



TOWN COUNCIL – AGENDA REQUEST FORM

THIS FORM WILL BECOME PART OF THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION USED BY THE COUNCIL AND PUBLIC

Please submit Agenda Request Form, **including back up information**, 8 days prior to the requested meeting date. **Public Hearing requests must be submitted 20 days prior to requested meeting date to meet publication deadlines** (exceptions may be authorized by the Town Manager, Chairman/Vice Chair).

MEETING INFORMATION

Date Submitted: November 14, 2019

Date of Meeting: November 21, 2019

Submitted by: Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius & PW Deputy Director/Town Engineer Dawn Tuomala

Department: Parks and Recreation / Public Works

Time Required: 25 minutes

Speakers: Matthew Casparius & Dawn Tuomala

Background Info. Supplied: Yes: No:

CATEGORY OF BUSINESS (PLEASE PLACE AN "X" IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX)

Appointment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognition/Resignation/Retirement:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Hearing:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Old Business:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
New Business:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consent Agenda:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nonpublic:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>

TITLE OF ITEM

Wasserman Park Beachfront Update

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM

Town Council to be presented with an update on the status of the Wasserman Park beachfront.

REFERENCE (IF KNOWN)

RSA:	Warrant Article:	_____
Charter Article:	Town Meeting:	_____
Other:	N/A	

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED (PLEASE PLACE AN "X" IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX)

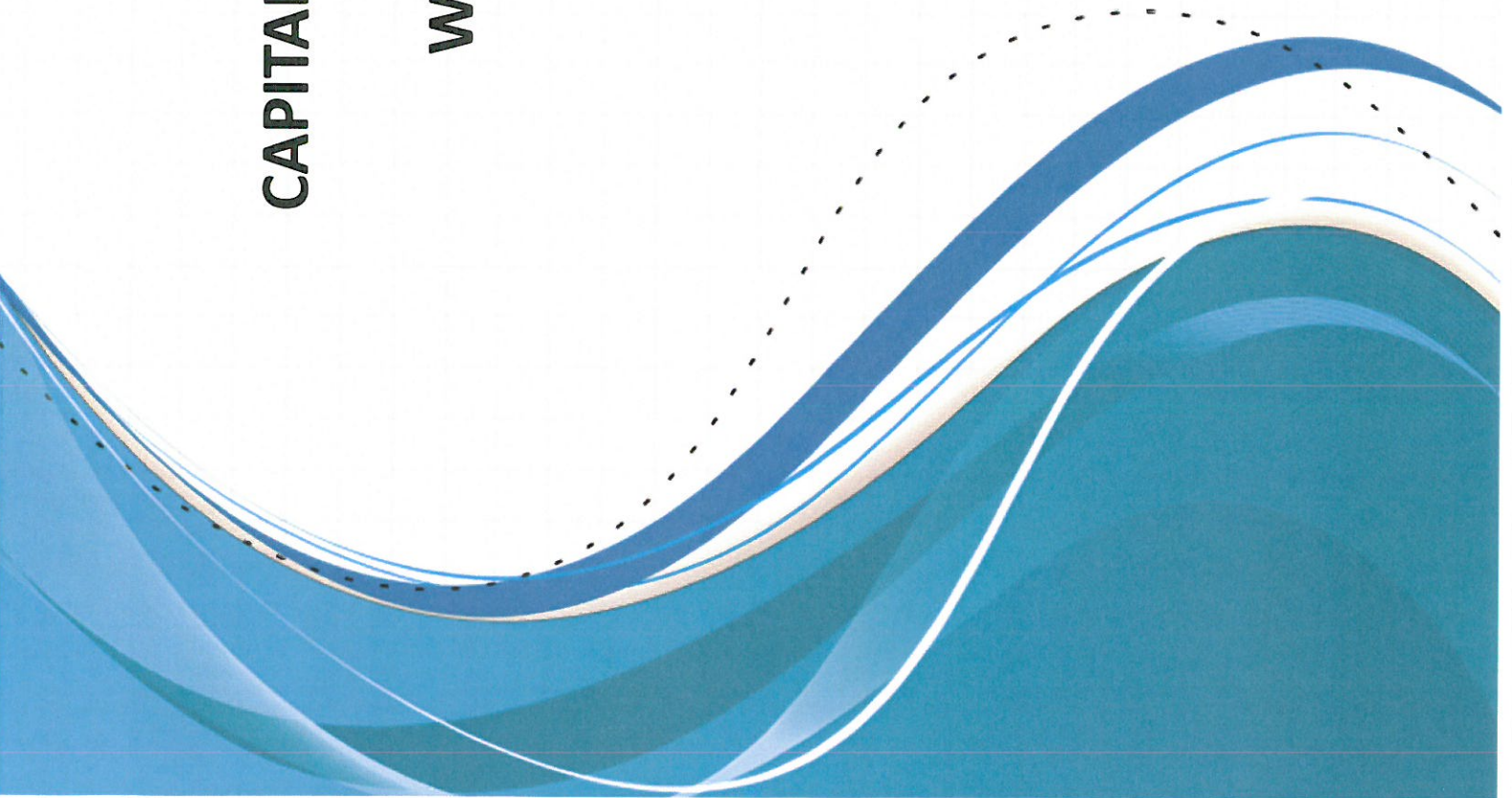
Projector:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grant Requirements:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easel:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joint Meeting:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special Seating:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laptop:	<input type="checkbox"/>	None:	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name:	Matthew Casparius	Address:	116 Naticook Road
Phone Number:	882-1046	Email Address:	mcasparius@merrimacknh.gov

APPROVAL

Town Manager: Yes No: Chair/Vice Chair: Yes No:



**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PROPOSAL
WASSERMAN PARK
WATERFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

Matthew Casparius, CPRE
Director of Parks & Recreation

Waterfront Reconstruction Project Shoreline View

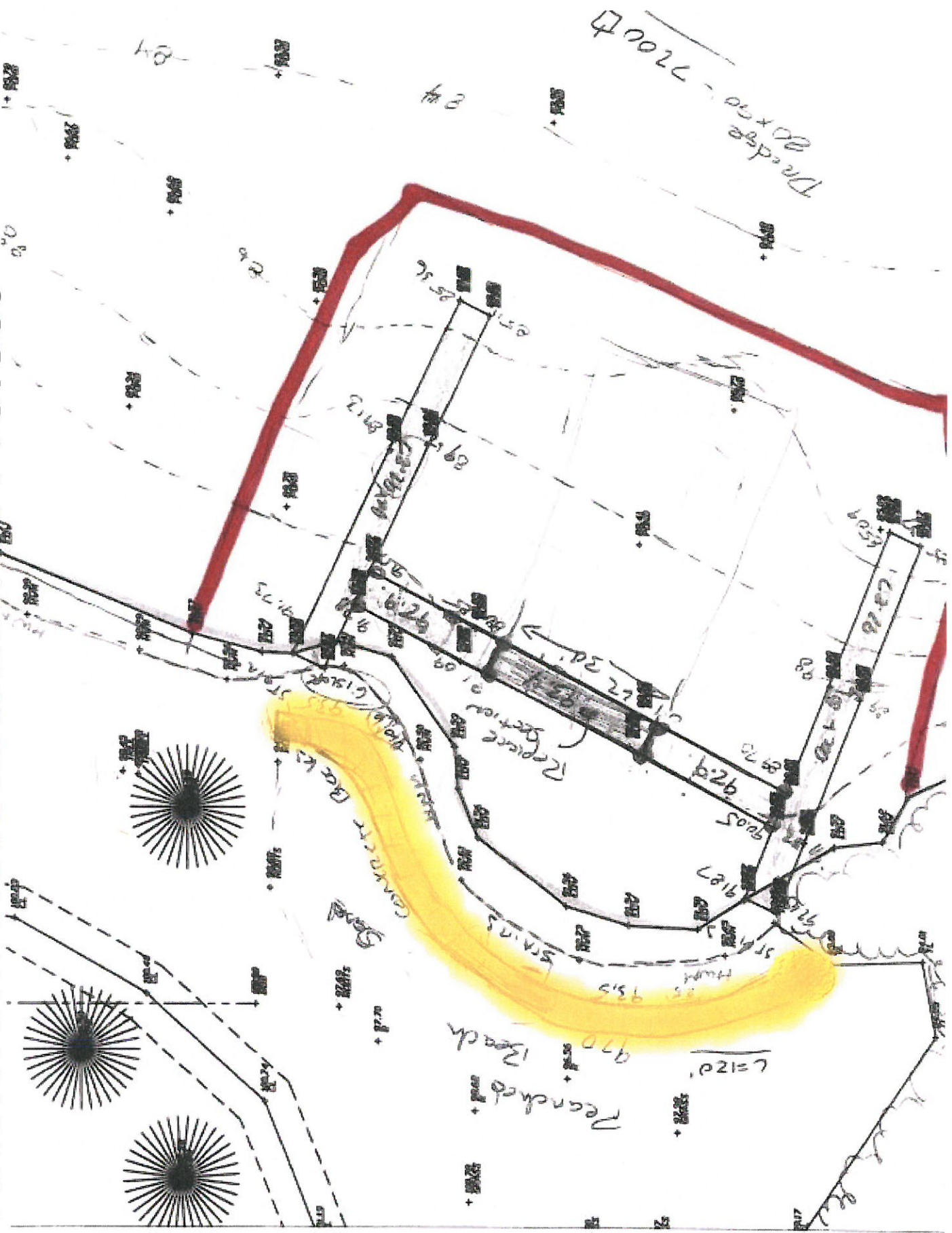


Waterfront Reconstruction Project

Shoreline View – front of docks



Waterfront Reconstruction Project

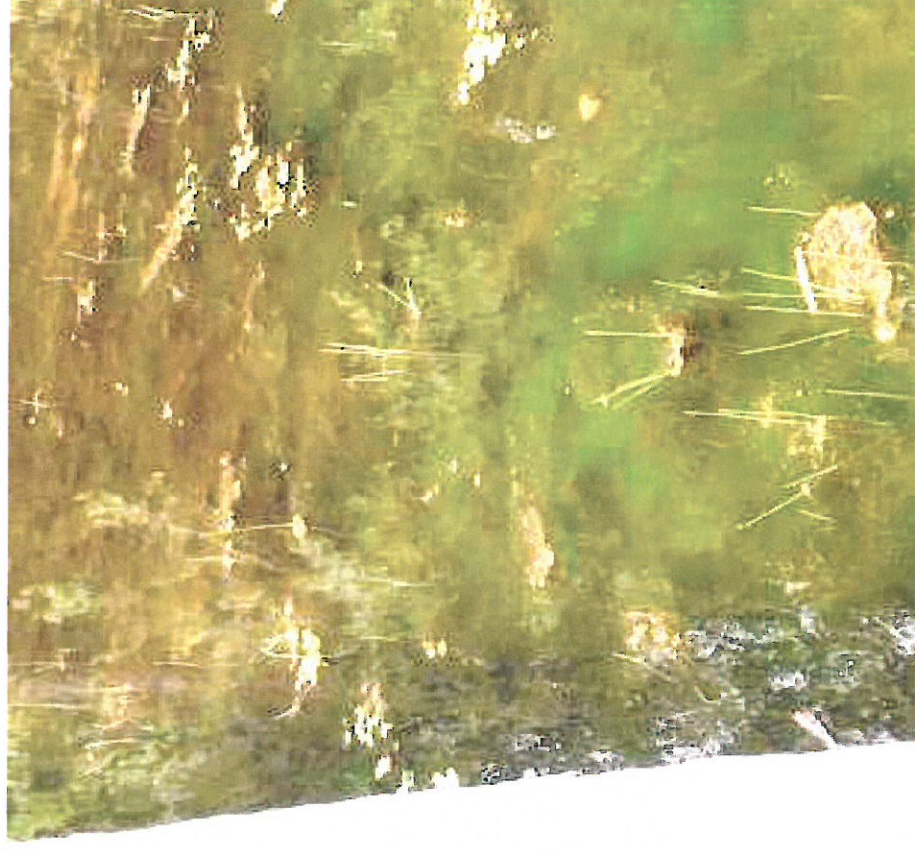
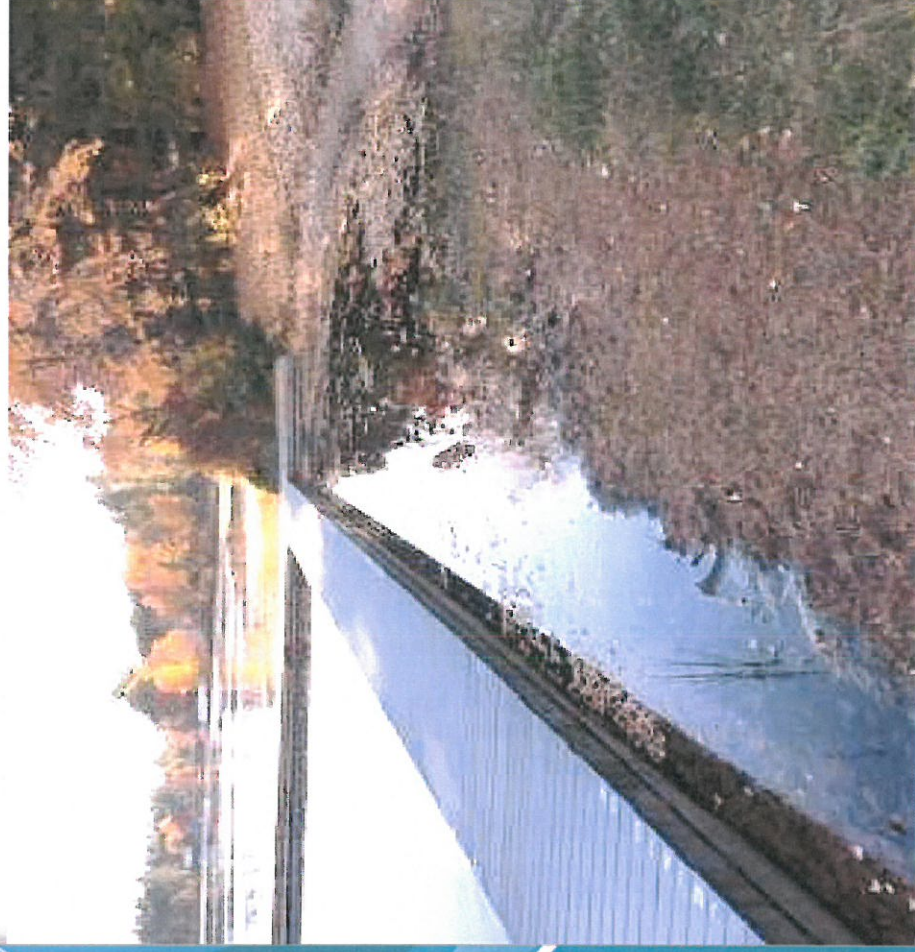


Waterfront Reconstruction Project Proposal to Establish a Perched Beach



Waterfront Reconstruction Project

Front section of the water



Frequently asked questions?

Why do we need to undertake this project at all?

The Parks & Recreation Department exists to provide quality recreational programs and events along with safe and well maintained recreational facilities. Our waterfront has significant erosion and safety issues that are deterring residents from using it. Without this projects, the conditions will only continue to deteriorate.

Is there any way to do this project without removing the large pine tree and root system?

We believe this is the most cost effective solution to this problem. As was mentioned in an earlier slide, the State of NH would only allow us to add 10 yards of sand 1x every 6 years but only if we could prevent it from going in the lake (which we can't and we would need 80 yards of sand to sufficiently cover the root system).

The pine trees are obviously no longer holding the embankment in place anymore. The idea was suggested to create a boardwalk system over the root system. We do not think this would be a viable option as the embankment is going to continue to deteriorate under any boardwalk which would expose event more tree roots and eventually would cause upheaval of the boardwalk. In addition, in order to cover all the tree roots, we would need to cover a large portion of the beach which would be expensive to build and even more expensive to try and maintain.

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In 2018, the department offered 186 different programs, activities, and special events. This number is down slightly from the year before in part due to the departure of the department Coordinator and the position being filled at the end of the summer.

Aside from the growing popularity of the programs, they are seeing record attendance at some of the special events (upwards of 800-1000 attendees).

The budget has very few changes. It is broken into two components; taxpayer funded and the Recreation Revolving Fund. On the taxpayer side, 01-13-8504-0 Office Equipment, has been zeroed out. The line is related to the registration software used to manage and maintain all programs, facilities, rentals, etc. The allocation moved from the taxpayer side and put in the programming side (revolving fund) so that the programs are paying for that software.

There are two large projects under 01-13-8505-0 Infrastructure. A PowerPoint presentation was provided (can be viewed [here](#)).

Councilor Healey questioned if Watson Park is included under 01-13-8321-0 Maintenance-Buildings, and was told that is covered within the Public Works budget.

Councilor Boyd spoke of the skatepark ramp questioning if the allocation is tentative for the current location, and was informed that is the case. Asked if the Skatelite material would be enough to improve the ramps and maintain the level of safety, Director Casparius stated it would. Fourteen panels were done at the end of this summer as a result of the conversations with the School District. He is hopeful that will be sufficient until almost into FY21.

Asked, Director Casparius stated his belief this is the 4th year without the monitor. Asked if there has been any uptick in problematic activity, he responded he does not believe there to have been. He can only think of 1 or 2 cases of more significant vandalism, but even that is less common.

Director Casparius addressed the waterfront reconstruction project at Watson Park. The waterfront area is the only official swimming area in the Town. Significant erosion has occurred over the years. In addition to the aesthetics of the beach, the exposed tree root system from the two giant pine trees that are in the middle of the beach, have created significant safety hazards.

The proposal looks to solve the erosion issues as well as address the safety issue while providing better recreational access to the lake. Prior to 2015, approx. 30 people/day (weekends) were using the area. In 2015 the new parking lot was put in. Since that time use has increased tremendously (averaging 100/day on weekends). On weekdays there are about 200/day (includes campers). Many residents have stated they don't come to the beach because of the existing conditions. A lot of residents choose to go to Baboosic Lake in Amherst and pay a fee to get in. Amherst doesn't allow non-residents on weekends or holidays.

To address the issue of erosion, the proposal would remove the two pine trees. A grass line swale would be established across the back side of the beach, which will help divert erosion coming down the hill away from the waterfront. From there they establish a perched beach (depicted in photo). A perched beach is a retaining wall followed by a smooth and flat section of sand followed by another retaining wall. By the time you get to the water's edge you have a flat transition into the water. Each

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of those sections of retaining wall prevent anything from coming down the hill; if the swale doesn't stop it, the retaining wall does. Once the beach is established, they would reintroduce its 80 cubic yards of sand to complete the land portion of the project.

The front section of beach used to be a nice wading area. Markings on the dock indicate the water level used to be 2'. Over the past few years it has dropped down to about 1', and in this case it is down to about 3" by the time we get to the end of the summer. What little water there is sits on top of several inches of mud/muck.

The water portion of the project is dealing with the existing conditions of the lake itself; trying to bring it back to what it used to be. A temporary cofferdam would be installed (80' x 90'). The waterfront is placed in dry dock temporarily. An excavator is brought in and the mud, organics, etc. that have accumulated over the years are dredged out (materials taken offsite) returning the area to good clean beach water conditions. Once that has completed, the cofferdam is removed, the water comes back in, and the beach is fully restored. Cost estimates are \$92,025.00.

Director Casparius addressed questions he believed would be asked. Regarding why the project needs to be done, he noted existing conditions, residents going elsewhere, erosion and safety concerns. The State allows the addition of 10 yards of sand every six years. The problem is in order to obtain the permit to do that you have to guarantee that 10 yards of sand won't wash into the lake. Even if you could prevent the erosion, current conditions require 80 yards of sand.

Considering breaking down the project into phases to reduce the cost in the FY20 budget, he indicated the land-based portion of the project could be done to address erosion and safety issues caused by the runoff and tree roots, but the State won't provide a permit to dredge the lake unless we have dealt with the erosion. We can't clean up the lake unless we fix the land. We could, in theory, just do the land-based portion if money was an issue.

If separating out the dredging portion, cost estimate is \$70,125. If choosing to do the dredging phase later, the cost would be \$34,870 as you would have to add back in mobilization costs, etc. The result would be an approximate \$12,000 additional cost to the total project.

Councilor Thornton questioned the depth of the water off the dock, and was told if kids are jumping off the section that goes across the middle of the H dock, and into deeper water, it is about 5'. After the dredging, the depth would be approx. 8'.

Were the project approved, work would begin with the Public Works Department (PWD) and the permitting process with the idea of going out for bids to begin work in the summer and get it done in the fall to be ready for the summer of 2020.

Vice Chairman Koenig noted existing condition is not shown. The photos of the tree and beach don't really show where the sand beach is in front of the water to the docks. He questioned where the trees are coming from. Director Casparius stated they are at the end of the yellow mark in the diagram provided. There are two sections of the beach; directly in front of the H dock (to the right of the tree) and the open water area, which is still roped off for swimming, is to the left side of the beach. The erosion problems are centered more on the right-hand side of the tree, but the roots extend out. Asked if the wooden fence prohibits access from other areas, Director Casparius stated the fence was put in

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temporarily to keep users away from the worst part of the roots. There is still access off to the right-hand side.

Vice Chairman Koenig recalled conversations last year or the year prior regarding replacing the dock. Director Casparius stated that has not yet occurred; pushed out a few years. It is being fixed on a regular basis as necessary. The desire is to deal with these aspects first.

Vice Chairman Koenig questioned the cost of replacing the dock, and was told last year they realized the estimates were off. To replace all three sections of the dock is approx. \$40,000. Vice Chairman Koenig stated his surprise as he was not aware this would come forward. He agrees it needs to be done. He does not believe there to be enough information provided identifying current conditions and proposed outcome.

Councilor Albert commented on this having been removed from the budget last year. He has visited the area, and is aware of the need. He believes there to be enough information provided and supports the project. He stated concern with liability.

Councilor Healey questioned if non-residents are seen using the area during the summer. Director Casparius stated that is not really seen, however, noted, technically they are not allowed to ask according to direction received from the Police Department. The Police have said they do not have the right to ask unless they have probable cause. Police do patrol the area and do look for stickers, etc. Chairman Rothhaus stated the comment from the Police Department to be interesting noting that is done at the landfill. Councilors Boyd and Harrington both commented on that being news to them. Councilor Boyd stated the area is for residents only. He would expect the Police Department to be validating users. Councilor Healy remarked especially with the issues at Watson Park regarding residents of other towns and state using that facility.

Councilor Albert stated uniformed police officers must have a reason to approach individuals. It may be different for staff than it is for law enforcement. Chairman Rothhaus stated agreement; he would not want the Police Department doing that. Councilor Harrington noted the area is posted for residents only. She spoke of a section of Wasserman Park that was purchased with the use of Federal Funds, which prohibits the restriction (trails not beach).

Town Manager Cabanel stated her understanding the parking lot put in where the function hall was, is meant for residents only.

Director Casparius noted the parking lot is well signed for residents only. The Police do come through periodically and will issue tickets. If staff witnesses a vehicle without a sticker a notice will be put on the car noting the absence of a sticker. That is all staff can do. For the few times they have had bigger issues they called the Police and let them address it.

Councilor Boyd questioned who is responsible for enforcing the rules in all Town parks, and was told it is the Police Department. He remarked if it is their responsibility to enforce the rules why are they not allowed to monitor whether a person is a resident. Councilor Albert stated they can walk up to a person and engage in a conversation, but can't walk up and ask for identification for no general purpose just to say I'm checking your ID to see if you should be in this park. Asked how it is

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unreasonable, Councilor Albert stated it is against the law. It violates Constitutional rights. Chairman Rothhaus remarked it is the thought they are guilty before any evidence of anything is there.

Vice Chairman Koenig questioned if the work related to the dredging portion is contracted out at the \$35,000 estimate, and was informed it is. Asked if cofferdams are required, Director Casparius responded, according to the Town Engineer, they are.

Under 01-13-8505-0 Infrastructure, the MYA cabin has an associated cost of \$8,000. The \$8,000 was allocated a year ago to either repair or tear down the old MYA cabin, which has been sitting vacant for about 10 years. The project went out to bid last year, and prices came in closer to \$15,000. Right around that same time issues arose with the floor in the function hall. The previously approved funds were utilized to address that. The request for funds to tear down the last cabin is now being made again.

Councilor Albert questioned if the cabin has running water and electricity, and was told it has electricity although the wiring is 30 years old and completely out of date. Councilor Albert questioned why the PWD couldn't demolish the structure. Director Casparius stated the cost to be based on experience with demolishing other cabins in the park. The cost includes disposal.

Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali noted the foundation is half cinder block/half stone. There could be other issues related to the age of the cabin, e.g., asbestos, lead paint. The cost provided is not a lot of money to have a contractor come in. The materials are loaded in Town vehicles and taken to the landfill, etc. It is the other issues that are unknown; lead, asbestos, disposing of the foundation, capping the sewer, water and electricity.

Councilor Boyd questioned if the Fire Department could do a controlled burn, and was told that was looked at with one of the other cabins and they could not do it because of the number of fire hydrants. That could be looked at again. There is still the need to review the possibility of lead, asbestos, etc.

Vice Chairman Koenig questioned the MYA budget. He noted the increase in the budget, and asked for clarification.

Councilor Thornton noted the only increase to be in the area of soccer. For the past two years soccer did not take funding from the Town as they had ample funding in their bank account.

Brian Harris, President, Merrimack Youth Association (MYA), stated soccer made a request for \$12,000 which was cut back to \$8,000. They are asking for several things this year, e.g., training for kids on both recreation and travel teams. New soccer rules coming up this year require them to change about 7 sets of nets each having a cost of approx. \$5,000.

Recreation soccer currently costs \$65/participant, and the desire is to keep that cost from increasing.

Town Manager Cabanel noted gross expenditures are listed as well as revenue received. Their budget is \$507,691 and their revenues \$435,595 resulting in a net cost of \$72,096 to the Town.

Holly Golden, Treasurer, MYA, spoke of the implementation of a winter league that has not been added to the budget. The hope is that it goes well. If that is the case, they will have to increase fees