

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
MIDDLETON GOLF COURSE
MARCH 19, 2019 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Q. Can you summarize what is being proposed?

A. The Town of Middleton has the opportunity to purchase the Middleton Golf Course (MGC) at 105 South Main Street (Route 114). The Town needs land on which to construct a new Fire Station and other municipal buildings. The MGC is an ideal location and size.

Q. When is this going to happen?

A. There is a Special Town Meeting on March 19, 2019 to ask for \$3.8 million to acquire the property. If Town Meeting votes in favor we will close on the property this year. Town Meeting will also be asked to appropriate \$325,000 to undertake a master development plan to ensure the efficient use of the property and efficient layout of buildings on the property.

Q. Does the majority rule?

A. No, because we are asking to borrow money these votes require a 2/3 majority to pass rather than a simple majority.

Q. What happens to the rest of the property?

A. The owners of MGC requested and the Town agreed that the balance of the property would be kept as open space. The Town will commit to keeping it as open space and mowing it in order to keep it from becoming forest.

Q. Where will the buildings be located?

A. The Town buildings will be situated toward the front of the property along Route 114. We are asking Town Meeting for funds to undertake a master development plan of the property so we lay out the buildings in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible

Q. How close will the buildings be to abutting residential properties?

A. In the R1a zoning district, the zoning bylaw requires that buildings be set back 15 feet from the property line. However, in the agreement with the owners the Town committed to a 100 foot setback along all residential properties.

Q. How much will it cost and how do we pay for it?

A. The acquisition cost is \$3.8 million. We will borrow to pay for it and pay it back over 30 years

Q. How much will it cost me?

A. The debt service (principal and interest) on the land and the study will average about \$250,000 per year;

- the highest debt service payment is estimated at \$308,000 in year 3 of the borrowing (currently projected to be FY22); after that the debt service declines each year
- Estimated property tax rate impact: \$0.13/\$1,000 of valuation
- Average single family home valued at \$608,174: \$79/year

Q. Will there be a Proposition 2 ½ override vote?

A. We expect to hold a debt exclusion override vote in 2020 when we ask for funds to construct the Fire Station. The land costs will be rolled into the debt exclusion for the Fire Station project.

Q. When do we build the Fire Station?

A. The tentative timeline under a best case scenario:

- March 19, 2019: funding for acquisition and master development study
- Fall 2019 STM: funding for Fire Station design
- Fall 2020 STM: funding for construction
- 2022: Fire Station opens

Q. When do we build the other buildings?

- A. We are planning to construct the buildings one at a time. We will not start the second building until the first one is finished.
- Q. If we vote YES on March 19, 2019, are we committing to all the buildings?
 - A. No, you are only committing to the purchase of the land and the master facilities study. Each building project will have a separate Town Meeting approval and each will probably require two Town Meeting votes (one for design and one for construction).
- Q. Isn't there a cheaper alternative?
 - A. No. The Fire Station, Senior Center, Police Station, and Memorial Hall all need attention and we cannot ignore it. The best we can hope for is that a suitable building becomes available that could accommodate the Community Center/Council on Aging or the Town Offices. It would be less costly for us to buy an existing building than to build new. But suitable buildings are not readily available.
- Q. Why don't we just rehab the existing Fire Station and build a second station on land the Town already owns on Locust Street?
 - A. Running two stations requires more staffing which increases our personnel costs. Running two stations increases other costs like heat, electricity, and other utilities. Running two stations also drives up our capital expenses because of the cost to rehab the existing station and build a second one. And running two stations requires more equipment than running just one station.
- Q. Why doesn't the Town take over the property and run the golf course?
 - A. The course has not been very profitable and we do not believe we could cover our debt service (principal and interest) with the income it generates. More importantly, we do not need a golf course. A golf course would be a nice amenity, but it is not a necessity. It is more important that we address our public facilities.

Q. What if Town Meeting says NO to the purchase of the property?

A. The Fire Station would probably drop down to 2nd or 3rd on the priority list. The most likely scenario is that the Town would pursue a new location for the offices that currently are housed in Memorial Hall. Once Memorial Hall is vacated funds would be sought to design and build a Fire Station at 48 South Main Street. This would result in demolition of Memorial Hall.

Q. Will there be a road connecting South Main Street and Boston Street?

A. No, the Town is not contemplating a connection between South Main Street and Boston Street.

Q. How will the Town maintain the property?

A. The Board of Selectmen recently decided to contract out the maintenance of the property to a private vendor.

Q. If I cannot attend the Special Town Meeting on March 19 can I vote absentee or by proxy?

A. No. Town Meeting is the Town's legislative body and you have to be physically present in order to vote.