

**JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE BOARDS OF SELECTMEN OF DURHAM AND MIDDLEFIELD
AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #13
December 20, 2004**

Present for the Durham (TOD) Board of Selectmen: Maryann P. Boord (First Selectwoman); Ernie A. Judson (Selectman); and Renee J. Primus (Selectwoman).

Present for the Middlefield (TOM) Board of Selectmen: Charles Augur (First Selectman); Peter Brown (Selectman); and Pat Bandzes (Selectwoman).

Present for the Board of Education: Chet Raczka (Chairman); Mary Jane Parsons, Jack Terczke, Gene Brown; and Susan Viccaro, Superintendent.

Chairman of the Board of Education Chet Raczka opened the meeting by stressing the importance of this meeting between the Boards of Selectmen of Durham and Middlefield and Regional School District #13 (RSD) to discuss parking the buses for the school district. Presently the buses are housed on Commerce Circle in Durham. He feels the five-year lease in Durham was a good cost saving move.

The present interest is a 6-acre piece of property for sale on Ozick Drive. The question is which of several scenarios is of interest to the towns: 1) RSD purchase the property alone; 2) RSD and the TOD purchase this parcel for development by the school district and Durham's Public Works Department; and/or 3) look for another site. Mr. Raczka retold the story of the Middlefield land proposal for this issue, which failed at the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) level.

There was a proposed \$75,000 savings in the Board of Education budget to have the buses housed in Durham: 35% for the TOM and 65% for the TOD due to the student population percentage. E. Judson clarified this by saying the saving is identical per taxpayer. R. Primus asked if there was a penalty for the early termination of the lease. C. Raczka said he's not sure if early termination is legal even if they could agree to it. He said the RSD wants to own its own site sometime. The district pays \$2,000/month for the lease; DATTCO pays \$2,000/month for the lease so the cost to the taxpayer is \$4,000. He said DATTCO is willing to invest a substantial amount but he does not have the actual amount.

R. Primus asked what went wrong with the Middlefield piece. C. Augur explained that the PZC denied the zoning change and they were unable to set an area for the detention basin and area for the buses. M. Boord also noted that neighbors were concerned; the property is in a business district.

E. Judson explained that Geoffrey Colegrove, Town Planner, had said nothing about needing a zone change for the Durham piece; his advice was to subdivide the property after buying it

jointly, i.e. such as a condo agreement. E. Judson gave a "90 second recap" explaining that a flat 8-acre parcel had been looked at but the owner was not motivated to sell; then the Board of Education needed a place quickly and the Ozick Drive parcel surfaced. K. Bober had floated the idea of a RDS/TOD public works option. Durham is interested in helping RSD and there is commonality of usage. The facility could provide the break room area needed by both groups.

Peter Brown noted that RSD #13 needs about three acres to house the buses but can save money by not building two wells, two septic systems, break room and morning room. C. Raczka said it was almost an ideal piece of property, which is commercial, not residential. The topography would be a big advantage to Durham's Public Works Department for sand and salt storage. E. Judson explained there would be one entrance into the back but he anticipates issues with crossing traffic.

R. Primus said she feels there are risks with the public work's involvement such as 1) they do not need the land; and, 2) they have additional land to use now in addition to what they have at their present site. She feels it will be difficult to put forward a public works department wish list at this time; Durham is not in the position to land bank. She said she had asked the Board of Education to carry it on their own. C. Raczka responded that in our town, we would be pursuing property to buy. He noted that if RSD #13 took full possession of the property in the future -- once the district owns it, we need to do what's right for both towns.

P. Bandzes opined that it was not likely to be a dual purpose facility. G. Brown said there are always economics with two parties participating; it is more expensive for the towns to do it alone. R. Primus noted there are topography issues with this land.

C. Augur stressed the problem is that this is a regional district and therefore, it is extremely important that the entire transaction must be done cleanly. P. Bandzes opined again that economically a joint ownership is wise, but politically it is not wise. C Raczka said if it goes to Referendum, there would be multiple opportunities to explore this. Peter Brown suggested that the RSD buy it all. C. Raczka suggested that if RSD #13 bought it, they could see if it could be subdivided; there would be developmental costs -- would both towns help?

G. Brown said he is happy with the present DATTCO setup but alternatives are better when we have a property. E. Judson said he doubts DATTCO will pay toward the development of the parcel but C. Raczka countered that they have talked about site development and involvement before. E. Judson said the reality is that the parcel is being actively marketed. P. Brown said that lends credence to one parcel, one usage. C. Raczka explained the Building Committee looked at eight parcels of property but they all contained financial and other problems.

Questions addressed to C. Raczka: what is the Building Committee asking of the towns tonight? A: approval to proceed working with Durham. He added we all owe it to our constituents to decide whether we should proceed.

M. Boord said she sent a letter of Right of First Refusal to the owner. She agrees that Public Hearings by the district and both towns are necessary. She is concerned about taking the land off the Durham tax rolls as industrial property. She wondered if the savings on the cost of buses is enough for Durham. The issue should move forward soon, however.

E. Judson asked to firm up the Right of First Refusal to be signed by all. M. Boord said the property owner has not responded. E. Judson clarified that he talked to the owner and he

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wants to know the downside of a Right of First Refusal. M. Boord explained that the purpose of her letter was to let him know we are seriously interested in the property.

It was agreed to secure answers to the following questions prior to a public hearing:

1. cost savings to the district;
2. the lease arrangement we currently have;
3. size and price of the proposed property;
4. site preparation costs;
5. what amount would be lost on the Durham tax rolls;
6. liability;
7. costs of early termination of the lease arrangement;
8. PZC §8-24 approval;
9. implications of partnering;
10. what would DATTCO contribute?

They all agreed to reconvene when the Fact Sheet is ready, setting a meeting date of January 6, 2005, 6 p.m., Strong School.

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.