

**NORTH BRANFORD TOWN COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MEETING**

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Town Council Chambers

7:00 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Esposito called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present were Mayor Andrew Esposito, Deputy Mayor Joanne Wentworth, Council Members Mary Bigelow, Andrew Bozzuto, Arthur Hausman and Ashley Joiner. Also present were Town Manager Karl Kilduff and Public Works Director Fran Merola.

Absent were Council Members Paul Calamita, Michael Doody and Donald Fucci

2. **DISCUSSION RE: REVIEW OF MASTER PLAN PARK DEVELOPMENT FOR SWAJCHUK PARK**

Town Manager Kilduff gave a brief history of the Town's purchase of the Swajchuk property and stated that a landscape architect has prepared plans showing potential recreational uses for the site. He presented for the Council's review the proposed plans on how this property could be developed, including access and amenities. The property contains approximately 83 acres and development has been clustered due to the flood plain on the site. The Town Manager pointed out the location of the police department and indicated that it is the assumption that the police department would be expanded in the future.

The Council reviewed the proposed plans with the Town Manager, including the new road system through the site, the replacement of Wall Field, an additional baseball field, amphitheater, playground area, multi-use fields and the new entrance onto Forest Road. Town Manager Kilduff pointed out that there is also the potential for a trail network on the parcel. The phasing sequence for this project was also discussed.

3. DISCUSSION RE: FUNDING OPTIONS FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT

Town Manager Kilduff addressed the Wall Field replacement for which \$400,000 has been earmarked from the State. He indicated that a conservation easement for the limits of the flood plain could be granted to the Regional Water Authority in order to secure additional funds. He pointed out that a significant portion of the site is within the flood plain area and cannot be built on. There is the potential to use this area for recreation use although no structures could be built in the flood plain.

The Town Manager also noted that the Operating Engineers Union does volunteer work for these types of projects and that he has also been approached by two Eagle Scouts in Town who would like to forge the trail network. He also spoke on Federal funds which Rosa DeLauro could help to procure for this project.

Town Manager Kilduff presented for the Council's information a chart entitled "Wall Field-Swajchuk Milestones" and reviewed the Funding, Labor, what has been Done to date and the Needs, highlighting the remaining items which need to be done for this project.

The Town Manager confirmed that the Recreation Commission is aware of this project and that there has been some public outreach to the sports groups who also support this plan.

With respect to the Hyland property, he noted that three multi-purpose fields are planned for that parcel.

4. DISCUSSION RE: REVIEW OF SITE PLAN FOR OLD TOWN HALL SITE

Town Manager Kilduff distributed to Council members for review the Urban Design Study site plan for the Old Town Hall site which was done by Yale. He pointed out that the plan calls for the demolition of the existing building, rehabs the old school and proposes a mixed use to the rear of the parcel which includes residential use. He also spoke on the reconfiguration of Route 139 and its impact on this project. The Town Manager noted that this lends itself to a village center concept and confirmed that this project could be done in phases.

The Council reviewed the different uses proposed for the site which include retail, professional offices, food establishments and residential. They also reviewed the elevation sketches and architectural schemes.

Town Manager Kilduff distributed to Council members a worksheet entitled "Old Town Hall-Site Milestones" and reviewed the Funding, what still needs to be Done, the Needs and Other issues. He spoke on the need for approval of the Town Council and Planning and Zoning Commission for this development. He also noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission would need to approve a mixed use regulation for this type of project. He reviewed other issues, particularly with respect to the Department of Transportation and the last phase of the Route 80 design and the reconfiguration of Route 139. He distributed additional information on the possible time frames for the two projects.

There was discussion on the future of the Community Center and the possibility of relocating it as well as the Senior Center to the Donald Augur property. Town Manager Kilduff noted that the funding for such a relocation project could come from such areas as STEAP for the

Community Center and a Small Cities grant for the relocation of the Senior Center as well as proceeds from the land sale of the Old Town Hall site.

There was considerable discussion by Council members on the Old Town Hall Site, particularly with respect to the mixed use issue which includes residential use. With respect to the former school on the site, the Town Manager confirmed that it is the intention to keep the façade and that they will know more after the hazardous materials assessment is done.

5. DISCUSSION RE: NEXT STEPS

Councilor Joiner questioned the DEP report on endangered species on the Swajchuk property. She also questioned if the Hyland parcel will be phased in. Town Manager Kilduff confirmed that no endangered species were found on the Swajchuk property. He noted that any development of the Hyland parcel will be contingent upon funding, need and priorities.

There was further discussion on the relocation of Wall Field, the three multi-purpose fields proposed on the Hyland property as well as the different fields in Town. Town Manager Kilduff advised the Council of the Recreation Commission's desire to keep the Hyland property fields under the control of the Recreation Department although they would be shared with the school system. It is the Recreation Commission's desire that these fields be governed by the Town and not by the school system.

There was some discussion on the centralized location for the Community Center and Senior Center and the need to possibly keep all athletic fields in this central location. It was noted that this could possibly open up Northford Park to industrial development in the future.

The Town Manager indicated that the Recreation Department had previously done a study on the fields in Town and this study noted the need to rest the fields and the need for more fields in Town.

Town Manager Kilduff requested direction from the Council on the Swajchuk property and the relocation of Wall Field. He also spoke on the need for a strategic plan for the Community Center and the Senior Center. He confirmed that the Senior Center is a historic asset of the Town and can be used for other Town services.

There was considerable discussion by the Council on a conservation easement to the Regional Water Authority for the flood plain of the Swajchuk property. Town Manager Kilduff again pointed out that the flood plain cannot be built on and that the Town can negotiate what it wants contained in the easement and define what activities to allow on the property.

There was a brief discussion on the issue of the East Haven retaining dam and how it could affect any of these plans. Town Manager Kilduff reported that that issue has been resolved. He did note, however, that no development can create additional runoff downstream or restrict flow.

It was the consensus of the Council to move forward with the relocation of Wall Field and to speak with the Regional Water Authority regarding a conservation easement on the Swajchuk property.

Town Manager Kilduff pointed out that budgeted funds would be needed in order to move forward with the Old Town Hall site. Upon questioning, he reviewed the make up of the focus group for the Old Town Hall site and confirmed that he will continue to look for additional funding

for this project.

With respect to the Swajchuk property, the Town Manager stated that there could still be revisions due to funding restrictions or future needs. There was discussion on the location of the amphitheater. The Town Manager indicated that the location was chosen for the amphitheater due to the natural topography in that area.

Public Works Director Fran Merola reviewed the possible location of Wall Field on the Swajchuk property.

As funding for the Hyland parcel is uncertain, Councilor Joiner suggested that the Board of Education could search out grant funds for that parcel.

There was further discussion on the Regional Water Authority conservation easement on the Swajchuk property. It was the consensus of the Council to have the Town Manager speak to the Regional Water Authority with respect to this.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Councilor Bozzuto moved, seconded by Councilor Joiner, to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

VOTE: Passed 6 to 0 in a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosanne Krajewski
Clerk to the Council