

Plans would place 35 more parking spaces at Wood End School

By DOUG WOOD-BOYLE

READING - According to the project manager, 35 more parking spaces can be designed as part of the Wood End Elementary School project, pending approval from the Conservation Commission.

L. Scott Dunlap, a principal with Wayland based Ai3 Architectural firm and the project manager for the school construction told the Committee at a recent meeting, "During February and March we looked at the possibility of 30-35 parking spaces, contingent on what was affordable. We proceeded with the design process that was most reasonable."

As part of this process, a site visit at the school was held on April 13. Members of the ConsCom, the Building Inspector and other officials attended the visit.

According to Dunlap, test pits will be drilled during the school vacation week. The results from this testing, and other information, will be presented to the ConsCom for a formal determination of need on April 27.

"If (the plans) are approved, we can go out to bid in May or June," Dunlap said.

Under this time table the contractor should be in place and construction underway by the start of the summer vacation.

"The count (of parking spaces) there is about 60," Dunlap said. "This would get us to

90. That is what is needed for the additional faculty."

Dunlap also noted that, per an agreement with the ConsCom, the grade elevation of the lot will remain close to what it is now.

"We have agreed to minimal regrading," Dunlap said.

Superintendent Pat Schettini explained that the parking is really only an issue at the Wood End campus. Other elementary schools have easy access to on-street parking, as well as a parking lot.

Committee Member Elaine Webb questioned whether the additional parking spaces would affect the number of handicapped spaces that would be needed at the site. Schettini replied that would be "...an issue that will come up when we discuss lining."

In a related issue, Committee Chairperson Carl McFadden questioned the placement of a dumpster so close to the playground at the Wood End School. He discovered the placement during a recent visit to the school.

"I was horrified," McFadden exclaimed. "We put a dumpster five feet away from the playground. I look at that as a health hazard."

Dunlap noted that the original plan was to place the dumpster to the rear of the school. A paved access would have led to the dumpster.

"Unfortunately, that is a much more sensitive area, according to the Conservation Commission," Dunlap said. "That is a no pave area."

According to Schettini, many of the issues the Committee and the project manager are now dealing with occurred as a result of decisions made by the previous school administration.

According to Webb, the placement of the playground was a decision that came after the placement of the dumpster.

Dunlap said the site of the playground was always intended for use by children.

Committee Member Rob Spadafora asked what could be done about gutters that are draining into the entrance of a hiking trail by the school. According to Dunlap, extensions of the offending drains are being looked at as a solution.

Director of Human Resources Mary DeLai advised the Committee that the Automatic Underground Sprinkler System at the Wood End School had to be re-bid as the previous contractor was not meeting benchmark goals. That contractor, G.T.A. Irrigation once again came in with the low bid (\$13,500) but the bid of Terrain Irrigation, Inc. (\$16987.36) was accepted under guidelines for the bidding process.

Those guidelines allow for a higher bid to be accepted in a case where it is believed the low bidder cannot meet the contract. Terrain irrigation also does other business with the town, through the Department of Public Works.

According to reports submitted work on all of the building projects are proceeding in a satisfactory manner.