

Special Town Meeting November 30, 2011

The Special Town Meeting was called to order by the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, in the Town Hall Large Conference Room at 7:30 P.M.

Mr. Marconi announced that the first item on the agenda was to consider and act upon the proposal to purchase 25.8 acres on Old Stagecoach Rd. for the purpose of open space, and the second item was to consider act upon tax abatements for Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals Inc. (See legal notice on page 368).

Mr. Marconi stated that the first item of business was to elect a Moderator. Di Masters moved, John Katz seconded to appoint Sharon Dornfeld as Moderator.

**Vote: “Aye” votes unanimous, and Mrs. Dornfeld was elected Moderator.**

Mrs. Dornfeld asked for a motion to waive the reading of the legal notice. John Katz moved, Dom D’Addario seconded to waive the reading.

**Vote: “Aye” votes unanimous, and the reading was waived.**

Mr. Marconi raised a point of order that Barbara Serfilippi be recognized as secretary of the meeting.

The Moderator then brought up the first item, the purchase of 25.8 acres on Old Stagecoach Rd. Mr. Marconi commented that there were changes to be made by Dr. Ben Oko, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, before a motion was addressed. Dr. Oko informed the audience that there could not be a vote tonight, because there was no contract to execute on the matter, due to the fact that there were many details to work out. He thought that a vote would be taken tonight, but the biggest problem is that the neighbors committed to making contributions, are depending on getting assurance from the bank that they won’t put a cell tower on their property. He assumed that it would be worked out by now, but there was unfinished business between the bank and the seller. The bank was meeting with the seller on Friday, and then meeting with the Conservation Commission. A lengthy discussion followed on the situation, and the possibility of having a vote on December 14<sup>th</sup>. It was decided that the Board of Selectmen would have to set a date for the required town meeting to vote on the purchase.

Chief John Roche moved, and it was seconded to postpone this first item on the agenda and remand the item to the Board of Selectmen for consideration and deliberation.

**Vote: “Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.**

The Moderator then proceeded to the second item on the agenda, tax abatements to Boehringer Ingelheim. She stated that the Board of Selectmen had already considered this and recommends town approval for the abatements. There are five different items. (See chart at end of minutes.)

John Katz made a motion to approve the request, and it was seconded. The Moderator asked for discussion.

The First Selectman asked Al Garzi, Assessor, to explain the request. Mr. Garzi explained that at present, Boehringer pays approximately \$4.5 million in property taxes. It is estimated that they have 900,000 sq. ft. of office space. At present they have three developments that have abatements on them, and the approved abatements cost us \$679,000, which have nothing to do with the \$4.5 million they pay us. (See attached chart) We collect \$290,000 on the three abatements. All the abatements run seven years by law. On the abatements, the town collects \$.15 on the dollar. He added that right now there are five proposals, totaling \$1.1 million dollars in abatements. The Town would be collecting \$300,000 on the total five projects. (See attached chart) When the CO is completed on the projects, the Town will start collecting the \$.15 on the dollar. The Town collects all tax monies as the building goes on up to the assessment date. The ordinance requires that the company has to have a presence in town and must have at least 500,000 sq. ft of office space existing in town to qualify. They have to spend at least \$75 million in real estate construction and \$50 million in personal property. The ordinance was approved by the voters in 2007.

The First Selectman gave a brief history of the abatement process. This project was a \$382 million expansion of the present campus. Prior to Boehringer voting on the present abatement, they came to the Town and said they were looking at three locations, Ridgefield, Ohio, and Virginia, and they had to take advantage of all tax incentives available, and the only one available by statute was the tax abatement. The Town negotiated that with them, and they went ahead and are building about \$382 million, a combination of real estate and personal property. At the end of the abatements, the Town will about double its tax revenue from them.

Mr. Marconi informed the audience that what originally started it was the approval by the Town Meeting to support the tax abatement program for Boehringer Ingelheim to move forward with the building. When the Town approved it, there were milestones in it to bring it back to the Town Meeting so people understand where they are at, what the progress is, and approve going forward. Boehringer Ingelheim is meeting the parameters of the ordinance, and tonight is to give people an update on the project.

The Moderator called for a vote.

**Vote: "Aye" votes unanimous, and the abatements for the Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc program was approved.**

The Moderator called for a motion to adjourn. John Katz moved, and it was seconded to adjourn the meeting.

**Vote: "Aye" votes unanimous, and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk

