

TOWN OF EXETER

MEMORANDUM

TO: Select Board
FROM: Town Manager
RE: 10 Hampton Road
DATE: September 13, 2021

Pursuant to the board's vote, the Town signed a purchase and sale agreement for property located at 10 Hampton Road. The P&S is contingent upon voter approval in March of 2022. The cost for the property is 1.15 million dollars negotiated down from an original asking price of 1.35 million. A fair price was sought, using property value estimates ranging from \$800,000 to \$1.395 million obtained from local realtors.

WHY IS THIS PROPERTY IMPORTANT?

This property would become the new home of the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department. The 1.64-acre parcel sits adjacent to the Recreation Park on Hampton Road and includes a 6,000 sq foot building and a small detached garage with office space. The larger structure houses 15 offices, a renovated kitchen, four bathrooms, two large multi-purpose rooms, a lobby/sitting area, a copy room, and a new outdoor deck.

The Parks and Recreation Department would move from 32 Court Street to 10 Hampton Road. Moving the staff and programs into the new building would require minimal renovations in FY22. Immediate updates include creating an ADA-accessible entrance, removing two office walls to expand program spaces for youth and seniors, installing ADA-compliant bathroom fixtures in 2 of the four bathrooms, installing Town internet, and updating the parking lot. We would work with DPW's highway & maintenance departments to achieve most of these renovations as a part of the annual maintenance and paving budgets.

Moving the Parks and Recreation Department to this new building would allow the Department to expand programming for seniors and youth as to meet the growing needs of our consistently changing community. The popular summer camp program would have access to the building during weather emergencies, thus providing safe shelter.

Ownership of the 10 Hampton Road property would also give residents access to an additional parking lot that could support approx. 60-80 cars. The new parking lot would provide safe access to the Recreation Park, allowing shorter walking distances to get to the athletic fields, an outdoor picnic pavilion, and a small playground. Parking capacity at the Recreation Park's main lot frequently cannot support demand during most activities & events. Often families and residents are forced to park at Access Sports and cross Hampton Road (Routes 111/27) on foot which can be very dangerous. If the Town purchased 10 Hampton Road, parents, children, and seniors would have two safe access points to the Park. Parks and Recreation could work with DPW to expand the current parking area at 10 Hampton Road in-house, using environmentally friendly permeable pavement to allow rainwater to infiltrate the ground and minimize stormwater runoff.

The 10 Hampton Road property is an ideal location to house a multi-generational community center as it is located between two commercial properties (as seen on the attached map), thus drastically minimizing any impact to local residential abutters.

COST SAVINGS CURRENT AND FUTURE

Purchase of this property in 2022 would support the current and future needs of the Parks and Recreation Department. The property size allows for the potential of future expansion to the building and garage. The goal would be for Parks and Recreation to improve the structures and property a little each year so that the cost to the taxpayers is fiscally responsible and doesn't negatively impact the tax rate.

We expect the FY22 renovations to cost no more than \$100,000, however, we are currently working to finalize that number which we will have as we start presentations to the various boards.

Parks and Recreation could immediately reduce their Capital Improvement Plan requests by eliminating or modifying several current project proposals, which would save the town millions of dollars over the next 2-8 years.

Eliminate from the current Capital Improvement Plan:

- \$4.5 million - Athletic field/ Parking expansion at Recreation Park.
- \$75,000 - Accessibility Assessment of 30/32 Court Street

Modify for future Capital Improvement Plan:

- \$6.5 million *change to* \$2-3 million - Multi-generational Community Center
 - In 6-8 years: Building improvement & expansion to include building a gymnasium, additional programming & meeting spaces, department storage, and outdoor access to bathrooms.

Although the Recreation Department will request to improve the building and property each year through the CIP and budget processes, those requests will be broken into smaller pieces that benefit the town by stretching the timeline to support better fiscal planning.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE COURT STREET PROPERTY?

The relocation of the Parks and Recreation Department to Hampton Road would enable the town to consider future uses of the 30/32 Court St property.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Parks and Recreation will present the project to the Budget Recommendations Committee, the Facilities Advisory Committee, Conservation Committee, the Planning Board, and the community for feedback and support.

WHY IS NOW THE TIME?

This property only recently became available for purchase. If the Town is unable to secure the property now, the chance to own a property that abuts the park and can support a community center will be lost. The current property market in the seacoast makes this property very attractive to local developers and we are fortunate the property owner was willing to negotiate with the Town potentially allowing future expansion of the Parks and Recreation Department.