



**MINUTES  
ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
August 21, 2023  
5:30 PM - Scitico Room**

**1. Roll Call**

Present: Gina Cekala, Robert Cressotti, Matthew Despard (Remote), Douglas Finger, Nick Hopkins, Michael Ludwick, Cynthia Mangini, Ken Nelson Jr., Marie Pyznar, John Santanella, Lori Unghire.

Also Present were Town Manager, Ellen Zoppo-Sassu; Assistant Town Manager, Steve Bielenda; Assistant Town Attorney, Mark Cerrato; Director of Finance, John Wilcox; and Town Clerk, Sheila Bailey.

Absent: None

**MOTION #6673** by: Marie Pyznar, seconded: John Santanella to suspend the rules and move the Fixed Tax Assessment Agreement for Fast Track Realty first on the agenda. Upon a **SHOW OF HANDS** vote, the Chair declared **MOTION #6673** adopted. Yes: John Santanella, Cynthia Mangini, Lori Unghire, Matthew Despard, Gina Cekala, Douglas Finger, Nick Hopkins, Marie Pyznar, Michael Ludwick, Robert Cressotti No: None Abstain: Ken Nelson Jr.

**2. Fixed Tax Assessment Agreement for Fast Track Realty**

Attorney Carl Landolina, Representative for Fast Track Realty, discussed the advantages of utilizing the Fixed Tax Assessment Agreement, stating that the agreement is not an abatement and allows for a fixed assessment period of ten years under the Connecticut Statute. It guarantees the developer a fixed tax assessment rate even as improvements and values increase on the property and would start for the 2025 Grand List. If the developer ceases to use the property as recreation or retail, a 9% penalty is imposed.

Assistant Town Attorney Mark Cerrato and Town Manager Ellen Zoppo-Sasso explained that the vote to approve the Fixed Tax Assessment Agreement for Fast Track Realty is needed for the developer to obtain funding for the project. If the agreement is approved by the Council, the developer will still need to go through the land use application process. Executing this agreement is the last step in finalizing this project and it will not come to fruition until all other approvals of the plan have been completed.

### **3. School Modernization**

Town Manager Ellen Zoppo-Sassu introduced the School Modernization study as a two-piece study. The first piece is the facility review by Russell & Dawson, which inventoried all the issues and concerns involving the elementary schools. The second piece is the demographics portion, which looked at various statistics to see the trajectory of needs for the elementary schools. Currently, the demographics portion is in the process of being reworked to include more accurate details due to a calculation error. A more accurate figure is needed to obtain funding from the State of Connecticut, as well as for the taxpayers to see what the proposed project would cost. There are only a few weeks to decide whether this will appear on the November 7th, 2023 ballot.

### **4. Higgins Park Update**

Town Manager Ellen Zoppo-Sassu presented the attached Summary of Higgins Park Improvements handout and gave Director of Finance John Wilcox the opportunity to speak about the project. Ms. Zoppo-Sassu stated the original funding of \$6.5 million failed at a referendum and the projects have been pieced together using various funding sources from the Town of Enfield. Ms. Zoppo-Sassu spoke about the design and innovation of the proposed Higgins Park improvements.

Mr. Wilcox explained the timeframes and status of projects completed in prior years and the appropriation of funds to complete said projects. Mr. Wilcox explained the idea of an expanded parking lot which would connect to the parking lot of Enfield Express. The bids were for the parking lot, as well as for decorative lighting, Wi-Fi services and additional handicap parking.

Councilor Marie Pyznar asked how much the total funding would be for the project as she thought the funds had already been allocated. Ms. Zoppo-Sassu explained the bid cost is \$1.7M but with already appropriated funds, the additional allocation is closer to \$815,000.

Councilor Ken Nelson said he would like to see the approved projects completed with the funds that have already been allocated and postpone any additional projects that haven't already been funded.

Councilor John Santanella stated he would like the discussion to go to the General Government Subcommittee but not take action until a referendum regarding the school modernization plan has been passed.

Councilor Nick Hopkins inquired about using TIF funds and would like to see estimates before they go to General Finance.

Councilor Michael Ludwig spoke about the importance of cameras around the playscape as well as the future bathrooms. Expenses including cameras and Wi-Fi were not included in the proposal.

Mayor Cressotti stated that the general consensus seems to be that members agree to finish projects already funded and hold off on future projects.

**5. Adjournment**

**MOTION #6674** by: Cynthia Mangini, Seconded: John Santanella to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #6674** adopted unanimously, and the meeting stood adjourned at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila M. Bailey, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the Council

Lindsay Petrucci, Assistant Town Clerk  
Secretary of the Council

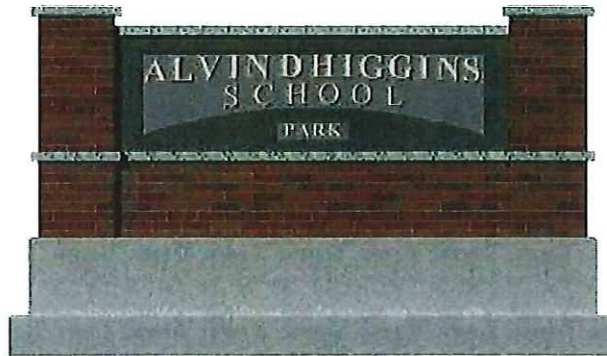
## SUMMARY OF HIGGINS PARK IMPROVEMENTS

### TOWN GREEN WALKING TRAIL

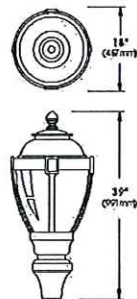
- One (1) security blue light bollard on the westerly end of the walking trail.



- 2" conduit (empty) around the walking trail connected to the Thompsonville Fire Department for future fiber optic line.
- Park entrance brick paver plaza with seating area and the park entrance signage re-using the old Alvin Higgins granite.



- 1-1/2" conduit around the walking trail to provide electricity to 13 new decorative lights.



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PATENT PENDING

- Electrical conduits, handhole and wiring to provide the bandshell with electricity.

#### **PARKING LOT – TOWN HALL & ENFIELD EXPRESS**

- 65 new parking stalls.
- Summary of drainage improvements: 7 new catch basins, 520 feet of new HDPE drainage pipe, 3 new manholes plus an underground detention system.
- 13 new islands where trees or bushes or flowers can be planted.
- New concrete curbing throughout the parking lot.
- New concrete sidewalk to connect the Enfield Express building to the Town Hall building and to connect the new parking lot to the newly constructed bandshell.
- Pedestrian connection from Enfield Street to the bandshell and walking path.

18 new parking lighting lamps & poles (US Architectural Lighting & Sun Valley Lighting).



- New parking lot areas with a new base and a new hot-mix asphalt surface.

#### Justifications

- Comprehensive Higgins Park Master Plan created for the Recreation Referendum 2021.
- When the referendum was voted down, DPW was instructed to implement the walking trail, move the softball field and build the new field at Brainerd Park, install the basketball court, install fitness stations, and install the bandshell. Funding for these came from multiple town sources.
- CWB/KP wanted this vision for the Town Hall/Higgins campus and DPW steadily implemented it with the understanding that continued phasing over “X” years would accomplish it
- The continued phasing of the master plan includes:
  - Walkway lights that changed from bollard type lights to the tall acorn lights for future security cameras, Wi-Fi integration and fiber optic,

- Security bollard,
- Paving in front of the playstructure,
- Connection to the Enfield Express,
- Pedestrian connection from Enfield Street,
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- Park entrance sign and seating area using the granite from Higgins School,



- Parking continuity from the lower lot to the expanded Enfield Express parking lot,
- EV charging stations,
- Traffic islands, and
- Re-paving the lower lot.

All of the above items were included in the recently bid project for economy of scale savings including design and construction.

Quantities for your reference

Blacktop-

Area- 8120 Sy

Tons- 1900 tons

Curb- 100lf

Concrete-

4" walk- 4400Sf

Concrete curb- 2900lf

Pads- 568Sf

Ramps- 600Sf

Flush curb- 225Lf

Electrical-

Conduit- 4400Lf  
Light poles and bases- 18

Brick pavers- 2000Sf

Drainage-  
15" pipe- 550Lf  
8" cpp pipe- 94Lf  
Precast structures- 12

Landscape area-  
Lawn- 48,000Sf  
Trees- 34

### Financial Summary

The history of the appropriations for the various Higgins Park projects are as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Appropriation</b>
04/21/21	Higgins Playscape	\$200,000
07/01/21	Higgins Walking Path	\$638,200
07/01/21	Higgins BBall Court	\$ 75,000
11/15/21	Higgins Parking Lot	\$425,000 - ARPA
11/15/21	Higgins Bandshell	\$200,000 - ARPA
11/15/21	Higgins Fitness Stations	\$ 93,000 - ARPA
04/17/23	Higgins Bathrooms	\$200,000 - ARPA

Note: The playscape, walking path, and basketball court were included in the FY22 Budget Capital Appropriation. After the budget was adopted, we wanted to try and have the playscape available for the summer of 2021. So we subsequently appropriated the funds in FY21 (April 21, 2021) and reversed the FY22 appropriation.

**Higgins Playscape (\$200,000)** – project was completed in the summer of FY21 for slightly less than the budgeted amount (\$7,873). The excess budget was reallocated for a fence around the HP BBall Court and towards the walking path lighting.

**Higgins Basketball Court (\$75,000)** – The court was completed in the summer of 2022.

**Higgins Walking Paths (\$638,200)** – The walking path portion of this budget was completed in the spring of 2022. The original budget included an amount for lighting on small posts (3 foot). Subsequently, it was determined that larger posts would be needed for WIFI coverage and for video surveillance. Chris Bromson asked Donald to include decorative lighting similar to the lighting around Freshwater Pond. The larger lighting was included in the RFP for the parking lot.



**Higgins Parking Lot (\$425,000)** – The original budget included expansion and paving of the parking lot behind Enfield Express. However, the Higgins Park Master Plan that was presented to voters at referendum included a much larger plan. Only design work has been completed so far. Chris Bromson had requested that Donald bid the larger parking lot because of the bandshell. The larger lot was included in the RFP.

**Higgins Bandshell (\$200,000)** – This project was completed in the summer of 2023. The bandshell was moved from the original planned location and will need to be made handicap accessible which would not have been needed. The handicap accessibility was included in the RFP.

**Higgins Fitness Stations (\$93,000)** – We have purchased the equipment and are waiting for the installation.

**Higgins Park Bathrooms (\$200,000)** – This project has not yet been started.

In summary, the RFP was issued for the Master Plan version of the parking lot, the walking path lighting, handicap access for the bandshell as well as, a brick entrance plaza for Higgins Park that included the original Higgins School granite. We have not signed any contracts so we are at a decision point. We have 3 options:

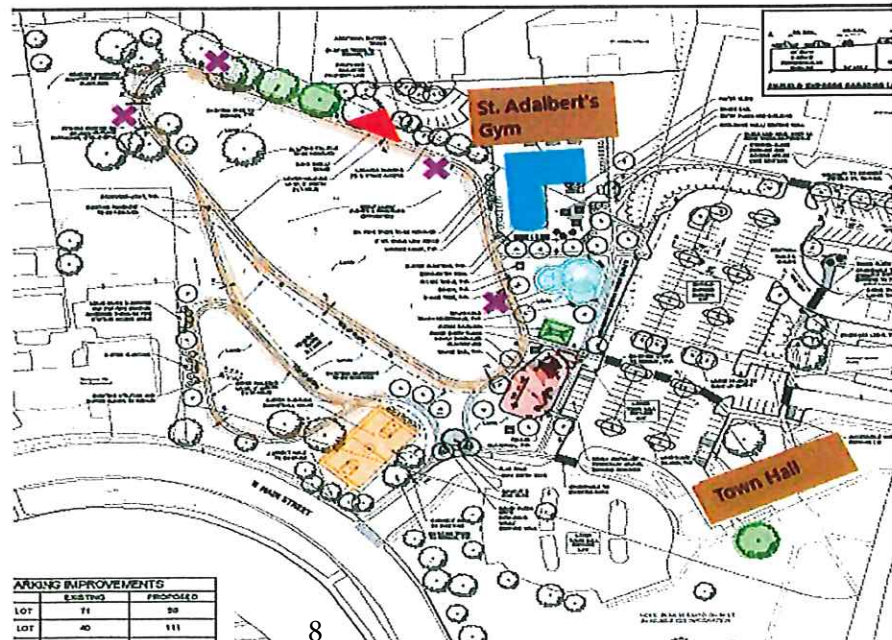
1. Go back to original budgeted amounts – we will lose WIFI/Surveillance, handicap access (will have to be budgeted separately) and the expanded parking lot (will lose economies of scale as it will likely want to implement the Master Plan version at a later date).
2. Go forward with RFP – we will need to develop a funding plan that will likely need some amount of additional funding from the Town
3. Go forward with some mixture (for example add handicap access) – we will need to develop a funding plan that will likely need some additional funding though less than in item 2.

## Higgins Park Master Plan

A central hub for passive and active recreation

### Planned Amenities

- Walking Trails
- Playscapes
- Basketball Court
- Fitness Stations
- Band Shell
- Pool and Splash Pad





2. "SHALL THE TOWN OF ENFIELD APPROPRIATE \$6,500,000 FOR RECREATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS AT HIGGINS PARK AND THE INSTALLATION OF SPLASHPADS AT GREEN MANOR PARK, HAZARDVILLE MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND PRUDENCE CRANDALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS, NOTES OR TEMPORARY NOTES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$6,500,000 TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION?"

YES

NO"