

MIDDLE SCHOOL FIELDS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ALSO KNOWN AS RECPLX QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Questions and Answers

Q: When did this project begin?

A: The project began in January 2015.

Q: Who proposed the project?

A: A working group was formed in January 2015 comprised of a member of the Select Board, representatives from the Youth Sports Leagues, a local business owner and a member of the School Committee. This group was later named the Middle School Fields Improvement Committee (MSFIC).

Q: How many public meetings did the committee have?

A: Between 2016 through 2019, the committee held **19 public meetings**.

Q: What is the cause for the delay?

A. The construction delay was caused by a series of lawsuits filed by abutters to the project.

Q: When did the litigation begin?

A: The litigation began in April of 2019.

Q: How many lawsuits were filed and what was the outcome?

A: There were three (3) lawsuits filed related to this project. One lawsuit challenged the Town's use of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds on this project. The Town prevailed in that lawsuit. Another lawsuit challenged the ownership of a small strip of land on the project boundary. The Town did not prevail in that lawsuit. The last lawsuit is related to the Planning Board's issuance of a site approval plan for this project. That lawsuit is still pending.

Q: What impact do the lawsuits have on this project?

A: The lawsuits have had a significant impact on the cost of the project. The original cost estimate in 2018 when construction should have begun was **\$9.2 million dollars**. The cost of the project in 2024 dollars is now estimated at **\$18.3 million dollars**.

Q: Given the huge increase in cost, how will the Town fund this project.

A: The Town is proposing to use a combination of Town, CPA funds and private donations.

Q: What would be the mechanism to fund the deficit?

A: In addition to the funds that were previously allocated for this project by Town Meeting in May 2018, the Town proposes to issue a 25 year bond for the Town's portion of the project, which is an additional **\$3.8 million dollars**. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) approved the requested funding and is recommending a 10 year bond for **\$5.9 million dollars**. There have also been contributions from the sports group (included in the Town's funding of the project). Private donations will be sought to provide additional funding towards the project.

Q: Will this funding be on the warrant for this **Annual Town Meeting on May 14, 2024**?

A: Yes. There are two (2) articles on the Town Meeting Warrant. Article 10 is the article for the appropriation of the CPA funds. The other article is Article 20 for the Town's funding of the project. Since this is an article to bond funds, there needs to be a **2/3 vote at Town Meeting**.

Q: What impact does the Town's bond have on the taxpayer?

A: There will be no impact on the taxpayers. The annual estimated payments that the Town is responsible for will be paid using debt capacity within the general fund. As other debt is paid off, the Town can then assume new bond debt, therefore, there is capacity within the Town's other existing capital projects to make these annual payments.

Q: What factors have caused the massive increase in cost?

A: The very slow litigation process since 2019 prohibited the Town from moving forward. In the intervening years, the cost of construction has significantly escalated.

Q: What is the plan moving forward, given there is still one (1) unsettled lawsuit?

A: If the CPA and Town funding are approved at Town Meeting, the Town will proceed with the construction bidding process. The Town evaluated the risk of proceeding with the construction bidding process and determined from past cases, the risk is minimal.

Q: Is there an estimate as to when construction would begin?

A: Ideally, construction could begin as early as late summer/fall 2024.

Q: What if Town Meeting does not vote for the funding?

A: This would cause further delay in construction, which ultimately means additional cost increases.

Q: How committed is the Town to this project?

A: The Town is very committed to completion of this project.

THE RECPLEX OFFERS

RECREATION FOR ALL AGES

- PLAYGROUND
- 1/4 MILE WALKING TRAIL
- EXERCISE COURSE
- TWO (2) HALF BASKETBALL COURTS
- TWO (2) MULTIPURPOSE COURTS – STREET HOCKEY, TENNIS, PICKLEBALL
- AMPHITHEATER – ARTS PERFORMANCES, MOVIE NIGHTS, SCHOOL/TOWN ACTIVITIES
- BASEBALL AND MULTIPURPOSE FIELDS
- RECREATION FIELDS – SOFTBALL FIELD, INFORMAL RECREATION, OUTDOOR EVENTS, MULTIPURPOSE FIELD
- BOCCE AND SHUFFLEBOARD
- OUTDOOR EATING AREA
- CONCESSION STAND
- PLAZA WITH GAZEBO

