

TOWN OF CROMWELL
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
Thursday, December 4, 2008
6:05 P.M., Cromwell Town Hall Room 224/225
(See Preceding Legal Notice)

First Selectman Jeremy Shingleton called the meeting to order at 6:40 P.M., and asked for nominations for a moderator. A motion to nominate Alice Kelly as Moderator was made by Mark Corvo, seconded by Al Diaz. There were no other nominations from the floor, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The Call of the Meeting was read by Town Clerk Darlene DiProto. Motion to accept the call was made by Ellie Corciullo, seconded by Fran Monnes. A motion was made by Peter Keithan to vote on question (a) by paper ballot, seconded by Ellie Corciullo, and unanimously approved.

A motion to approve question (a) for discussion made by Fran Monnes, seconded by Richie Waters, and unanimously approved. The moderator opened the floor for discussion.

Robin Cassella, 582 Main Street – Spoke against the project. She felt that the money should be used for playground equipment, etc. for the children in town.

Richie Waters, 84 South Street – (BOS Member) Said that the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted not to approve this project. That the land floods, is contaminated, and the abutting resident was not notified about the project. That he voted in favor of the Park on River Road, but felt that the First Selectman should have had the highway crew working on the roads and not on the park. He is against buying this property.

Richard Newton, 1 Elm Road – (BOS Member) Wanted to correct what Mr. Waters stated about the Board of Selectmen vote. The Board of Selectmen's correct vote was four (4) against the project and three (3) in favor, and to move the question to a Town Meeting the vote was unanimous.

Frank Iudiciani, 4 Wall Street – Lives right in the back of where they want to put this parking lot. He explained that there was a main storm pipe there. He has lived there for 28 years and the old records show that there was oil tanks that were buried in that area. He is against this project.

Anthony Varricchio, 6 Kowal Drive – Is against this purchase. Wanted to know where they would plow the snow. Said that there was a Right of Way next to the railroad with steel barriers. Does not understand why we are spending money to buy that property when we should be looking to buy the parking lot that we now rent. The owner of the property that we are looking to purchase is in the building business and if were worth anything he would be building there himself.

Kathy Duncan, 26 Elm Road – Spoke first as the Cromwell Coordinator for the Chamber of Commerce. She read a letter to the First Selectman from Larry McHugh in who is in favor of the parking lot for the downtown property. She then spoke as a resident of Cromwell who was a former business owner of Music Plus from 1990 to 2000. She said that parking was a problem back then for her customers, and it has been a problem when events were held downtown.

Andrea Charlier (aka Amora), 380 Main Street – Feels there is a lot of potential for that area, but it needs more investigating. That we need more information before we can vote. The downtown is dying and it looks ugly, but she would be in favor of a parking lot.

Richard Anderson, 25 Chestnut Court – Has watched the town develop on the West side for 30 years, and wants to know why a major developer has not come down to the Main Street area? He does not think that \$148,000 or 27 parking spaces will do anything. He opposes the purchase.

Stanley Stachura, 47 Geer Street – Opposes the project due to the cost. He thought maybe we could lease it from Mr. Dayharsh, or that Mr. Dayharsh could put a building there. He feels we need to drill to see if it's contaminated. He said that what we would have to do is tear down everything in the area and rebuild like Blue Back Square. He also heard that Essex has the same problem with parking. He is against the purchase.

Ken Going, 142 Shunpike Road – Has been here for 56 years and remembers a furniture store, a garage and a dump were in the area. He comes to eat at one of the restaurants almost every day and has never had a problem parking. Mitchell's is doing well and there is the parking lot that the town is renting with plenty of parking. That rented lot is what we should be purchasing. The price for this land is outrageous. He is opposed.

Ken Smith, 34 Elm Road – Spoke in regards to the Masonic Lodge building where they have one tenant and there is no parking available to them for their patrons. He feels that no parking will kill the downtown.

At this point in the meeting there was a motion to move the questions, but the moderator argued that she was going to continue letting people speak.

Sal Morello, 20 Iron Gate Lane – Owns one of the buildings on Main Street. He said that the town collects taxes but for 40 years has neglected that portion of Main Street. During a study that the town did, it showed that they were short 36 parking spaces. When they first started talking about buying that property they were first going to have 39 spaces, and now it is down to 27 spaces. The businesses in the area are starving for parking. This study was paid for, and the town takes the

Town Meeting December 4, 2008

taxes but gives nothing back. This is a win-win for all. We paid over million dollars for land that we cannot use. He is in favor of the purchase.

Again a motion was made to move the question, a vote was taken with the ayes in the majority, but the moderator wanted to let more people have an opportunity to speak.

Ellie Corciullo, 23 Glenwood Terrace – Feels the purchase is important to keep businesses afloat. The bond money was approved and we knew it would be used for something in that area. She asked that people take advantage and vote in favor of this. She has seen so much beautiful land go to developers. We need the parking, and feels that the contamination shouldn't deter us. Is in favor of the purchase.

Ann Halibozek, 7 Christian Hill Road – Her taxes went up this year. We need more businesses for downtown so that they can help with the taxes, before there are budget cuts and layoffs. We need businesses to help bring in some money. Is in favor of the purchase.

Al Diaz, Thistle Down – Spoke in favor of the purchase. He is a member of the Downtown Revitalization Committee and they have been working on this since April. He feels the town needs a facelift. That the downtown is the hub of this community. Issues can be addressed, and the money is available through the bonding money. The prime location would have been the auto dealer's property across the street, but the owner had no interest in selling unless we paid him \$200,000.00.

Myron Johnson, 16 Pleasant Street – Said there are a lot of details in this project that people are not aware of like the construction cost, etc. We should not be talking about parking lots, when what we need first is to have developers come down there and have an interest in building.

Allan Spotts, 62 Blackhaw Drive – Read a letter from Economic Development Commission member Merrie Buchsbaum, who heard about this on November 20th, and feels that the amount is too much. She is against this purchase until all questions are answered. As for himself, as pass Chairman of the Riverport Festival, he feels that parking was not an issue, even during the festival. He had hired shuttle buses and they were not even utilized, and that there were at times over 3000 in attendance. We under utilize our parking lot we lease, and he does not feel that 27 paces is going to do it.

Richard Nobile, 50 Hillside Road – Chairman of the Economic Development Commission. He feels we have bought land we should not have in the past. He did not get enough information from the First Selectman when he came to the EDC Board. The commission wants to improve downtown, but not that piece at this time. A parking lot is just a band-aid. He would like to try and negotiate with the owner of the auto dealer, and if they could purchase that it would eliminate and eyesore.

Al Waters, 86 South Street – This property is land-locked by the railroad on one side and Cromwell Energy on the south side. The south side owner had approached them to buy a right-of-way, but was told it was not available. The First Selectman has told the town meeting that there are tax liens on the property that abuts this property, but not only are there tax liens, but numerous other liens. He also feels that we should be purchasing the auto dealer property across the street, and has spoken to the owner and he was receptive to listening. The owner is willing to talk to the Economic Development Commission chairman, and Mr. Waters is recommending that we do not accept this purchase until we check out all the avenues.

Joe Mazurek, Town Engineer – Explained that two independent designs have been done on the corner of Community Field Road and Main Street, and building a parking lot on the auto dealer lot would produce on 10 to 11 spaces because it is half the size of the other parcel.

Motion made by Robin Casella to move the questions, seconded by Ellie Corciullo and unanimously approved. The moderator explained that the voting would take place across the hall by paper ballot.

The vote was as follows: Yes = 42 No = 80
The purchased failed.

A motion was made to by Fran Monnes to open for discussion question (b), seconded by Shirley Banic, and unanimously approved.

The First Selectman gave a brief overview regarding County Line Drive.

The moderator opened the floor for discussion.

Al Waters, 86 South Street – Contacted the Town Manager, Mrs. Gilbert. In speaking with her, the last time the council met was April 7th with Mr. Shingleton and others. Mayor LaRosa and the council did not give them anything to deal with at this time, they want a study done first. The town of Rocky Hill will take legal action if anything is done without their permission.

Mr. Shingleton responded that the Town Planner was given permission to go to the Inland Wetlands Meeting, and he is going forward to draft and application to them.

Al Diaz, Thistle Down – Asked what size the parcel is. Joe Mazurek, Town Engineer said it was about 10,000 square feet, less than ¼ of an acre, in a triangular shape, 780' along the town line, and 810' to the highway.

Town Meeting December 4, 2008

Michael Slifer, 2 Pondview Drive – Asked that we support this so that we can grow our industrial base.

Salvatore Petrella, 8 Wexford Lane – He is advocating the acquisition of this parcel from Sysco for the development of the road. This parcel is needed to expand the road, and this is the first step for the expansion.

Richard Nobile, 55 Hillside Road – Supports this purchase. The Economic Development Commission first met with Sysco a while ago. It is imperative that we get that road.

Anthony Salvatore, Chief of Police, 4 Ledge Road – Mr. Water’s is correct. We need to acquire the land to improve the road. Step 1 is to buy the land from Sysco, then go to Rocky Hill to acquire the rest of the abutting land. Mr. Waters is correct about Rocky Hill, but we still need to get the land we need from Sysco because there can be no further developments until then.

Motion made by Peter Keithan to close seconded by Fran Monnes, and unanimously approved.

Motion made by Al Waters to take a vote by show of hands, seconded by Joanne Massey, and unanimously approved. There was a majority in favor of acquisition with one abstention. Question passed.

Motion was made by Richard Newton to open for discussion question (c), seconded by Al Waters.

Al Waters, 86 South Street – He knows that the property in on North Road where it goes over Route 9 that the property owners have big front lawns, but he would like to know if Reed Builders would be deeding those pieces over to the owners?

John Flanders, 57 Washington Road – Feels that if we sell this to the developer it would allow them to build on the property behind this. He is opposed.

Peter Keithan, 20 Iron Gate Lane – Is on Planning and Zoning and they voted that we sell this land to the builder at the end of the road and have it deeded to each owner so they can take care of it.

Attorney Salvatore Petrella, 558 Main Street – Represents Reed Builders and would like to clarify that they already have access to North Road, but that this would allow them better access. They (Reed Builders) will have the liability and will be paying the taxes. The people on the front of North Road sent a letter to the First Selectman requesting this. We intend to buy a portion of the parcel and give the description to turn over this to the town attorney. We don’t want to prevent people from accessing their property.

Richie Waters, 84 South Street – Feels that .44 acres is a building lot and to sell it for \$15,000 is giving it away. The town is not in the business of buying and selling real estate, and this is giving the property away at that price.

Anthony Varricchio, 6 Kowal Drive - Would like to see the other property owners were not left out in the cold.

First Selectman explained that 1.44 acres is the whole parcel. They took a proportion and cost associated with the closing into account.

Al Waters wanted to know if each property owner would get that front parcel given to them.

Delman Wolf, 5 Shelley Street – He is a former Assessor and believes we should have a formal appraisal so that we have the appropriate value for credibility.

Attorney Salvatore Petrella, 558 Main Street – Wanted to clarify that the town Assessor came up with the valuation. The town is not selling a building lot just a triangular piece. They already have approval for a subdivision entrance way into the development. He wanted to reiterate that this is not an approved building lot.

Richie Waters, 84 South Street – Feels Attorney Petrella makes it look like the town is getting a good deal, but Mr. Waters thinks the town should get more money.

Motion to call the questions was made by John Flanders, seconded by Peter Keithan, and unanimously approved.

Question passed by a hand count vote: Yes = 23 No = 9

There being no other business, the moderator adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene A. DiProto, Town Clerk

Dated at Cromwell this 9th day of December 2008.