

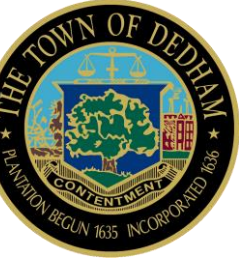
Article 13:

To Appropriate Money for Design, Engineering, Construction, and Outfitting of Town Green at 600 High Street (Police Station property)

May 4, 2022

Hybrid Public Information Meeting





Agenda

- »» About Article 13
- »» History of the Project
- »» Development of Conceptual Designs
- »» Funding Opportunities & Next Steps
- »» Questions?



Introduction

Presenters (in speaking order)

- Dennis Teehan, Select Board Member and representative to Dedham Square Planning Committee (DSPC)
- Jessica Porter, DSPC Co-Chair
- Dimitria Sullivan, Select Board Member
- Erin Boles Welsh, Select Board Member
- Dave Roberts, Finance & Warrant Committee Chair

Goals

- Emphasize the community consensus for reuse of space as park/Town green
- Present Select Board's Town Meeting Warrant Article and recommendations
- Explain decision-making process and recommended budget/funding strategy
- Discuss possible next steps following Town Meeting



Article 13 - What is it?

Language from 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant Book:

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the total cost of the design, engineering, construction, and outfitting of a Town Green on or about 600 High Street, the property on which the Police Station now sits, also shown as Assessors Map 92 Parcel 78, including but not limited to costs of demolition and removal of any structures or features thereon, site preparation and any other incidental and related expenses, and, further, to transfer such property from the Select Board for those purposes for which it is presently held, to the care, custody and control of the Select Board for park and playground purposes, and to dedicate such property to those purposes under the provisions of G.L. Chapter 45, Sections 3 and 14, and, further, that the Select Board and Town Manager be authorized to submit on behalf of the Town any and all applications deemed necessary for grants and/or reimbursements from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the United States, under the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (P.L. 88-578, 78 Stat 897), or any other state or federal programs including those in aid of creation or acquisition of conservation or park and playground land and/or any others in any way connected with the scope of this article; and further to authorize said board, commission and manager, as appropriate, to enter into all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary to effectuate and implement the vote taken hereunder, or take any other action relative thereto.

WHAT DOES THIS ARTICLE INCLUDE?

- Appropriate funds for **TOTAL COST** of design, engineering, construction, and outfitting of a Town Green (including demolition and removal of any structures, site prep work)
- Select Board responsible for care, custody and control for park and playground purposes
- Select Board and Town Manager can submit applications for funding for work (within the scope of the project)
- Select Board and Town Manager can authorize additional study of the area, within the scope of the project, such as:
 - Pedestrian safety
 - Underground utilities
 - Traffic



History of Town Green Project

- Police Station building will be vacant upon completion of new Combined Public Safety Building (estimated October 2022)
- Use of Town-owned land is under the purview of the Select Board; appropriating funds for future use of said land is under the purview of Town Meeting
- Realizing the opportunity that a vacant 600 High Street parcel would present, the Select Board amended the charge of the existing Dedham Square Planning Committee (DSPC) to allow the Committee to develop a reuse proposal to be presented to the Select Board
- After more than two years of extensive and exhaustive study, research, real estate evaluations, community outreach, public meetings, stakeholder engagement, and deliberations, the DSPC unanimously recommended that the 600 High Street parcel be reused for a “Town Green”
- DSPC presented their [final report](#) and recommendations to the Select Board in [November 2021](#)



DPSC Research By the Numbers

Data below inserted from the DPSC presentation to the [Finance & Warrant Committee on March 29, 2022](#)

MEETINGS & VOLUNTEER HOURS

- 24 Committee Meetings, beginning September 2019
- 16 Community Engagement Working Group meetings
- 3 Walk Audits
- Bi-monthly meetings with Town Manager, Town Engineer, co-chairs and Select Board members
- 1000+ hours of volunteer time from committee members

PUBLIC INPUT

Focus groups:

- Merchants & Businesses (2)
- Area Civic Organizations
- Dedham Square Residents (2)
- Senior Center (2)

Community meetings:

- 170+ residents, zoom meeting, February '21
- 100+ residents at neighborhood meetings, June '21
- 70+ residents at Design workshop, September '21

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

INTERNAL:

- John Sisson, Economic Development Director; Michelle Tinger, Assistant Town Planner; Jason Mammone, Town Engineer
- Leon Goodwin, Town Manager

EXTERNAL:

- David Gamble and James Carrico, Gamble & Associates Urban Design & Planning
- Barry Abramson, Abramson & Associates Real Estate & Market Analysis
- Don Giard, Urban Designer, Conceptual Design

REVIEW OF DATA & PRIOR STUDIES

- 2020 Mixed Use Study
- 2018 Dedham Square Design Guidelines 2018 Stantec Parking Study
- 2017 Parks & Recreation & Open Space Master Plan
- 2013 Urban Land Institute Redevelopment Study
- 2007 Dedham Square Planning & Redevelopment Study



600 High St: Analysis of Options

Table below inserted from the DSPC presentation to the [Finance & Warrant Committee on March 29, 2022](#)

	SELL PARCEL FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT	KEEP PARCEL FOR SURFACE PARKING	KEEP PARCEL & BUILDINGS	KEEP PARCEL, BUILD TOWN GREEN
ECONOMIC BENEFITS	LOW	LOW/MEDIUM	LOW	HIGH
COMMUNITY BENEFITS	LOW	LOW	LOW/MEDIUM	HIGH
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS	LOW	LOW	LOW	HIGH



Why build a Town Green?

SELECT BOARD AND DSPC ARE IN AGREEMENT A COMMUNITY GREEN IS THE BEST OPTION FOR THIS SPACE



Photo from Bing Maps

SELECT BOARD IS SERIOUS ABOUT A TOWN GREEN SPACE

- Select Board voted unanimously on [January 20, 2022](#) to approve the future use of the Police Station property at 600 High Street for the development of a Town Green
- Hosted two virtual Listening Sessions ([January 11](#) and [January 18](#)) to gather [additional public input](#) about the DSPC proposal prior to taking a vote on Warrant Article 13
- Select Board voted on [March 24, 2022](#) to ask that the FWC recommend appropriating up to \$2.5 million in **Warrant Article 13** for the total cost of design, demolition and construction, and outfitting of Town Green

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SHOWS DESIRE FOR TOWN GREEN IN DEDHAM SQUARE

- Unique opportunity to design a dynamic and timeless community green space in a centrally-located parcel of Dedham
- Public space will be designed to attract residents and visitors of all ages
- Phase 1 design of a green space can be built within the existing footprint and will not contribute to traffic congestion or diminish existing parking
- Flexibility in the final design that would allow for future enhancements and creative uses



Reasons for Phased Approach

As the Chief Executive Office of the Town, the Select Board must consider multiple factors for a design concept that may impact taxpayers:

REASON	ADDITIONAL DETAIL
COST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimated costs associated with reconstruction of curbs disproportionately increases the overall project cost
PARKING, TRAFFIC, AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All proposed changes must be made through the Town Engineering Department after successful completion of the necessary studies Any changes to the existing traffic or pedestrian infrastructure must be done for the entire intersection of the Dedham Square
UNDERGROUND UTILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainties exist regarding underground utilities within the Dedham Square A complete underground survey and study must be completed prior to any excavation work that may disturb any utility lines or connections; preventing disruption, increased costs, etc.



Collaborate to a Compromise

The Select Board acknowledges the hard work of the DSPC in identifying traffic and pedestrian safety as important issues in this parcel, this intersection, and the Dedham Square, as a whole. The Select Board is committed to integrating the work of the DSPC into the final design and has created a Town Green Working Group to accomplish this task.

- [April 13, 2022](#): Select Board voted to create a Town Green Working Group ("TGWG") to help integrate principles of the DSPC conceptual design into the RFQ
 - Group will consist of 6 members: 5 appointed by the Select Board and 1 nominated by the DSPC
- **May 11, 2022**: Select Board intends to appoint members of the TGWG
 - **The TGWG will be responsible for the following:**
 - Work with Town Engineer to advise Town Manager* on the RFQ
 - Help to outline process for designer selection
 - Ensure community priorities (as outlined in DSPC report) are included in final design
 - Provide periodic updates to the Select Board
- The FWC recommendation to Town Meeting includes language to authorize the Select Board to study the feasibility of curb alterations (i.e. bump outs or extensions) and their potential impacts to traffic, pedestrian safety, parking, and underground utilities, and includes an additional \$50,000 to fund the study.

A VOTE TO APPROPRIATE THIS FUNDING WILL ALLOW THE TOWN TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE DEMOLITION OF THE BUILDING, BEGIN THE NEXT STEP IN THE PROCESS TO BUILD A TOWN GREEN, AND TO PROPERLY STUDY THE IMPORTANT ISSUES AS IDENTIFIED BY THE DSPC.

*Town Manager is Chief Procurement Officer for the Town



From Ideas to Concepts

The process to date has proven that a beautiful park can be built that is representative of the entire community and prioritizes design elements identified as integral pieces to the overall experience, such as:

- Community Porch with power connections, lighting, and Wi-Fi
- Seat walls and benches, large boulders
- Common areas, flex spaces
- Specimen trees and shade trees
- Bistro lighting, catenary lighting
- Nature Path/Walkway
- ADA Accessible paths
- Bike racks
- Open lawn space
- Light fixtures

Using the recommendations from the DSPC, the Select Board engaged with the BETA Group to develop a design concept that demonstrates what \$2,550,000 (inclusive of overall cost and demolition) will allow the Town to construct while still prioritizing the elements identified as important through the extensive research and community outreach by the DSPC and considers additional factors such as constructability for the site, overall timeline, and cost.

Note: All designs presented to-date are concepts to present examples of designs. Formal design phase can begin after a vote to approve Article 13 at Town Meeting.



A Closer Look at the Concepts



Conceptual design for the Town Green as presented by the Select Board



Modified DSPC/Giard conceptual design site plan for the Town Green



A Plan to Keep Momentum

It is imperative to maintain the progress of this project and to ensure the well-documented feedback from the community is prioritized for consideration in the final design. The Select Board has committed to engaging with the Town Green Working Group, as outlined below:

Composition of Town Green Working Group:

- 5 members appointed by the Select Board
- 1 member appointed by the DSPC

Role of the Town Green Working Group:

- Work with the Town Manager and Town Engineer to develop the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to solicit designers
- Help to develop criteria to be used to select designer
- Develop and execute public outreach and engagement throughout formal design phase
- Provide regular updates to the Select Board throughout the process
- Present recommended final design plans to the Select Board for consideration and vote

Role of the Select Board:

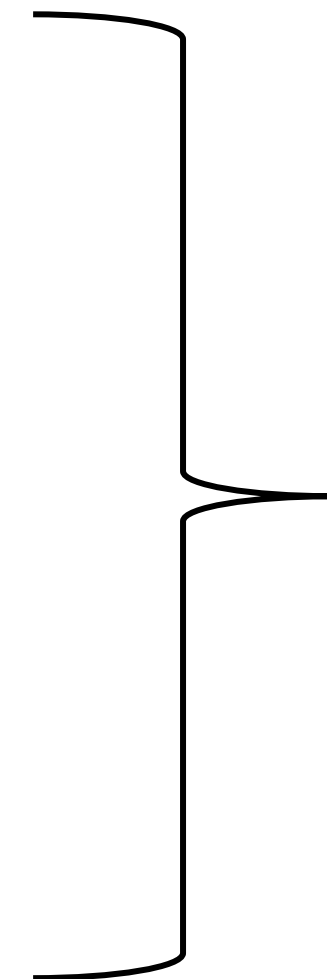
- Oversee the TGWG and support their efforts to continue engagement with the community
- Work with Town staff to share information and updates about the status of the project and overall budget
- Vote on final design of the park



Budgetary Estimate

Article 13 requests an appropriation of UP TO \$2,550,000 to demolish the existing police station, design and construct the Town Green, and to complete a traffic study to understand a possible future phase of the Town Green that would involve modifications to Washington and High Streets to reduce traffic congestion and improve public safety.

Demolition of Police Station	\$800,000
Design Contract Documents	\$150,000
Construction & Materials	\$1,550,000
Traffic Circulation Study	\$50,000
Total Request of Town Meeting (Article 13)	\$2,550,000



\$14.88 per year

Approximate impact to average residential taxpayer if Town were to bond entire \$2.55 million (over 20 years)

Note: Professional estimate above includes 20% contingency for demolition and construction.



Funding Strategy & Opportunities

It is the town's goal to aggressively pursue additional funding sources and lower the cost of the project for taxpayers.

- Maximum amount to be bonded by the Town is \$2.55 million
- Town is actively pursuing funding opportunities to further reduce the cost to taxpayers, such as:
 - Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program
 - Other State & Federal Grant Programs
- Private funds raised by a "Friends" or similar group could be used to further enhance the Town Green
 - Local example: Private fundraising was done to help install new lights at Dedham High School Track & Football Field

Update: The Town was recently notified we did not receive funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program



Next Steps

»» Vote at 2022 Spring Annual Town Meeting

If Article 13 Approved:

The Town will work with the TGWG to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design phase work (a requirement of formal design of project).

Included in Article 13 are the funds needed to complete the formal design phase, construction phase, and to complete a traffic study.

If Article 13 Not Approved:

The Select Board will work with stakeholders, including the newly formed TGWG, to formulate a strategy to move forward with a Town Green proposal that can be presented at a future Town Meeting.

»» Estimated Timeline for Each Scenario

If Article 13 Approved:

Formal design process can begin following Town Meeting, with estimated project completion end of 2023/start of 2024.

If Article 13 Not Approved:

Unknown availability of future funding opportunities (local and state/federal) and uncertain economic outlook. Project timeline to be determined

»» Future Opportunities for Public Involvement

Not Dependent Upon Town Meeting Approval:

Consistent with prior projects, there would be public engagement during design development to gather feedback and build consensus among taxpayers. This effort will be led by the newly formed TGWG.



Final Thoughts

- Cost of construction rising approximately 10% per year; project delay may not result in better process, schedule, or funding opportunities
- Centrally-located parcel in Town and cannot keep an abandoned building onsite
- Formal study of the area through Engineering Department while building is demolished will maintain forward momentum and provide valuable answers
- Town Green Working Group is a firm commitment by the Select Board to create a process to include DSPPC principles into final design and continue community engagement
- Once-in-a-lifetime project for the entire community that will serve as an example for surrounding Towns

A yes vote on Article 13 guarantees that no matter what, there will be a Town Green in Dedham Square for countless generations of Dedham residents

Questions?

