

**Special Town Meeting  
Parks Project Information Meeting  
January 30, 2023  
7:00 p.m.  
Location:**

**Present:** Supervisor Aaron, Councilor Alexander, Councilor Tucker, Councilor Legg, Councilor Dove.

**Also Present:** Pat Carroll, Chris Corfield, Diane Fellerman, Gail Grozalis, Rich Grozalis, Jeri Whiting, Eric Sell, Chris Pitman, Bennett Pitman. Andre Ivanchuk, Tom Fairhurst, Monica Lynch, Jake Salzhauer, Peter Salzhaure, Elan Salzhauer, Fran McCormack, Steven Sherman, Wally Holst, Mary Kate Holst, Dan E vans, Denise Schoeneck, Rob Schoeneck, Pat Benedict, Tom Benedict, Ginny Lovier, Patience Gregg, Holly Gregg, Barbara Delmonico, Maura Molnar, Scott Molnar, Anne Fouser, Mary Gaffney, Lawrence Palmieri, Steve White, Michelle Mashia, Bob Eggleston, Michael Major, Steve Musso, Tim Johnson, Chad Rogers, Bill Murphy.

**Supervisor Aaron Opening Statement:** Supervisor Aaron gave the following opening statement and history to the audience:

**“History**

*1927 the Austin Park lands were donated to the Village of Skaneateles and the Village DPW was for years at this site.*

*In 1967 the Allyn family made a substantial donation and generated the support to build the arena for ice skating. The Village became the owner but the park and arena were managed by the Town.*

*In 2000 the Community Center was built, again thanks to large donations made by the Allyn family.*

*The Town ran the Community Center from 2000 to 2010 and also continued the Austin Pavilion ice arena until June 2015. In 2010 the operation of the Parks Department moved back to the Austin Pavilion where the Parks Office was established and where it remains today.*

*Information meetings began in 2015 to receive public input on what the residents wanted to see for the future of this arena.*

*The locker rooms were converted to meeting rooms and the Nursery School moved in from 2016 to 2021.*

*2018 the Village turned over ownership of Austin Park to the Town*

*2019 The Town Board authorized the construction of new bathrooms at Sims Building and this project was completed in 2020*

*In May 2021 the Town agreed to sell the property on Fennell Street to the Skaneateles Library. Parks Equipment stored on Fennell Street that daily had to be driven back and forth from Fennell Street to Austin Park would now be housed at Austin Park.*

***6 Informational Meetings have been held to discuss the future of the Arena:***

2021 June 12<sup>th</sup>; June 22<sup>nd</sup>; June 23<sup>rd</sup>.  
2/9 2022 Presentation at a Town Board meeting  
8/25/22 Zoom Informational Meeting

**On 9/9/22** Courtney Alexander, Sue Murphy and I met with **Ken Kaufman and Holly Gregg** who submitted a well-thought-out plan that completed changed the direction of this project. While to this point the plans have called for a separate building on the west side of Austin Pavilion, this new proposal would use inside of the existing arena at the north end to house the storage needs of the Parks Department. This would greatly reduce the visual impact on the neighbors.

9/13/22 An in-person information meeting at Austin Pavilion was held where the new concept was presented verbally but due to the short notice would not be ready to visually present.

11/7/22 The Town Board authorized the funding to update the plan with the new concept and to include a redesign of the tennis courts to include adding pickleball courts within the same footprint as our current tennis courts.

Our priority in this first stage of development is to provide storage for the Parks equipment that has always been in the park. The equipment is not new to the park and will not increase the traffic. Equipment was previously stored on Fennell Street and daily, the Parks Department would have to drive the equipment up Austin Street to meet the needs of the park and then driven back down to Fennell St. for storage. The equipment needs to be stored and the employees need to be located at Austin Pavilion, the same place the Parks Department Manager has her office in order to oversee the operation and for overall efficiency.

We have been saving for this project over the years and will support the cost through ARPA funding, the sale of the Fennell Street property and future revenues from a proposed Occupancy Tax. The next phase will be improvements to the arena. This phase is to provide a storage area and to rebuild the tennis courts that will include new pickleball courts. We will continue to reach out to our representatives to find additional funding sources.

Our Parks and our Conservation Areas are important for all residents of our community. We especially saw the need to keep our parks pristine and open for our residents in in the early years of COVID where use soared. We continue to listen to your suggestions and concerns. We know that any change brings concern. That is why we have continued to look all options and possibilities as we move forward with these projects. We thank you all for taking the time to attend this meeting and we look forward to hearing your comments and questions after the presentation. ”

Chad Rogers, Tim Johnson and Bill Murphy reviewed the attached Power Point presentation which recapped the Austin Park Project and the Fennell Street property process to date, the parks maintenance facility space needs and the potential maintenance facility site considerations.

The updated plan is to consider the Parks maintenance facility be constructed on the North end of the Austin Pavilion, 6 new pickleball courts, 4 reconstructed tennis courts, and storm water upgrades. This would be considered Project 1.

Project 2 would be considered after project 1 and it would include:

- Austin Pavilion Renovations
- Austin Pavilion Restrooms
- South Parking Lot Repairs

They reviewed the schematic site plan for the groundwork and the design of the park's facility pavilion renovations.

They reviewed the possible funding sources:

- ARPA Funds
- Sale of the Fennell Street Property
- Existing Town budgeted funds
- 5% occupancy tax revenue
- Donations
- Federal, State of Local grants
- Public Bond

They reviewed the estimated project savings from the previous design and the estimated cost of Project #1:

TOTAL PROJECT COST – PROJECTS #1 and #2

August 2022 (previous concept):	\$14,875,000
January 2023 (current concept):	\$12,240,000
<hr/>	
Total Project Cost Decrease:	\$ 2,635,000

This cost decrease was largely realized by incorporating the Parks maintenance facility into the North end of the Austin Pavilion.

The team reviewed the projected cost of Project #1 and Project #2

PROJECT #1:

PARTIAL PAVILION

Partial Pavilion and Addition for Parks facility, Tennis and Pickleball courts	
Parks Facility & Site Work/Storm upgrades	\$2,660,000
Reconstruct Tennis/Pickleball Courts	\$1,140,000
Preliminary Estimated Construction Cost	\$3,800,000
	(includes 10% design contingency)

Preliminary Estimated Project Cost \$4,660,000  
(Includes 5% project contingency)

PROJECT #2

Austin Pavilion Renovation and Austin Pavilion Outdoor Accessible Public Bathroom Addition  
Pavilion Renovations & Site Work \$6,064,000  
South Parking Lot Overlay Repairs \$ 86,000  
Preliminary Estimated Construction Cost: \$6,150,000  
(Includes 10% design contingency)

Preliminary Estimated Project Cost: \$7,580,000  
(Includes 5% project contingency)

Chad Rogers stated the actual tax impact would depend on the amount bonded and interest rates at that time. The preliminary tax impact would vary, it would depend on future fundraising, grant funding, and use of future occupancy tax.

They reviewed the potential construction schedule. Project #1 – parks facility, pickleball, tennis courts and storm water upgrades would start with Town Board approval, Village approvals and the final design documents during the winter thru the summer of 2023. The Fall of 2023 they could go out to bid and construction could begin during the Winter-Summer season of 2023/2024.

The design professionals and the Town Board opened up the meeting for public comments.

**Wally Holst:** Mr. Holst commented to the Board his daughter plays tennis for the high school tennis team, and it is not right for the Town to take away 2 of the tennis courts that are used by the Highschool tennis team and the public. He stated he had nothing against pickleball, but could the Town find another space for the pickleball courts?

Chad Rogers stated putting the pickleball courts where the two tennis courts currently would be a big cost savings for the Town.

**Jeri Whiting:** Jeri Whiting stated she is the girls tennis coach and it is important for the Town to keep the 6 courts. Having only four courts for the tennis team is not enough. If the tennis team is playing or practicing, they use 4 courts, this would leave no courts available for the public.

**Pat Delaney:** Pat Delaney asked the Board if they had considered the ideas that had been submitted to the Town Board from the public. There had been an idea sent to the Town Board to put the pickleball courts inside the Austin Pavilion. Was this considered?

Councilor Alexander answered this was looked at but would not work. One of the main uses of the Austin Pavilion is the summer day camp program. This program has a least 100 children enrolled each summer. The pavilion is also used for the Rotary Pancake Breakfast and the Fireman’s Field Days each year. The pickleball courts in the pavilion would limit the use of the building.

**Diana Fellerman:** Diane Fellerman asked if the Town could combine with the Community Center and have the summer Playday program there?

**Jay Salzhauer:** Jay Salzhauer stated he was on the Boys Varsity Tennis Team and he was here to represent the team and the Coach. He read a letter that was submitted to the Board from George Constantino, boys tennis coach. The letter stated he was not in favor of losing 2 tennis courts to pickleball. The tennis teams need the 6 courts to compete and practice.

\*Letter attached

**Larry Palmieri:** Larry Palmieri asked if the school had their own courts on the campus. Years ago, they did, why didn't they have the courts on the school campus?

**Steve White:** Steve White stated he was in favor of keeping the six tennis courts.

**Holly Gregg:** Holly Gregg thanked the Board for listening to the community and making changes to the plan. He is not in favor of losing two tennis courts to pickleball. The Board should look for other solutions for pickleball. Mr. Gregg reviewed the proposed design and asked about the scale of the windows. He would like the windows to give the building an open air feel. He is hoping they would agree to adding rolling garage doors on the west side of the building. Architect Bill Murphy stated having the garage doors on the west side would be difficult due to the slope along the edge of the parking lot.

Holly Gregg stated he had concerns about equipment being stored on site. It looked more like a construction site than a park. He asked if the East wall, where there is storage for mulch and ball mix, could be enclosed. Councilor Alexander stated they could look at enclosing and screening in that area.

**Fran McCormack:** Fran McCormack asked if there was any way they could have 5 tennis courts and 5 pickleball courts instead? Tim Johnson stated this area is designed for the existing lighting and they want to use the same lighting.

**Patience Brewster:** Patience Brewster thanked the Board for all their work on this project and working with the neighbors. She asked what the surface was going to be for the walking track. Chad Rogers stated they are not at that point of the design yet.

**Holly Gregg:** Holly Gregg asked if the pickleball courts could be put where the volleyball courts are. Those courts are never used. Councilor Alexander stated this area was being looked at for something else and would have drainage issues as well.

**Steve Musso:** Steve Musso stated he is the Athletic Director for the Skaneateles Highschool and also a resident. He stated he is an advocate for keeping the 6 tennis courts and the courts need to be lighted. He asked about how the occupancy tax would work. He asked about the size of the turf

area in the Pavilion and what it would be used for. He reviewed his concerns of the garage area being attached to the area that would be having turf and a walking track.

**Kathleen Piper:** Mrs. Piper asked if the Board would consider the neighbors and move the garage to a more commercial area. Tim Johnson stated they did consider other areas in the Park and this was decided to be the most beneficial solution.

**Holly Gregg:** Holly Gregg stated he is in support of the occupancy tax. He asked if this was going to be done with the Village as well. Supervisor Aaron stated yes, the Town and the Village are working on this at the same time.

Supervisor Aaron thanked everyone for coming and giving their input.

Respectfully Submitted,



Julie A. Stenger  
Town Clerk