

ARTICLE 13

To see if the Town will vote to approve certain amendments to the Official Zoning Map, by re-zoning the parcels of land located at 9 School Street shown on Assessor’s Parcel 23 as Lot 161 and 277A Washington Street shown on Assessor’s Parcel 23 as Lot 165 from Single Residence A (SRA) to Local Business B (LBB) and overlaying these two parcels with the Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District 6 (FMUOD6/Washington Street Business District), as follows, or take any other action in relation thereto:

- 1) Change the designation of two parcels known as Assessor’s Plat 23, Lots 161 and 165, from Single Residence A (SRA) District to Local Business B (LBB) District;
- 2) Expand the FMUOD6/Washington Street Business District overlay district to include the two parcels known as Assessor’s Plat 23, Lots 161 and 165;
- 3) Replace the map entitled “Official Zoning Map, May, 2017” with the map entitled “Official Zoning Map, May, 2018”.

(Planning Board)

The Finance and Warrant Commission, by a vote of 10 in favor and 1 abstention, recommends that the Town so vote.

Please see Article 11 comments for further information.

ARTICLE 14

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee for the purpose of paying costs of a feasibility study for the Paul Hanlon Elementary School, 790 Gay Street, Westwood, for which feasibility study the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The MSBA’s grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in connection with the feasibility study in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town.

(School Committee)

The Finance and Warrant Commission, by unanimous vote of those present, recommends that the Town so vote.

MOTION

RECOMMENDS: That the Town appropriate the amount of One Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand (\$1,750,000) Dollars for the purpose of paying costs of a feasibility study for the Paul Hanlon Elementary School, 790 Gay Street, Westwood, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, and for which the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”), said amount to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 44, or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The Town acknowledges that the MSBA’s grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town, and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Feasibility Study Agreement that may be executed between the Town and the MSBA. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Westwood Public Schools Administrators have identified three of the Town’s elementary schools, the Hanlon, Sheehan and Deerfield (all built between 1948-1953), that are in need of major work, are currently at the end of their useful life and are functionally inadequate by today’s educational standards. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”) is fully aware that the intent of Westwood school administrators is to have a discussion and ultimately a potential project that will address all three of these buildings. The MSBA process allows for submission for only one building at a time, therefore, the State directed school administrators to submit just one application for the school with the greatest need, after which they would then be able to also discuss all options for the other elementary school buildings. The elementary school identified with the greatest need was the Hanlon Elementary School, which is why the Motion before Town Meeting references the Hanlon School.

Again, it is important to note that although the Hanlon is the only school listed in the Article, all of the elementary schools will be considered in the process of developing a potential building project.

Background on the MSBA process:

Westwood was one of fifteen (15) communities selected out of a pool of 82 applications sent into the MSBA. The criteria for selection is need-based, as determined by the MSBA. Many communities are not selected in their initial application submission and therefore must apply over multiple years. Westwood was invited into the program after its first submission, an indication of the significant-needs of the Hanlon School.

What is the benefit to a town being invited, and ultimately selected, into the MSBA process?

The State will grant the Town approximately 31-32% of the project costs. Given the potential scope of such a project, the grant from the State will potentially be in the tens of millions of dollars.

Breakdown of funding requested:

\$450,000 – Owner’s Project Manager (OPM)

\$950,000 – Designer (Architect)

\$200,000 – Environmental and Site Testing

\$150,000 – Other (Contingency)

\$1,750,000 – Total

Phases to the MSBA Process:

Phase 1 is the Eligibility Phase which would start on June 1, 2018 and end February 26, 2019.

Phase 2 is the Feasibility Study which, if Westwood is accepted into the program, starts immediately after the Eligibility Phase ends and continues for up to 30 months.

During the Eligibility Phase, the Town has to provide the MSBA with a list of deliverables. One of the major deliverables is the funding of the Feasibility Study. If the Town is unable to secure the funding for the Feasibility Study during the Eligibility Phase, the MSBA process will end and the Town will not be eligible to receive any grants. Again, this could potentially involve tens of millions of dollars in state funding for the building project.

*The final project has not been decided. The project, or “preferred option” as the MSBA terms it, will be determined during the 30 month Feasibility Study after identifying with the State, our community members, as well as the School Department and Town, what our needs are and how we as a community want to address them through this project. **There will be many opportunities for the community to have input into this project throughout the Feasibility Study.***

*The borrowing article that is before the Town provides funding for all costs up to the actual construction. The borrowing article authorizes the Town to borrow **up to** \$1,750,000. This is an estimated cost that may in fact come in lower than anticipated. When the actual costs come in from the project the Town will then decide what amount to actually borrow and when, with the maximum limit set at \$1.75m.*

In the town of Lincoln, MA in 2012, the MSBA offered to pay \$21 million toward a new school project with a total cost of \$49 million. It did not receive the required votes at a Special Town Meeting, the funding offer was withdrawn and the town had to restart the process from the beginning. The MSBA declined to offer funding to Lincoln in 2013 and 2015. In 2016, project consultants estimated the cost of the comprehensive project to be almost \$60 million, none of which will be funded by the MSBA. At this point the project has not happened and the town of Lincoln has to fund both the Feasibility Study and the actual construction on their own.

Westwood Public School Administrators, led by Superintendent Emily Parks, have taken many steps to communicate to residents via a Community Engagement Plan which involved forums and public tours of the schools. While administrators assure us the schools are safe for children, teachers and learning, it is clear that a long-term investment in our elementary schools is necessary, while also keeping in mind that the tremendous opportunity the Town currently has with the MSBA may not be offered a second time.

ARTICLE 15

To see if the Town will vote to approve certain amendments to the Westwood Zoning Bylaw to add definitive caps on the number of residential dwelling units which may be constructed in Flexible Multiple Use Overlay Districts 6 and 7 by amending Section 9.5 [Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District {"FMUOD"}], or take any other action in relation thereto:

Add a new Section 9.5.13.1 [Maximum Number of Residential Units] to read as follows, and renumber subsequent sections as appropriate:

9.5.13.1 Limit on Number of Residential Dwelling Units in FMUOD6 and FMUOD7.

The aggregate number of residential dwelling units for all projects allowed by special permit within the FMUOD6 and FMUOD7 districts shall not exceed a maximum of thirty (30) dwelling units per district. Said maximum shall include all residential dwelling units previously approved by FMUOD special permit or by Upper Story Residential Overlay [USROD] special permit.

(Nada Milosavljevic-Fabrizio, 32 Webster Street)

The Finance and Warrant Commission, by a vote of 10 in favor and 2 opposed, recommends that the Town vote Indefinite Postponement.

The proposed warrant article would establish a zoning by-law that restricts the number of residential housing units issued under special permits in the High Street and Washington Street Flexible Multi-Use Overlay Districts (FMUOD) to 30 in each district, including those already approved by prior special permits.

An overwhelming majority of FinCom members opposed this warrant article, primarily because they believe this bylaw would discourage developers from proposing mixed-use developments in those parts of town. Some FinCom members expressed concern that Westwood has not attracted many new mixed-use projects recently, and some parts of these districts may benefit from renovation. The majority of FinCom believes the current FMUOD bylaws coupled with the planning board's open and detailed review will encourage development proposals while safeguarding residents from undesired projects.