

These minutes were approved at the October 25, 2006 meeting

**DURHAM PLANNING BOARD
QUARTERLY PLANNING SESSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2006
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, DURHAM TOWN HALL
7:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Kelley; Arthur Grant; Kevin Webb; Stephen Roberts;
Richard Ozenich; Councilor Needell; Bill McGowan

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Councilor Carroll; Annmarie Harris; Lorne Parnell

MEMBERS ABSENT: Susan Fuller

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Administrator Todd Selig; Town Planner Jim
Campbell; Public Works Director Mike Lynch; Architect
Nick Isaak

I. Approval of Agenda

Arthur Grant MOVED to approve the Agenda as submitted. Steve Roberts SECONDED the motion, and it PASSED unanimously.

II. Report of the Planner

Mr. Campbell noted he had provided to Board members: a handout on architect Nick Isaak's presentation on possible designs for Mill Plaza; an email from John Carroll; and the agenda and minutes from the most recent Traffic Safety Committee meeting. He said he would update the Board on these meetings from time to time, and provided details on some of the traffic issues discussed at this most recent meeting.

He said he received a proposal from Norway Plains to review and summarize transportation planning documents done by the Town and UNH, including their master plans, in order to get an idea of what had been done and what still needed to be done. He said a scope of work would hopefully be developed for a comprehensive transportation study, looking at access to Durham from the north, south and east, and said the northern connector would be part of this.

Mr. Campbell said he had met with Jeff Taylor and Associates, who be providing a proposal to help the Planning Board deal with the "hit list" of zoning issues: excavation parking, signage, and possibly landscaping.

He said he met with Don Jutton of Municipal Resources Inc, to help the Town move forward on economic development issues, including education on economic development, and adoption of

TIF districts, and putting the finishing touches on a draft RFP for the sale and development of the Durham Business Park.

Mr. Campbell said at its recent meeting, the ZBA denied developer Steve Kimball's variance application concerning impervious surface ratio, and Mr. Kimball had then withdrawn his variance request concerning allowing 4 unrelated people per unit. He said Mr. Kimball wasn't sure if the project would go forward at this time.

Mr. Campbell said meeting dates of November 8th and Dec 13th, had been scheduled. There was discussion as to whether the practice of having one meeting per month during those months should be followed, and it was agreed those two dates were sufficient.

Chair Kelley noted there had been discussion about having a Planning Board member on the Traffic Safety Committee, and asked if any Board members would be interested in doing this. He also asked for details on the Madbury Road traffic safety issues that were discussed at the recent Traffic Safety Committee meeting.

Mr. Campbell said most of the issues related to speed problems, and to truck traffic on that road even though there are signs saying trucks are not allowed. He said the idea was to increase visibility of the signage, and to look at other ways to alleviate some of the traffic. He noted a past idea was to not allow traffic from Route 4 to turn onto Madbury Road, and said the neighbors there were excited about that idea. He said there would be more discussion, and hopefully this would be looked at as part of the transportation study.

Chair Kelley asked for update on the northern connector idea, as a regionally significant project for the future.

Mr. Campbell said it was in the State's long range (20 year) plan, and said the Town would need to get some good data in order to get even close to being in the State's 10-year plan.

Mr. Grant asked Mr. Campbell to consider Steve Pernaw for work on the Town's transportation study. There was discussion on this, with Mr. Campbell noting he had asked Mr. Pernaw about this, but Mr. Pernaw is involved with other projects.

III. **3-D visualization from Architect Nick Isaak of how the Mill Plaza area would look if it were redeveloped.**

Mr. Isaak spoke about the recent library work session, and said there was a lot of discussion about Mill Plaza as a possible location for the library and other potential uses. He said being able to visualize some of these ideas at an early stage might allow everyone to get on the same page, and had therefore created possible scenarios, among other things, get a sense of the scale of such a project. He said there are a lot of ideas floating around, and said he had felt compelled to try to tie some of them together.

Mr. Isaak noted the trend of strip malls being reconfigured these days in order to become higher end, retail areas with a nicer environment, so people would linger, and perhaps spend more

money. He said these “lifestyle centers” typically had a mix of uses, with residential and commercial uses, hotels, churches, and municipal facilities. He said this concept might apply to Durham, and would allow the Town to start integrating a number of different functions.

He said the building containing Durham Marketplace was about 30,000 sf, and the other building in the Plaza about 28,000 sf., and said a combined Library/Town Hall facility of 25,000 sf. that had recently been conceptualized could fit into either of these buildings as they were. But he said because Mill Plaza is such a large piece of land, there are other possibilities for the site.

Mr. Isaak said the current parking lot has about 330 spaces, and said a 4-story parking garage would have 110 spaces per level, for a total of 440. He said there could be two parking levels below ground and two levels above, without having a visual impact on Main Street.

He said one idea was to create more green space, perhaps as part of a Town commons. He noted where the municipal involved facility would be, further from the street, beyond the green.

He said with this scenario, he had assumed that the Durham Marketplace building would stay with the same footprint, and perhaps floors for office or residential space would be added above. He provided some detail on what would be involved. He said a key idea was to use the parking structure to link Main Street and the plaza, and at the end of the current Durham Marketplace building to add a façade to make things visually look better. He said if that building had more stories, it would have more of a presence in relationship to Main Street, and would make a connection with it.

Mr. Isaak described a second possible design scheme, with a larger plaza adjacent to the retail, to be more pedestrian friendly, and to include the potential for outdoor dining. He said a third design scheme took the garage and rotated it parallel with the Durham Marketplace building, where it would still be hidden behind the other buildings.

He noted some of these designs were predicated on the Grange site being a potential access site, and he provided details. There was discussion on what this would involve.

Councilor Needell asked if a parking garage was critical to these designs.

There was discussion that in creating more density, there would probably be a parking problem if there were not a parking garage, and also that the goal was to replace some asphalt with green space, so some existing parking would be lost.

Mr. Webb said the Conservation Commission had discussed the fact that there was a water quality problem with the stream near the parking lot, which then impacted Mill Pond. He said if the buffer strip along that stream could be widened, this would help address the problem.

There was discussion that more trees could be planted in that area as part of redevelopment of the site.

Mr. Isaak described the possible idea of having U shaped retail, but said the problem with that was that the loading docks for the businesses would wind up facing the stream.

There was discussion about how the loading zones would be designed as part of the design schemes Mr. Isaak had described.

The Board thanked Mr. Isaak for the work he had done on these designs.

Mr. Webb asked if there had been discussion with the owner of Mill Plaza about possible redevelopment of the site.

Chair Kelley said yes, noting the owner, John Pinto, had written a letter to Administrator Selig, and hadn't dismissed the ideas, but would like to see effort put forth by the Town before putting any money into such an endeavor.

Ms. Harris asked if Mr. Isaak's design had been forwarded to Mr. Pinto

Mr. Isaak said he thought the Town would want to consider the design ideas first, before sending anything to him.

IV. Presentation of draft proposal of 2007-2016 CIP,

Chair Kelley suggested that Administrator Selig give the Board a brief overall picture of the Town's financial status, bonding situation, etc.

Administrator Selig provided an introduction on the CIP, and described the process the Town goes through concerning it each year. He said in terms of the fiscal forecast, they were still compiling all of the operational department information and board and committee requests, but said on average, 4-5% increases being requested.

He also said there had been a number of requests from other entities, which potentially could have a significant impact. He first noted the increase in funding from \$29,000 to \$239,000 being requested by the Oyster River Youth Association (ORYA).

He also explained that there had been discussion about a possible partnership with Mill Pond Center, where the Town would purchase the Mill Pond Center property, would acquire the existing debt, about \$20,000, would expend an addition \$460,000 to fix up the barn, and would enter into a 99 year lease for a dollar per year allowing the Mill Pond Center to operate in the barn. He said the Town would have the use of the house and the grounds for programming of some kind. He said this could be a wonderful opportunity for the Town, but was also an additional expenditure.

Administrator Selig said the Library request was \$3.8 million, and would involve a site yet to be determined.

He said there was also a number of other “big-ticket” items, including the Town Hall facility, with its space and storage limitations. He provided details and said an additional problem was that much of the building is not handicap accessible. He said there were some safety concerns as well, regarding the stairs, and said Code Enforcement Officer Tom Johnson had recommended installation of a new stairwell, in the foyer where the large map is currently located. Administrator Selig said this would dramatically impact the interior of the building.

He said an addition off the Town Clerk’s office was also being considered, for \$120,000 to \$130,000, along with a sprinkler system for the building. He said he would like feedback from the Planning Board as to whether it thought these improvements should be made, or if instead, the Town should look for another site, perhaps as part of a joint facility, and should not put money into the existing Town Hall building.

Fire Department

Administrator Selig said the Town had secured space for the Fire Department for 10 years, and said in 2 years, it would begin to pay \$60,000 in rent there (split with UNH).

Police Department

He said this department is also having storage problems, if there were ever a merger with the UNH Police Department, additional building space would be needed.

He said there were no hard numbers for the coming year. But he said the Town had a tax rate of \$6.25 per thousand for 2005, and the default budget for 2006 of \$6.59, which represented a 4.8% increase in the tax rate. He noted that if fund balance had not been used, the increase would have been closer to 10%.

Administrator Selig said looking ahead to 2007, it is not clear what would happen with the fund balance. He said it was projected that there would be about \$1 million in fund balance after the tax rate is set, and said he was concerned with this—adding that he would be more comfortable having a fund balance of \$1.5 million.

He said if the Town were going to actively move ahead with big-ticket requests, it would need to use a lot of fund balance, or have a substantial tax rate increase. He noted the four land purchases moving ahead, for a total of \$1.6 million, and said if all four are bonded, this would mean an approximate increase of \$.19 cents per thousand to the tax rate. He said it was possible to use some of the land-use change tax moneys for these purchases, to offset some of this impact.

Administrator Selig also said bond anticipation notes of about \$1.7 million had been taken out over the last three to four years on various capital projects the Town had been funding, and he said the tax impact of moving to long-term bonding of those projects would add about \$.35 cents per thousand. He explained that time periods for the bonds differed in length, so that \$.35-cent increase would decrease significantly after the first five years.

He said his general worry is that there seems to be a lack of understanding on peoples' parts about the fiscal impact on the tax rate of the various projects residents desired. He said he heard a lot from people who were concerned about the tax rate, and said he hoped the Planning Board could provide him with some good input on how to address this year's CIP project requests.

There was detailed discussion about the tax rate, and the impact on it from the various projects to be bonded.

Administrator Selig said he believed the Town needs to make some choices in terms of what projects can realistically be funded, and also said the Town needs to look at ways to broaden the tax base in order to accomplish some of these projects. He noted he was not specifically recommending any of the items in the CIP, although he had thoughts on each of them. He also said he felt that some of the items were decisions for the Durham community to make.

Library

Administrator Selig said a 12,500 sf facility has been settled on by the Library Board of Trustees, but said a location had not been decided on yet. He said there is an issue as to how much of the funding should come from the Town, and how much should come from private fundraising. He said over the past five to six years, there had been no resolution on this issue. He noted that the Trustees felt they needed a site in order to be able to do fundraising.

He said the outcome of the Town Council's worksession was that people agreed that if the Mill Pond Plaza development--including a joint Library/Town Hall facility--could be done, this would be the top location for a new library. He said the Town Hall site appears to be the fall-back location. He said there is tension concerning the idea of having a site located in the center of Town, which would be more expensive, and having a site further out of town, which would be cheaper but not as accessible. He noted that the Master Plan had recommended a centrally located library, either at the Town Hall site or downtown.

Mr. Webb asked if the Town Hall property had been assessed, with the idea of selling it off to fund another joint site.

Administrator Selig said the property had been assessed at \$750,000 to \$1 million, and if another Irving-type facility were built there, there would be a \$3 million facility to generate tax revenue. But he said this was an historic location, and said many people felt it should be preserved as a municipal center. He said he felt the Irving station had made a big difference in terms of how the Town Hall site looked, and what it might be.

There was discussion about the \$500,000 listed under Library funds in the CIP. Administrator Selig said until the site was determined, this money couldn't be spent. He noted the timing for a possible development of Mill Plaza was not clear. He said he worried about siting the library at the end of the Mill Plaza parking lot when it was not clear the rest of the project would happen.

Councilor Needell said the Trustees were saying they would hold off for a year, if the decision were made to go forward with the Mill Plaza redevelopment. But he noted that before the end of

the budget cycle, the Council would need to decide if it wanted to be involved in the redevelopment.

Administrator Selig said Mr. Pinto wanted to be sure the Town was behind some type of concept before investing a lot of his own money in the project. He said Town staff already had a lot of projects they were working on, and he said it was hard to drop everything and focus on one project. He said realistically, there would be a working group to look at this, and a charrette regarding the Plaza would need to be planned, which would involve the neighborhood in order to make sure residents are comfortable with the ideas being proposed. He said it would take 6-12 months to develop such a plan to show Mr. Pinto the Town was “on board”.

Chair Kelley asked if the Town was exploring with Mr. Pinto the idea of locating a library in Mill Plaza.

Administrator Selig said yes, and said the library/Town hall facility had been discussed as well. He also said that possible incentives for selling or leasing the property to the Town had not been discussed yet.

Chair Kelley said it sounded like there were a lot of questions regarding the library at the Mill Plaza and the Mill Pond Center locations. He said there are a lot of big-ticket items out there, and said even if just one was chosen, and all the conservation land was bonded, there would be a 10% increase in property taxes this year. He said the Planning Board should give direction as to which are the most important projects to choose.

Administrator Selig said some of these big-ticket items were major operational requests, such as the request from ORYA and the request from the Mill Pond Center. He said these were things they needed to talk about when they were talking about spending so much money.

Mr. Grant said he had always had misgivings about money put into the CIP for a library, noting this had originally been intended to be private funding. He said the cost had gone up over time, but said there had been no Town commitment regarding funding. He felt that if the \$3.7 million were in the budget, it would be assumed by many people that this was what the Town would be paying. He also said the figure inflated the capital budget. He suggested it either be removed, or lowered substantially.

There was discussion on this. Administrator Selig said the Trustees had provided some good additional information this year, and were adamant that they could raise about a \$1 million out of the \$3.7 million. He said the Council would have to decide if it wanted the Town to pay for the rest of this, and if there were a bond of \$1 million or more, the Town would then have to vote on this.

There was discussion about the fact that the operating expenses for a new library would go up to about \$500,000 per year.

Mr. Roberts said he would like to know, as a taxpayer, what that meant in terms of the impact on the tax rate. There was discussion on this.

Administrator Selig said the unknown was what the Town funding commitment would be, which was yet to be resolved.

Mr. Webb asked about the idea of adapting a fraternity house on Madbury Road, next to the Middle School for a new library and if this is still being considered.

Administrator Selig said there had been talk about this, but said it was not clear currently what the Trustees felt about this. He said their second choice currently is the Cutter property, which Mr. Davis was interested in selling to the Town.

Ms. Harris noted that the SAE fraternity house could also be torn down, and a new building could be put in. She also said the price for the property could be good.

Chair Kelley asked if the function of the library had been clearly scoped out.

Administrator Selig said a better job had been done on this recently, and he provided details on this. He said the Trustees were not thinking in terms of being a recreational/community center type of facility, and were looking at providing traditional library programs, with a modern flair. He said the Trustees didn't go as far as what Councilor Van Asselt had talked about at the Council's Library work session.

Mill Pond Center

Administrator Selig said he was torn on this item. He said it was a great opportunity to get a great piece of land, noted there was a conservation easement over part of the property. He said it was close to the center of Town, and could provide space for nonprofits, a recreation department, the ORYA, etc. He said the Town does not have to figure out the end use right now, and said this could evolve. But he said the buildings would need substantial work, and he provided details on this.

He said the Mill Pond Center would like to remain on the property, and to tie up a 99-year lease. He said he had serious problems with this. He said arts entities were generally losers in terms of making money, and said he worried about the Town having a relationship with an entity that by definition would need ongoing subsidies. He also described current limited access to the site provided through a driveway, and said the cost of improving access would be \$100,000-125,000. He noted that the site distance of this driveway onto Route 108 was poor.

Administrator Selig said the barn on the property had limitations, and was a real concern. He said if the Town took it over, it would have to make significant improvements to it, and he said that in the long term, it would make sense to construct something there that was more appropriate. He also said that the septic capacity of the site was unknown, and that a lot of the property was under a conservation easement. He said it would be good if the Town could get the property next to the Mill Pond Center property as well, to get better access on Route 108, etc.

He said it was an opportunity worth looking at, but said the long-term cost implications would have to be considered. He said the Town already had plenty of old buildings, noting the Town's experience with the building on Wagon Hill farm.

Chair Kelley asked if the Town bought the property, and leased it to the facility, whether this would give the Mill Pond Center enough room to be financially stable.

Administrator Selig said he didn't know, but said it made it easier for them. There was discussion about the current and possible future operating costs for the Center.

Councilor Needell said another piece of the puzzle was the potential for other uses of the property, for the ORYA, a possible soccer field, a library, a Town Office, etc. But he said there was nothing in the CIP that supported any of those other functions or that indicated the property could be used in a more productive way by the Town.

Mr. Roberts said he had concerns about traffic flow problems in Town. He said a transportation plan would be pivotal in order to solve these problems before knowing there was something to work with in regard to redevelopment of Mill Plaza, and possible changes to the Mill Pond Center.

Mr. Grant noted that the Mill Plaza was already a crowded area in terms of traffic, and said he didn't see this as the right place for a library.

Administrator Selig said pedestrian flow was another thing to consider, concerning the Mill Pond Center. He said a bridge over the pond would be needed.

Mr. Webb said he agreed with Mr. Roberts that the Achilles heel of the Mill Pond Center as a Town facility was the access issue. He said the only reasonable and safe way to get large numbers of people in and out of there was to go through the field the Town had purchased the conservation easement on. He said he thought a nice, well-designed access-way could be put there.

Administrator Selig said that was not allowed, under the terms of the easement.

He said the Town could acquire the parcel, and keep it for low impact, smaller events, He said some Town operations could be moved there, to increase storage capacity, which would prolong the life of the Town Hall building. He said a library would generate too much traffic at that site.

He said he would like the Mill Pond Center concept to go through a good review over the next year, but said his concern was that the Center might not be able to survive for a year. He noted a large amount of money had already been put into the facility. He said perhaps that was what Durham wanted, but he said he worried about the cost.

Town Hall Facility

There was discussion on the current deficits in the facility, and money planned in the CIP for improvements.

Mr. Roberts said the Town show fix the traffic flow problems, and go for more intensive development in order to increase the tax base and increase the use of downtown. He said he didn't think the Town could wait until 2012-2013 to fix these problems.

Ms. Harris said she had received a call from an abutter of Mill Plaza/Mill Pond Center, and said the need for substantial buffering of residences on Faculty Road would have to be addressed.

Mr. Webb said band-aid solutions could be used for Town Hall--for example, the use of a trailer to provide handicap access. But he said sooner or later, another solution would be needed. He said Mr. Isaak's ideas were great, but felt it would be many years before they would come to realization. He also noted the existence of Arthur Grant Circle, and said it wouldn't be unreasonable to have a facility there for Town Offices, a recreational facility, etc. He said access on Route 4 might be an issue, but could be controlled.

There was additional discussion on how to proceed concerning Town Hall.

Councilor Needell suggested that the Town Hall site needed to be ruled out for the new library before deciding on what work should be done.

Chair Kelley suggested fixing the immediate problem with the stairs, but holding off on the addition, so the library/Town Hall facility would still be an option if people wanted it.

Administrator Selig said the Board seemed to be in favor of going forward with repairs, in the short term. He noted that he was worried that the modifications regarding the stairs would change the attractiveness of the lobby.

Ms. Harris said perhaps Mr. Isaak could look at this. She said another idea was that in six months, they would know more about what the Library Trustees wanted to do.

Mr. Webb suggested moving the map into the Council chambers, noting that it was a great planning tool.

Mr. Ozenich said he had heard that a local church was for sale, and asked if it was a possible site for a library, or a library/Town Hall.

Administrator Selig said there was not a lot of interest by either the Trustees or the Council in this property. There was discussion that it was too far from the downtown area.

MIS

Administrator Selig noted the Town had struggled with ability of off site departments to communicate with the Town Hall, and said it was primarily a bandwidth issue. He said MIS staff

had proposed that there should be a municipal system, which would allow the Town the bandwidth it needed.

He said his concern about this approach was that since the Town was not sure where the buildings would be, and because the technology was changing so quickly, he didn't want to spend the capital outlay and have things change. He noted that a wireless approach could also be used, which would require new antennas. He said he felt having a municipal system was a bit premature. There was discussion about the current unreliability of the system.

Planning

Traffic and Transportation study

Administrator Selig said the figure in the CIP was \$30,000. It was noted there was a proposal from Norway Plains, and He said he was in favor of it.

Chair Kelley provided details on what the \$30,000 would be used for, and on what the \$100,000 would be used for. He said it was a complex request for proposals that had to be created, and said consultant would be needed for this, which would cost \$30,000. He said the RFP would define the design work under the second phase, which the \$100,000 would be needed.

Mr. Campbell said some design concepts would be developed for the short term, for Madbury Road and Route 4, and said longer-term concepts would be considered for the northern and southern connectors. He noted that the work done with the \$30,000 might dispel, or modify some of these potential long-term concepts.

Mr. Roberts said this was an important way to be able to work with the University on traffic and transportation issue, noting UNH already had a plan of its own.

Chair Kelley said the Durham Master Plan didn't discuss specific details for solving the transportation problems, and said the Planning Board saw this study as a means of providing these details.

Mr. Webb and others said this was essential, and had been for quite some time.

Administrator Selig said he was very supportive of this, and planned to propose it.

Wagon Hill - Parking

Administrator Selig said this idea, to provide 50 additional parking spaces on the site, originally came from the 1995 Wagon Hill master plan, which had called for 150 spaces. He said the rest of the recommendation-included modifications to the building there, and bathrooms. He noted that the 2000 Master Plan had recommended that the Town follow through with the recommendations from the 1995 plan.

There was discussion as to when there are actually large numbers of cars at the Wagon Hill site, besides on Durham Day. Mr. Grant said the current parking lot was often full. It was also noted that parking got crowded in the winter when there is sledding.

Ms. Harris said she saw a few people at a time using it, but not large numbers of people at one time, other than Durham Day. She agreed that sledding created more need for parking.

Mr. Campbell said this was a very underutilized space, and should be used by more people.

Administrator Selig said he was not sure there was yet the vision yet for the other uses, but said he supported this proposed increase in parking spaces.

Mr. Lynch described the location for the parking expansion. He said it would be a gravel parking lot, and the Town would haul the gravel, and would rent a bulldozer and a grader to grade it out, so there would be a combination of town services and contractor services provided. He said some filling would be done, noting the area was a little low right now.

Main Street Enhancements - Phase III

This work would involve improvements to Main Street from the railroad out to Route 4, and would involve re-doing the road surface, the addition of shoulders, and addition of a small section of sidewalk on the other side of A-lot, which turned into a multi-use path.

Mr. Campbell said he had recently been at a meeting on Phase II, noting that \$1.8 million for the full project, had been obtained. He said the Town's share for this project would be \$88,000.

Chair Kelley asked if there was \$400,000 in state and federal money for Phase III, and Administrator Selig said yes.

Mr. Grant suggested that under the general fund account amounts, the bonded amount and other funding sources should be broken out and indented, so people didn't need to have four sheets of paper to figure out what the Town portion of the funding actually would be.

Chair Kelley said the Planning Board was in favor of Phase III of the Main Street Enhancements program.

Office Research Light Industry improvements

Councilor Needell said the current thinking was to bring water and sewer out to Beech Hill Road. He asked if this was actively being considered, and said he hadn't heard about it.

There was discussion about this.

Mr. Grant said the Town had a similar proposition at the Business Park, where the Council agreed Town water should be available. But he said the Council didn't expect the water to be brought in until it had an occupant in mind. He noted the money had already been spent on this

site, but had not born fruit, and said he was concerned that might happen with Beech Hill Road if the figures were in the CIP this way.

Mr. Campbell said the Town had no intention of building this until there was a developer that was interested, noting that this was how the Economic Development Committee saw it. He said this was a “placeholder” in the CIP, and said the Town had a commitment to doing it if there was some interest.

There was discussion on limited plans to improve Beech Hill Road.

Mr. Campbell noted there were no plans to upgrade Beech Hill road from a Class VI to a Class V road. He said the Economic Development Committee had talked about this.

Administrator Selig said the plan last year was to have this as a placeholder, in order to be able to say to a developer what potentially could be done.

Chair Kelley noted that extension of the roadway was listed in the CIP.

Mr. Campbell provided details on the design for a roadway. He noted that this would not deal with Beech Hill Road.

Chair Kelley said the figure of \$1 million for a road, and water and sewer lines seemed a little low. There was discussion on this, and on how current the figure was.

Athletic Fields

Administrator Selig said the Parks and Recreation Committee is recommending developing an athletic field at the Town-owned Packers Falls Road gravel pit. He said the Town had begun to reclaim parts of it. He noted it was still an active pit, and said this proposal would develop one field, and would also provide drainage and well capacity to develop a second field in the future.

He asked the Planning Board for feedback on this location, noting it was right over the Town of Lee line. He said if the work were done, the field couldn't be used until 2008.

Mr. Lynch said the Parks and Recreation Committee felt it was time to move forward with this, noting it had been pushed out to the future several times in the past. He noted that the part of the pit where the field would be located was being closed out, but said the back part of the pit would continue to be an active pit, but would be scaled down.

Chair Kelley asked if traffic conflicts had been ironed out, and Mr. Lynch said yes, and provided details. He said the biggest issue out there now was dirt bikes. He also said there was a mound of gravel that had to be moved, and said the number in the CIP took that into consideration. He said the project would be designed and built in house, and said the CIP figure was for materials, and for work to be done by Town staff.

Councilor Carroll said it made great sense to take an area that had been degraded and upgrade it, as opposed to making a field out of prime farmland, or forest lands.

Mr. Lynch agreed this was very appropriate. He noted that there had been a lot of talk about other places to put the field, including discussion that residents had to drive to these various places.

Mr. Webb noted that this site was a difficult place to pull out of, and Mr. Lynch said there had been discussion about doing some vegetation control, but not about actually modifying the roadway. He said there was proper site distance if the vegetation was cleared, and also said there would be proper signage.

Mr. Grant received clarification that the Town owned the property, and did not pay taxes on it.

Ms. Harris asked if there could be parking on the street, and Mike said no, not without some kind of reconstruction.

Mr. Grant said this was a \$140,000 investment, for a site that was realistically not within distance of Durham kids, without a car. He felt there were other town properties that could more feasibly be reached.

Mr. Roberts asked if there would be any control of usage of the fields.

Mr. Lynch said it would be ORYA that would schedule activities, so there would be some control

Councilor Needell said this might not be an ideal site, but he said the price was right and it was available, so they should take advantage of this, noting there was a desperate need for field space. He said this didn't mean there couldn't be further efforts to find playing fields.

Mr. Grant said the Oyster River School District was going to develop fields, and said he thought the schools should permit use of the fields by ORYA because this would save money. He noted that the University had fields the Town could make use of as well. But he said unfortunately, this kind of partnership doesn't seem to happen.

Chair Kelley asked if school fields were being used at such a rate that ORYA could not get in.

Administrator Selig said to his knowledge that was the case, the fields were fully utilized. He also said using UNH fields was problematic at times, and he provided detail.

Mr. Roberts said he thought this would be an ideal place for playing fields, noting other communities had done this kind of thing. He said it was an advantage to have the playing fields out there, to get the kids focused on what they were doing.

Mr. Webb agreed more athletic fields were needed, and said he thought the Town should go ahead with this.

Jackson's Landing

Administrator Selig noted the amount in the CIP for Jackson's Landing was for drainage and erosion improvements, and didn't get to the other improvements suggested. He said the total Phase I number was \$340,000, which also included additional parking across the road, enhanced plantings and grass, a nature walkway, and rebuilding of the docks.

Mr. Grant asked if the University would perhaps like to put half of the \$75,000 the Town had to put up, since it was a large user of the site.

Administrator Selig provided details on the funding aspects of the project, and said that some of the total funding for Phase I was still unclear. He provided details on what was planned as part of Phase I. He said it would enhance the whole area, and also described Phase II that had been designed. He said the CIP did not include the overlook aspects of Phase I, but said it did include the drainage system. He said a pre-proposal had been developed by the Jackson's Landing Committee, and it would find out shortly whether it could submit a formal grant proposal.

He also noted that it would be possible to utilize conservation funds for the erosion control aspect of Phase I, and said he thought this would be appropriate.

Mr. Webb said that given the focus on the shoreland protection zone, the Town looked hypocritical being such a violator concerning erosion and sedimentation. He said this project would be a good example to shoreland residents.

Mr. Roberts said the improvements to Jackson's Landing were something the majority of citizens could use.

Department Requests

Mr. Grant noticed that the Fire Department was requesting to replace cars with SUV's and four-wheel drive vehicles, and said he thought that was excessive. He said SUVs are expensive to operate and maintain. He said other vehicles could be used for emergency response.

Administrator Selig said the impetus behind this was the flood this year, where it was felt these vehicles would have been important. There was discussion about this.

There was discussion proposed funds for a new software program for the Police Department's records. There was also discussion on the current status of the dispatch system transition concept.

Chair Kelley questioned the need for a special response vehicle by the Police Department, and that he saw no contribution by UNH for this item. There was discussion as to the priority level of this proposed expenditure.

Administrator Selig provided details on the current Fire agreement, which he said was beneficial to the Town, financially. But he said the present quarters for the Fire Department are cramped, and said eventually, it would need a new home, He said it was important to look hard at where

that might be, noting that response time was a very important consideration in terms of siting of a new facility. He said the facility would need to be centrally located.

There was discussion as to whether this was in the University Master Plan. It was noted that a new facility would cost approximately \$8.75 million.

Chair Kelley said he had recently been involved with a project that involved a design of a facility on Cape Cod, which had a community room. He asked that the Fire Chief look at the 22,000 square footage number very carefully, and also at the \$300-350 per square foot cost. There was discussion about the University's contribution to this project.

Mr. Grant suggested that this item be moved back in the CIP.

Administrator Selig provided details on roadwork reclamation planned for Durham Point Road as a result of the flooding problems in the spring. He said the Town would get about \$25,000 for this.

He also spoke about the CIP item on the Wiswall Bridge replacement, and said the question was how urgently the Town should move ahead with this. He said he felt the Town should stay with the bailey bridge for the time being, and should push the Wiswall Bridge replacement project out so it coincided with the state funding that would become available. He said he didn't want to incur the tax impact of such a project.

Chair Kelley noted the 10% tax impact this year, without anything other than appropriated bonds and an increase in operational costs.

Mr. Lynch said the Town would get \$500,000 from FEMA, as well as state aid, so the burden to the taxpayers from this project as compared to some of other projects was fairly minimal.

Administrator Selig asked the Planning Board to think more about the Mill Pond Center issue. He said again that he was not sure what was the best way to go on this.

Councilor Needell said that Mr. Miner, the President of the Board of Directors of the Mill Pond Center, had said that if the Town didn't move ahead with the concept, that--within a year--the Center would have to make a decision to look for another partner, and that if the Town wanted this deal, it would have to move on it soon.

Chair Kelley suggested that an option on the property could be purchased. He also said the Town needed to assess a number of things. He said there appeared to be a lot of options there, but said the access issue was key.

Mr. Roberts spoke about the seating limitations for performances at the property, and said there was no way to get the flow of customers needed in order to support the Center.

Chair Kelley said he was thinking more about the buildout options the Town might have for the parcel.

Administrator Selig said this had been a helpful discussion.

V. **Old Business/New Business**

Mr. Campbell said he had met with resident Rob Keefe concerning the timber harvesting/forestry provisions. He said they would sit down again to develop some new language. It was agreed there needed to be a Zoning rewrite meeting to complete work on the timber harvesting/forestry issue, and to possibly address other items on the hit list. There was discussion that the Goss issue would not be covered in such a small group.

Mr. Campbell said the Board also had to schedule a public hearing for the revised Historic District provisions, ideally for October 25th. He updated the Board on recent additional revisions to these provisions.

Mr. Grant said when the Planning Board had done the site walk at the Caldarola property, they walked Bagdad Road but did not walk Canney Road. He noted that the first phase of the project would be on Canney Road, and said he would like to see that portion of the property, and have someone there to explain where things were planned.

The other Board members agreed with this, and a site walk was schedule for either September 30th, or October 7th, at 9:00 am.

Ms. Harris described another possible idea for a Town facility. She said the idea was to use the Pettee Brook parking lot, Pettee Brook Lane itself, and the parking area on the other side of the street as the location for such a development, also stating that this would involve re-routing Madbury Road traffic. She said this could become the Town center, noting it was certainly in the center of Town, was property owned by the Town, would probably decrease traffic issues, and could even contain a parking garage.

Mr. Campbell noted that re-alignment of the Pettee Brook Lane roadway had been talked about. There was brief discussion on this location.

Adjournment

Arthur Grant MOVED to adjourn the meeting. The motion was SECONDED by Richard Ozenich, and PASSED unanimously 7-0.

10:17 pm adjournment

Victoria Parmele, Minutes taker

W. Arthur Grant, Secretary