

Meeting: May 30, 2012

Town Hall Office

WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

**Board Members Present:**

Elaine Whitney            Secretary  
Mark Mathias

**Administrators Present:**

Elliott Landon            Superintendent of Schools  
Nancy Harris             Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Sandra Evangelista      Coordinator for Transportation

**CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** 1:05 p.m. in Room 307, Town Hall Office

**Special Meeting: BOE Bus Parking Subcommittee Work Session**

Elaine Whitney and Mark Mathias were joined by the following: Elliott Landon, Nancy Harris, Sandra Evangelista, Phil Johnson, VP Operations DATTCO; Larry Bradley, Director, Planning & Zoning; Michael Galante, Frederick P. Clark Associates; Richard Redniss, Redniss & Mead; Michael Rea, Board of Finance; Allen Bomes, Representative Town Meeting

**DISCUSSION:** Traffic Management, Land Use, and Other Considerations for Parking School Buses Used by THE BOE at the Following Potential Locations: Baron's South, Longshore, Compo Beach, and Staples High School.

No action was taken.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Whitney, Secretary  
(Minutes written by Lisa Marriott)

To: Westport Board of Education  
From: BOE Bus Parking Subcommittee: Mark Mathias and Elaine Whitney  
Subject : **Bus Parking Subcommittee Status Report**  
Date: June 11, 2012

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This memo provides a brief update on the work of the Bus Parking Subcommittee. At our Board of Education meeting on June 11, 2012, we will announce highlights from this report.

## **Key Findings from Special Meeting on May 30, 2012**

### **Summary**

- **Baron's South appears to be the best option among town-owned sites.** The operational feasibility and traffic impact of using this site for parking our school buses would be comparable to that of the current site;
- Alternative town-owned sites which had still been under consideration based on initial analyses were deemed **not viable**; and
- Two state-owned sites remain very attractive as alternatives based on operational and traffic considerations. However, the state has denied the town the use of either parcel, so they have been deemed **not viable**.

### **Detailed Findings**

1) **The operational feasibility of using Baron's South would be comparable to that of the current site.**

However, to achieve this:

- a) zoning approval would be required; and
- b) some initial capital costs would be incurred. The capital costs would involve site work, including regrading, installation of a diesel fuel tank and construction of a facility for dispatch and basic bus maintenance.

2) **The traffic impact of using the Baron's South site would be comparable to that of using the existing site**, even without a traffic light at the new location, as long as our buses did not turn left out of or into the parking lot except for the early morning exit. And an analysis of our bus routings indicated that meeting this condition would be **quite feasible** (see details in #3 and #4 below).

3) Three of the four entrances/exits would not negatively impact traffic in any significant way as they are currently configured:

a) the early morning exit (approximately 6:15-6:45 a.m.) does involve both right and left turns, but the traffic volumes at this time are very low, and the traffic consultant assessed the impact of left turns on traffic patterns at this time to be minimal; and

b) the morning entrance (approximately 8:30-9:00 a.m.) and the afternoon entrance (approximately 3:45-4:15 p.m.) are both already configured to utilize only right turns by our buses to limit any negative impact on traffic patterns.

4) The fourth entrance/exit, the early afternoon exit (approximately 1:45-2:15 p.m.), is currently configured to utilize some left turns out of the lot. However, our Director of Transportation and Assistant Superintendent for Business confirmed that it would be quite feasible to reconfigure our routings to eliminate left turns at this time. This is feasible in part because all of the buses leaving the lot in this time frame are heading to either Staples High School, Coleytown Middle School, or Bedford Middle School; further, all three of these sites are located to the east of the proposed site, and there are multiple major roads which could readily handle the additional volume of the relatively few buses which currently turn left out of the lot at that time.

5) **Alternative town-owned sites** which had still been under consideration based on initial analyses were deemed **NOT VIABLE**. These were the:

- 1) **Staples High School** parking lot;
- 2) North parking lot at **Compo Beach**; and
- 3) **Longshore Club Park**.

For all three of the above sites, the major factors driving this determination were:

- a) not currently zoned for either fueling or maintenance functions, and also highly unlikely to be approvable for such functions, thus significantly reducing the economic benefit of parking the buses at these sites; and
- b) likely to negatively impact multiple neighborhoods in terms of traffic and/or noise levels and thus highly unlikely to be approvable for such use.

In addition, using the Staples High School parking lot would entail substantial logistical complications, and using either Compo Beach or Longshore would entail possible concerns about the environmental impact given the sites' proximity to waterways.

6) **Two state-owned sites remain very attractive** as alternatives based on operational and traffic considerations. These are:

- 1) the Connecticut DOT maintenance site at the intersection of the Post Road East and the Sherwood Island Connector; and
- 2) the Sherwood Island State Park parking lot, which is operated under the auspices of the Connecticut DEEP.

However, to date **the State has denied the Town the use of either of these parcels** for the purpose of parking our school buses despite significant efforts on the part of our First Selectman and legislators to secure the necessary permission, both in the past and more recently. Therefore, these sites have been deemed **NOT VIABLE**.

***Note:** Attendees at this meeting included Mark Mathias and Elaine Whitney, members, BOE Bus Parking Subcommittee; Dr. Elliott Landon, Superintendent of Schools; Nancy Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Business; Sandra Evangelista, Director of Transportation; Phil Johnson, VP, Operations, DATTCO; Larry Bradley, Director, Planning and Zoning; Michael Gallante, Frederick P. Clark and Associates, traffic consultants; Rick Redniss, Redniss & Mead, land use consultants; Mike Rea, Board of Finance; and Allen Bomes, RTM.*

## **Recommendations for Next Steps**

Further explore the viability of parking our school buses on Baron's South:

- 1) Gather traffic data for the proposed site and the intersections in closest proximity when school is in session (*in progress*); and
- 2) Assess feasibility in light of upcoming recommendations from the Baron's South Committee for the use of the parcel based on RFP responses.

Cc: Donald O'Day, Chair, Board of Education  
Dr. Elliott Landon, Superintendent  
Gordon Joseloff, First Selectman  
Michael Rea, Board of Finance Revenue Enhancement Committee Chair  
Allen Bomes, RTM Long-Range Planning Committee representative