Saturday, June 19, 2010 at The Village Club, 83 Morton Street, Needham from 7:30 pm to 12:00 am.
5. Approve increase in hourly rental fee for the Stephen Palmer Building from \$12/hour to \$15/hour to reflect actual costs.
6. Water & Sewer Abatement Order No. 1106
7. Approve One Day Special Wine & Malt Beverage license request from Pam Fernandes to hold a “Friends of Scooby Doo Fundraiser” on Saturday, June 5, 2010 at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 1211 Highland Avenue, Needham from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm.
8. Grant permission for the following residents to hold block parties:

Name	Address	Party Location	Party Date	Party Rain Date	Party Time
Janet Michienzi	65 Livingston Circle	Livingston Circle/Churchill	May 23		4-8pm
Deb Tormey	33 Lawton Rd	Lawton Rd	June 19		2-9pm

Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 5-0.

9:30 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Handel that the Board of Selectmen vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting of May 25, 2010.

Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 5-0.

