

**TOWN OF DARIEN  
REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING  
APRIL 17, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Regular meeting of the Representative Town Meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by Christa McNamara, Town Clerk, who noted there was a quorum of 66 members present. She also thanked everyone for wearing their name badges and asked that they return the badges to their district chairs at the end of the meeting.

Upon Roll Call, the following were present:

From District I, there were 8 members present, 8 absent.  
From District II, there were 12 members present, 4 absent.  
From District III, there were 10 members present, 7 absent.  
From District IV, there were 13 members present, 3 absent.  
From District V, there were 12 members present, 6 absent.  
From District VI, there were 12 members present, 5 absent.

The absentees from District I were: Brakman, Grambling, Keane, Lublin, Mecsery, Schneider, Schwartz, Von Stuelpnagel.

The absentees from District II were: Hult, Marousek, Russell, Teschner.

The absentees from District III were: Cardone, Crouse, Dunn, Giordano, King, Lane, Ruddy.

The absentees from District IV were: Bhat, Domittner, Keller.

The absentees from District V were: Huang, Mahoney, Patrick, Pesce-Gray, Pope, Smith.

The absentees from District VI were: Conway, Gauthier, Johnson, Taylor, York.

The Moderator, Seth W. Morton, Assumed the Chair and said that the Rules Committee met to discuss \$40,000 for an engineering study of the Noroton Heights retaining wall and a special appropriation of \$34,000 for speed signs for the police department. These items were funded by the Board of Finance, which is why they are not on the RTM agenda.

The Moderator said there will be a public meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup> on the drainage study results for Saltbox Lane.

The Moderator said the Selectmen will hold A Quarterly Department Review on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

**\*\*        \*\*        THE AGENDA WAS ACCEPTED BY UNIVERSAL CONSENT.**

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 20, 2023 MEETING**

The following correction was made: It was noted that Erika Procaccini, District V, was present, not absent, at the meeting.

- \*\* A MOTION WAS MADE FROM THE FLOOR TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.**
- \*\* THE MOTION WAS SECONDED FROM THE FLOOR.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

## **ELECTION OF A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE GREAT ISLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Moderator noted that this iteration of the committee would be in effect until December 31<sup>st</sup>. There were two candidates: Mark Adiletta and Amy Zabetakis. He asked if there were any other candidates – there were none. The Moderator asked each candidate to address the RTM.

Mark Adiletta, District V, read the following:

Good evening. My name is Mark Adiletta. For those not familiar with me I have been on the RTM since 2005 serving District V. I am the District V Chair, Chair of the Public Works Committee, and sit on the Rules Committee. Over the years I have served on F&B with Mr. Davis, Parks and Rec with Ms. Conniff and TGS&A. I have also been involved with previous advisory committees including the Public Works Garage Building Committee and the Recycling Center Advisory Committee (as it was known in the past) through my Chair position on Public Work. Please know that if elected, I would be happy to serve on this Great Island Advisory Committee. I believe decisions regarding the special property need to be made with great care in collaboration and with input from many of the Town's constituents including this body. Having toured the site and followed evolution of this purchase I believe there is work that needs to be done to secure the property, make it safe to access by residents, and not interfere with parties that have leases. I expect many of these initial activities to be "infrastructure" in nature. These likely include adjusting access roads, signage, remediation, securing unused buildings, set up sanitary facilities and management of these efforts along with identifying, interviewing and recommending to the BOS any consultants retained to execute on these basic needs. I believe my past RTM experience is directly applicable here.

I also understand clearly the charge includes other activities related to preparation of various budgeting and regulatory information for consideration to the BOS in their decisioning. I also understand the term is for one year.

I believe it is important that whoever you elect to this committee be willing to collaborate transparently with the other town officials, representative from the Public, and the diverse committees of this RTM.

As always, if elected I'd be happy to serve for the good of all the residents of Darien to the best of my ability.

I thank you for your attention.

Mark Adiletta

District V

Amy Zabetakis, District V, said she is the Chair of PZ&H and has paid extra attention to this project since it first came on the radar. She is a zoning and real estate attorney in town. She does not represent anyone with property adjacent to this, nor would she take on any such clients. She has the skill set to work on this phase I committee. If elected, she would make sure that there is clear transparency and would focus on the governing structure and long-term structure.

While the ballot votes were being counted, the Moderator asked Rolf Obin, District IV, Chairman of the Public Works Committee, to talk about the storm drainage study:

I'd like to thank Moderator Seth Morton, the Rules Committee and the Public Works Committee Chair, Mark Adiletta for allowing time to present this report on the status of Town Storm Drainage Studies. I may repeat some of what Seth has already said so please bear with me and I will try to be brief.

On Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00pm in Town Hall, the Town of Darien Public Works Supervisor Ed Gentile will conduct a presentation and hearing regarding the Tighe and Bond drainage study which describes the area as being centered on Salt Box Lane and Salt Box Lane East but extends onto neighboring streets. The contributing watershed area extends north nearly to Relihan Road, west to Gardner Street and the eastern leg of Stanton Road, east to Noroton Avenue, and south to Holly Pond at Seagate Road.

The results of the study will be explained in detail, all members of the public are invited to attend and will be given an opportunity to be heard; a portion of the meeting will be devoted to questions and answers. Notice of the meeting has been posted on the Town website and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

A second study for the area west of Bailey Avenue, south of West Avenue is completed but is not part of the presentation scheduled for May 11<sup>th</sup>. A third study addressing the Tilly Pond Watershed is near completion and should be available soon.

These areas of study were significantly impacted in 2021 by two severe storms: one in July (Elsa) and the other in September (Ida). The Coachlamp-Saltbox and Tilly Pond watershed studies are of particular interest because the Town's American Rescue Plan Act Committee aka the ARPA Committee placed these drainage initiatives on the Town's ARPA funding list for a combined \$2.5 million dollars. A quick read of just the Coachlamp-Saltbox drainage study indicates a recommended cost estimate four times the \$1.5 million dollars reserved by the ARPA Committee for that drainage project.

Please keep in mind that funds for ARPA projects must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and the project must be completed by December 31, 2026. The Board of Selectmen's agenda for tomorrow morning's meeting includes a discussion for the possible reconvening of the ARPA Committee.

The Coachlamp-Saltbox and Bailey Avenue reports are available on the Town website; enter a search for the Documents Directory, select Department Documents, Public Works Documents, Stormwater Information; (I love the Town website)

I have no professional credentials in hydraulics, hydrology, or storm drainage so I will not comment on the findings of the drainage reports; explaining the reports is best left to the expertise of Ed Gentile and his staff.

I encourage all RTM members to seek feedback from neighbors; if you know someone who lives in the Coachlamp-Saltbox Lane area, please reach out to them so they are aware of Ed Gentile's presentation which is the first formal Town drainage presentation to be delivered to the townspeople of Darien since the storms of 2021. I ask that you and your neighbors please consider attending the May 11<sup>th</sup> presentation.

Short of reading the reports, I will try to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

**\*\* UPON BALLOT VOTING, MARK ADILETTA WAS ELECTED AS THE RTM REPRESENTATIVE TO THE GREAT ISLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

**23-11**

**DONATION OF \$15,000 FROM THE DARIEN LITTLE LEAGUE FOR A PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION OF THE THREE ATHLETIC FIELDS AT MCGUANE PARK**

**\*\* ADELE CONNIFF, DISTRICT III, CHAIRMAN OF PARKS & RECREATION, MOVED:**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 2-33 of the Codified Ordinances of the Town of Darien, the Board of Selectmen is empowered on behalf of the Town of Darien to accept gifts provided that the gifts do not have a value in excess of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 2-33 of the Code of the Town of Darien, said gifts in excess of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) may be accepted with action by the Representative Town Meeting of the Town of Darien; and

**WHEREAS**, the Darien Little League wishes to donate a gift of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) for a professional evaluation of the three (3) athletic fields located at McGuane Park; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of this evaluation is to bring the two baseball fields and one softball field back to the same high-quality condition that they were in when they were first installed; and

**WHEREAS**, the Darien Little League will consider donating additional funds based on the results of the evaluation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Selectmen at its meeting of March 20, 2023, wishes to accept this gift to evaluate the condition of the three athletic fields at McGuane Park.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Representative Town Meeting of the Town of Darien hereby authorizes with thanks the acceptance of this gift in the amount of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) from the Darien Little League for the professional evaluation of the three athletic fields at McGuane Park.

**\*\* THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY DIANE CONOLOGUE, DISTRICT I.**

Adele Conniff, District III, Chairman of Parks & Recreation, read the Committee report:

One of the FY24 Parks & Recreation Capital Improvement requests for McGuane Park was \$15,000 for the professional evaluation of the three athletic fields at McGuane Park and field renovations were requested in the Six Year Capital Improvements Plan for FY25. There are two baseball fields and one softball field at McGuane Park. The Parks & Recreation Commission felt the fields have been maintained, but not rescanned or fundamentally improved since they were installed 20 years ago. The grades have shifted and there are drainage concerns resulting in erosion. The evaluation would identify where the grading issues are and the scope of the work required to fix them. The process would include infiltration rate tests, laboratory testing, and analysis and irrigation evaluation and provide solutions that help improve the quality of the Little League fields.

During the town budget review process, the evaluation of the athletic fields was deferred to FY25.

Subsequently, the Darien Little League has offered \$15,000 as a gift to the town to complete the professional evaluation and will consider donating additional funds based on the results of the evaluation. The town is lucky to have such dedicated volunteer support for our children. The Darien Little League is extremely successful with over 1,000 participants registered this spring in their baseball and softball leagues.

Thank you Darien Little League!

The Parks & Recreation Commission (2/15), Board of Selectmen (3/20) and Board of Finance (3/21) have voted to accept this generous gift of \$15,000.

At their meeting on 4/6 the RTM Parks & Recreation Committee with 14 of 15 members present voted unanimously to accept a gift of \$15,000 for the professional evaluation of three athletic fields at McGuane Park. We encourage the RTM to do the same.

Adele Conniff  
RTM Parks & Recreation Chair

Jack Davis, District III, Chairman of Finance & Budget, read the Committee report:

I am Jack Davis, District 3, RTM Finance & Budget chair.

Thank you, Adele, for that excellent report. The RTM F&B committee met in March and discussed this gift and appropriation for \$15,000. Thank you to the Darien Little League.

Just for information, if the Town is accepting the gift and making payments, the BOF needs to approve an appropriation to be followed by the RTM. If the donor is making direct payments for a gift, the BOF is not involved and such gift only requires BOS and RTM approvals providing such gift is approve the threshold.

The committee voted unanimously in favor of this gift and appropriation and recommends the same to the full RTM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Davis

RTM Finance and Budget Chair

April 17, 2023

**\*\* ITEM 23-11 CARRIED ON A RISING TALLY VOTE OF 66 IN FAVOR, 0 OPPOSED, 1 ABSTENTION.**

**\*\* UPON MOTION MADE AND SECONDED FROM THE FLOOR, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED BY VOICE VOTE TO ADJOURN AT 8:30 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco Blois  
Telesco Secretarial Services