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## ATM Article 15: At last, a plan for Bromfield's Pond Road parking

by Erin Fay

Anyone who has traversed the Pond Road parking lot—the one behind the Bromfield School and below the library—can see that it has fallen into significant disrepair. Aside from being cosmetically unappealing, the parking lot also poses a risk to both vehicles and pedestrians. The pavement is failing, the grade is dangerously steep, and there is no designated path for pedestrians. Last year, this issue came up at Town Meeting, but was dismissed due to the plan's obvious shortcomings. This year's plan addresses those shortcomings.

Selectman Tim Clark points out, "The plan submitted last year was ill-conceived and focused on only repaving the parking lot. It ignored the fact that the pavement was failing because of poor drainage, and the repaving would do nothing to improve the inadequate access for students and pedestrians, as it lacked sidewalks."

The new plan includes repairs and updates to the existing drainage system, improvements to the grading and the addition of sidewalks leading to Bromfield. The School and Capital Planning and Investment committees have asked to borrow \$157,000 to pay for the work, with the payment of interest and principal to come from CPIC's capital fund. The cost is higher than last year's plan due to the aforementioned additions.

Both SusanMary Redigner, chair of the school committee, and Selectman Tim Clark believe that it is the repair of the infrastructure and the addition of sidewalks that will make all the difference to the success of this project. Redinger explains, "The drainage improvements will extend the life of the new surface, and the sidewalks and crosswalks will allow students and other pedestrians to safely access the school from the parking lot and will connect to the Pond Road walkway." Clark explains that connecting the town center to the town beach is something the citizens of Harvard support, having been identified as a goal years ago.

The process of the proposed project is fairly straightforward. First, the existing pavement would be removed. Then the existing drainage swales and culverts would be repaired and updated. The grade would then be fixed to improve visibility and access to Pond Road. The lot would be resurfaced, and parking spaces and crosswalks would be painted. Finally, sidewalks would be added.

Some have speculated that the Department of Public Works might be involved in the project to keep costs down, but Public Works Director Rich Nota explained, "Public Works will only be providing consultation and project management services. It was determined that public works equipment and manpower resources were fully committed this year on other projects and would be

unavailable to undertake the project this year."

Although keeping costs down is a priority, Clark hopes that voters will consider the long-term effects of the proposed plan. Clark laments, "It always seems that community priorities get forgotten when a committee or board looks at a project, as they look to spend as little money as possible on the project rather than invest in lasting improvements to these facilities." However, Clark is optimistic about the proposal, saying, "I do think that it has a strong likelihood of passage now that these deficiencies have been addressed."

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