



Austin Park Project Q & A

I. **Topic: Visual Impact.**

Q1: Can the new windows on the west side (facing Jordan Street) of Austin Arena be larger and be able to open?

A: The Town Board will evaluate whether it would be practical to make the windows on the west side of the Austin Arena larger and capable of being opened.

Q2: Will the Town Board change the style of garage doors on Austin Arena to avoid a “warehouse” style look?

A: Yes. Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and Village (the “MOU”) the Town agreed to reduce the number of garage doors to be located on the northern side of the Austin Arena to no more than three. In addition, the Town agreed that the garage doors will have a more decorative facade in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. The proposed doors will be similar to residential garage doors in terms of style and scale.

Q3: Has the Town Board considered decreasing the amount of Town Parks equipment that will be stored at Austin Arena?

A: Yes. Pursuant to the MOU the Town Board has agreed to erect a Storage Building with dimensions measuring at least 40 feet by 60 feet near the northern property line of Austin Park (the “Storage Building”) for the purpose of storing sand, mulch, wood chips, and ball mix. The Town Board has further agreed to store one pick up truck and multiple trailers at that Storage Building. The remainder of the Park Department’s vehicles will be stored on the south side of Austin Arena and its equipment on the north side of Austin Arena.

Q4: Will there be any vehicles or equipment stored at Austin Arena that does not belong to the Town Parks Department?

A: No. The Town will only use the Austin Arena and the Storage Building to store Town Parks Department vehicles, equipment, and materials that are used in Austin Park. Vehicles and equipment belonging to other Town departments, such as the Highway Department, will not be stored at any location in Austin Park.

Q5: Does the proposed project provide for improved landscaping surrounding Austin Arena?

A: Yes, the proposed project includes new landscaping, particularly on the northern side of Austin Arena, designed provide vegetative screening. The Town's plans also include the installation of major improvements to the drainage surrounding the site that will involve grading and landscaping.

II: Topic: Use of the Austin Arena.

Q6: What measures will the Town take to optimize the use and maintenance of the Austin Arena following the completion of the proposed renovations?

A: The Town Parks Department will continue to oversee the use and maintenance of Austin Park. Reservations for Austin Arena will be managed on the Town's website, similar to how reservations are made now.

Q7: Will the staff at Austin Arena handle questions and monitor usage issues?

A: Yes. The Town Parks Department will continue to oversee the use and maintenance of Austin Park & the Arena . Reservation requests to use Austin Arena will continue to be managed on the Town's website and each reservation will include acceptable terms of use.

Q8: Does the Austin Arena need to have walls.? Can the Town keep Austin Arena as an open structure with no exterior walls?

A: The Town Board elected to enclose Austin Arena with exterior side walls to make the structure more appropriate for use by the community during the winter months and incimate weather. However, the west side will have operable windows or doors and the east side of the building will have many overhead doors that can be opened during good weather to give the arena an open air feel residents desire.

Q9: Does the proposed project designs provide for Austin Arena to be heated?

A: Yes, Austin Arena will be equipped with an HVAC system adequate to allow for the building to be used year round. Temperatures within Austin Arena are intended to be moderated but will not reach normal room temperatures to save on energy costs.

Q10: What will happen to the farmer's market? Can other community events use the Arena once turf grass is installed?

A: The farmer's market will continue without disruption with the added benefit of being able to move inside Austin Arena during times of adverse weather. Other events including, but not limited to the Labor Day Field Days, Rotary Pancake Breakfast, Town recreational programs, and other Skaneateles community organizations will also continue to be allowed to use the Austin Arena. The turf grass will have an alternative covering when in use at events such as Field Days or Rotary Pancake Breakfast.

Q11: Will the Austin Park project make any improvements to Austin Arena kitchen? Will the plan include a food concessions area?

A: Yes, current plans include renovations to the existing kitchen with commercial grade appliances and three commercial sized sinks appropriate for dishwashing. These proposed kitchen upgrades are intended to improve the health, welfare, and quality of communal events at the Austin Arena. The plan does not currently include a permanent food concession stand or window.

Q12: Are there any plans for bathroom renovations at Austin Arena?

A: Yes. Pursuant to the MOU the Town Board has agreed to renovate the bathrooms in the Austin Arena. The new renovated bathrooms will be accessible from both the exterior of the building and the Arena itself. The newly renovated bathrooms will also comply with ADA standards for accessibility. The renovated bathrooms will continue to be in the same general area as they are now in the current Arena.

Q13: Will the Town Parks Department have offices in Austin Arena?

A: Yes, the Town Parks Department will have two (2) offices inside of Austin Arena for use by the Parks Director, Recreation Program Management, and other staff as needed.

Q14: How many employees work for the Town Parks Department? Is office space for these employees really necessary inside of Austin Arena?

A: The Town Parks Department employs three (3) full-time employees and (35-40) seasonal workers. The Town Board has determined that office space is necessary for the Town Parks Department inside of Austin Arena because they will be oversee the community's use of Austin Arena and the maintenance of the park. Town Parks Department employees will need to have offices inside the Arena as the Arena use will be increased upon completion of the renovations.

Q15: Is the Austin Park project contingent on the Town securing ingress and egress access along the northern boundary of Austin Park to access the Storage Building?

A: The Town Board and Village Board shall seek an easement to provide access to the Storage Building from the Community Center using an existing driveway. In the alternative, access could be provided across Town owned land.

III. Topic: Park Equipment.

Q16: Have you considered approaching the American Legion to lease or purchase land on their property either to the north of the baseball fields or in some other area?

A: The Town Board has undergone exhaustive efforts analyzing alternative sites to store the Town Parks Department equipment, and has concluded that the Austin Arena is the site that best fits the Town's needs. The Town does not intend to purchase or lease land from the American Legion.

Q17: Where will Town Parks Department equipment be stored in the future and where is it stored now? Why do trucks need to be stored in the Arena building at all?

A: The Town Parks Department will store three (3) pick-up trucks on the south side of Austin Arena when not in use and one (1) truck, trailers, and materials in the Storage Building that will be constructed on the north side of Austin Park. The remainder of the Town Parks Department equipment, including items to be used inside the Arena (e.g. the turf cover), will be stored on the north side of Austin Pavilion. All of the above referenced equipment is currently stored in the park. Pick-up trucks are necessary in order to maintain the park. Ideally, the parks department employees should work in the same building where management has its offices in order to maximize efficiency and facilitate supervision.

Q18: Does the storage of Town Parks Department equipment inside of the Austin Arena violate OSHA or provide any other environmental concerns?

A: No. The Austin Arena remains subject to all regulations including, but not limited to, OSHA, environmental, and State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Codes. The Austin Arena will also be ADA compliant.

IV. Topic: Safety and Security.

Q19: An alternative location for "all" of the [Park's] equipment is still next to the Community Center, if the safety issue of Park's traffic traveling back and forth on their driveway can be solved. Have you considered the lawn equipment having a separate path from the structure into the park area so they don't have to use the

driveway (possibly out through/near the Legion land)? Have you considered speed bumps and new crosswalks?

A: The Town Board has determined that the safest location for park maintenance equipment is on the north side of the Austin Arena because it provides direct access to the areas that must be maintained and is not located in an area with high levels of pedestrian traffic. Trucks will not be stored on the north side of the Arena and will instead access the garage on the sound side of the Arena using the existing driveways and parking lot to the south of the Arena. The Storage Building is located in an area with high pedestrian traffic levels, thus, only equipment that is not used during peak park hours will be stored in that location. Safety remains the Town Board's top priority, and we will continue to keep the safety of our residents at the forefront during this entire process. The Town Board is currently in consultation with its engineers and architects to determined whether speed bumps and/or new crosswalks are recommended.

Q20: Security considerations. How will security considerations be handled? Will there be security cameras and/or monitoring?

A: Austin Park is currently monitored by security cameras. The Town Board will consider whether additional cameras will need to be installed in the Austin Arena in order to provide a safe and secure environment for the community.

V. Topic: Cost.

Q21: Any information on the potential cost of the Pavilion renovations and other work within the park at this time?

A: Until the plan is finalized, the Town cannot accurately estimate the total cost of the Project. The Town Board remains cognizant of cost and is diligently working to offset these costs through the following possible funding sources:

ARPA Funds	Approximately \$400,000
Sale of Fennell Street Property	Approximately \$413,000
Existing Town Budgeted Funds (Park Reserves)	Approximately \$300,000
5% Occupancy Tax Revenue	Estimated Revenue of \$300,000/year
Donations	TBD
Federal, State, or Local Grants	TBD
Municipal Bond	TBD

Since the Town took ownership of the park the Town has spent approximately \$163,586 on renovations to the existing locker rooms in the Arena, \$89,000 (County Grant Funded) on a new walking path, \$442,295 (County Grant Partially Funded) to construct the new bathrooms in upper Austin Park, \$24,923 on roof repair to arena, \$48,069 (Grant Funded) on security cameras, approx. \$25,000 on new signage for the park, approx. \$345,000 on fees related to work done on the master plan for the park which includes new pickle-ball court designs, new tennis court design, updated basketball courts, multiple versions of proposed arena renovations, new storage building in upper Austin Park, feasibility studies, community outreach & administration, building assessment, surveys, environmental review, design development, engineering new mechanical electrical & plumbing systems, cost estimates, construction documents, bid & construction administrative services of the current proposed park upgrades.

Q22: How will the upkeep, daily housekeeping and maintenance be handled and paid for?

A: The Town Parks Department will oversee the upkeep, daily housekeeping, and maintenance of the Austin Arena. The costs of these activities will be accounted for in the annual Parks Department budget, and the costs will be offset in part through reasonable rental charges for events taking place at the Austin Arena.

VI. Topic: Process.

Q23: Why is the June proposal vastly different from the previous proposal?

A: The modifications to the Austin Park project are a result of design updates driven from public comment and collaboration between the Town Board and Village Board. The Town Board and Village Board worked together over a six month period to address as many public concerns as possible into the revised plan.

Q24: Why did the Town Board not go back to the Village Planning Board with this revised proposal?

A: The Town Board and Village Board determined that direct communication between the two elected boards was the optimal process for designing this project.

Q25: Why did the Town Board declare itself immune from the Village's Planning Board process?

A: The declaration of immunity from local zoning laws was necessary to facilitate the process of negotiation between the Town Board and Village Board.

Q26: Is the storage of Town Park equipment in Austin Arena considered an alienation of public parkland?

A: No. New York State law and case precedent states that park use may include storage of vehicles and equipment that are used to care and maintain the park and offices that oversee operations and use of the park.

Q27: How do we know the Town Board will not unilaterally alter its plans?

A: The Town Board and Village Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding that provides that the Town's assertion of immunity shall not apply to any other future project at Austin Park that is not described in the Memorandum of Understanding. Put differently, the assertion of immunity made by the Town only applies to the park renovation plans submitted to the Village, as modified by the MOU. Any future changes to the MOU would have to be mutually agreed upon by the Town Board and the Village Board.

Q28: Is the Town subject to the Village's zoning and land use laws.

A: Generally, the Town is subject to the Village's zoning and land use laws. Any future project proposed by the Town unrelated to the present project may be undertaken by either a new assertion of immunity for that specific project or the conventional Village approval process. The process for securing approvals for the new bathroom building in upper Austin Park is an example of the Town following the Village's conventional approval process.

Q29: Whether the Project goes forward should be subject to a mandatory referendum.

A: The decision of the Town Board and Village Board to enter into an agreement concerning improvements to Austin Park is not an appropriate subject for a mandatory referendum pursuant to New York State law. The Town Law and General Municipal Law state what kind of ballot propositions are available for a mandatory referendum. A mandatory referendum is a ballot proposition presented to the voters of the Town to decide an issue of policy, rather than being decided by a vote conducted by the elected board.