

**Ayer Board of Selectmen  
Special Meeting – Ayer Town Hall  
July 14, 2006 @ 4:30 p.m.**

Present: Frank Maxant, Chairman; Carolyn McCreary, Clerk; Cornelius Sullivan, Member; Gary Luca, Member. Staff: Shaun Suhoski, Town Administrator. Guests: George Kahale, representing the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority.

Meeting called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Chairman Maxant.

The only agenda item was discussion of proposed legislation to transfer a parcel of land currently used as the parking area for the Nashua River Rail Trail to the Town of Ayer.

Mr. Luca recused himself from discussion on the matter.

Chairman Maxant outlined the proposal by the state Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), as detailed in their July 7, 2006 correspondence, to support transfer of a parcel of land to the Town for purposes of developing enhanced parking on the site.

Mr. Suhoski advised of the current status of federal and state funds, as well as the need for legislative action during the formal session that ends July 31.

Mr. Kahale joined the discussion at the table and advised that the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority supports the legislation and the project. He noted the legislation is the first step in a process to construct 300 to 350 parking spaces on three levels (one at Park Street grade, one at current elevation, and one deck above). Mr. Kahale outlined future issues to be resolved: (1) determine exact location of Right-Of-Way from Main Street to train station, and (2) need to acquire additional funding to meet a total estimated project cost of \$7 to \$8 million.

Mr. Suhoski noted that the Cecil Group report indicates that additional parking can be created on the rail trail site within the \$4 million already allocated, though it may contain less spaces than MART's goal of 350.

Chairman Maxant questioned how long it would take to get to construction, to which Mr. Kahale advised four years. It will take 12 to 24 months for design to be completed.

Selectman McCreary sought clarification on the various funding sources: \$3.15 million existing federal earmark, and up to \$2 million in state transportation bond funds. Mr. Kahale advising that MART would work with Congressmen Meehan and Olver for additional federal funds, if needed.

Discussion over potential acquisition of abutting parcels yielded unanimous consensus that there would be no support for any eminent domain proceedings.

Selectman Sullivan advised to the potential for the Town to develop design criteria for the facility, as well as potential urban redevelopment along Park Street in the future.

The Board accepted comments from the public:

Patrick Hughes stating support for this "procedural" matter of requesting the legislation, and of the design not being out of scope in height.

Carol Bousquet speaking for the citizen's action group to Save the Station, stating she was "very excited" about the parking proposal at the rail trail site.

Jim Lucchesi questioning whether the Board of Selectmen was "overriding the taxpayers" by supporting this project, and other concerns. Selectman Sullivan responding he has heard overwhelming support for project from taxpayers.

Jim Lucchesi questioning traffic impacts at Park / Main intersection in light of new fire station. Selectman Sullivan responding that most commuter traffic flows from north of downtown and would not enter intersection. Discussion over traffic and origination ensued.

Harry Zane advising that additional parking was approved in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan that the Planning Board endorsed. Mr. Lucchesi responding that the Planning Board supports the great majority of recommendations, but that others need further review.

Mr. Kahale noted that most commuters arrive before 7:00 a.m. and depart after 6:00 p.m., thus limiting impact on the intersections.

Ed Kelley questioned whether the project was feasible with acquisition of the rail trail parcel only, and what would happen if no other parcels available. Mr. Suhoski advising that Cecil Group report indicates project is feasible within rail trail footprint only, but that the open design process would address this issue.

Mr. Kelley stated he agrees with the draft legislation, but expressed concern over loss of taxable properties. Mr. Kahale said taxation depends on the final ownership and leasing arrangements yet to be determined.

Richard Gilles suggested incorporating existing businesses into the design of the new facility and suggested it may enhance local revenues.

There being no further discussion the Chairman called for a motion.

**MOTION:** Selectman Sullivan moved the Board of Selectmen request its state legislators to file "An Act Relative to the Transfer of a Parcel of Land Used for Conservation/Recreation Purposes to the Town of Ayer for the Enhancement of Public Access to the Nashua River Rail Trail."

Second: Selectman McCreary. **MOTION PASSED:** 3-0 (Selectman Luca not voting – recused).

**MOTION** to adjourn by Selectman McCreary. Second: Selectman Sullivan. **VOTE:** Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

END OF 7/14/06 MINUTES.