

Edgewood Sports Complex – Questions and Responses – April 6, 2020

Why not just tell folks to go to the Newtown Community Center and use their Pool?

- The Google Maps mileage test shows it has by far the longest travel time for Southbury residents.
- It's an indoor pool. The Pool Task Force feels that an indoor pool option is not a sought-after choice for swimmers in summer months. Folks want to swim outdoors in summer months.
- NCC only has an open swim option. It's not an option for our swim teams. That's a significant drawback, as the swim programs in Town are quite popular.

Your Cost Estimates Appear Inflated, and I don't believe them. You're trying to deceive the public. Your presentations are "full of false and misleading information."

- The group involved with the Pool Task Force includes the following people:
 - Jeff Manville – First Selectman
 - John Michaels – Chair of the Board of Finance
 - Tom Connor – Vice-Chair of the Board of Finance
 - Dan Colton – Town Finance Director
 - George Bertram – Selectman and chair of the ad-hoc Pool Task Force
 - Charlie Rosa – Chair of the Park and Rec Commission
 - Tom Marks – Commissioner on the Strategic Plan Commission
 - Hugh Sullivan – Consultant and Chief Architect of Bennett Sullivan Associates
- Four of this group are top elected officials in Town, representing both parties.
- Nobody on this committee has a conflict of interest
- All are committed to making fiscally responsible choices for the Town
- All agree that the purchase of Edgewood is a better fiscal choice than a rebuild of Ballantine. The Pool Task Force is 100% behind this recommendation.
- As to rebuilding Ballantine, we've obtained estimates from Weston and Sampson, a very reputable engineering firm, and Bennett Sullivan Associates
 - \$2,900,000 to "RENOVATE POOL WITH MYRTHA & RENOVATE BUILDING."
 - \$4,650,000 to "REPLACE POOL IN-KIND WITH MYRTHA & RENOVATE BUILDING."
 - We have an estimate to replace the Pool with a concrete structure (not a Myrtha liner) from the Architectural Firm of Bennett Sullivan at \$3,729,000

- We've also obtained several estimates from local pool construction companies.
 - These were estimates and not formal bids. Estimates are a traditional precursor, used by the Town, prior to entering in the costly and time-consuming process of formal bidding. Estimates are not binding. Once the Edgewood deal is off the table, and we went to bid on a rebuild of Ballantine, their pricing could change, and are not consistent with traditional municipal project cost structures.
 - It seems that these estimates were skewed to the low side by knowledge of the \$2,000,000 price tag on Edgewood, combined with the understanding that we would have to rebuild the Pool House at considerable expense.
 - None of the local pool companies were willing to quote on the necessary rebuild of the pool house to meet building code and ADA compliance.
 - The licensed architects, Bennett Sullivan, we retained to act as a referee on the pool cost issues, issued their report and came back with an estimated cost of \$3,729,000
 - Note that the Pool Task Force does not want our opinion to reflect poorly on these pool companies. They both have an excellent reputation and have been in business for many years.
- The Pool Task Force has faith in the estimates from Weston and Sampson and Bennett Sullivan over the estimates from the pool companies and the many self-proclaimed construction-cost experts in the public realm and on social media. We'll defer to the expert opinions.
- The Pool Task Force believes that purchasing Edgewood for \$2,000,000 is a better and more responsible choice than rebuilding Ballantine's Pool and Pool House for \$3,729,000. We see the Edgewood option as a "2 million-dollar solution to a 4-million-dollar problem."

Some folks are upset about having to pay property tax to Middlebury.

- We've included the property tax in the financial analysis.
- It's an expense like any other expense—electricity, Insurance, Salaries, etc.
- We project that Edgewood will be able to operate at a profit, even after paying the tax to Middlebury
- We may be able to negotiate a deal with Middlebury in the future.

Some folks are concerned about the Building Inspectors Report.

- The Building Inspection Report indeed shows "poor condition" on many items.

- That's typical for an inspection report when a potential buyer pays for it. It provides some leverage that the potential buyer can use to compel the seller to make the repairs before completing the deal.
- Note that the seller agreed to remediate all issues highlighted in the inspection report, at their cost, prior to closing.
- The building inspector has also agreed to perform another inspection, after the issues are repaired, to verify compliance. We will do that if the deal moves forward.
- The building inspector has also written a letter, copied below. The letter indicates normal wear and tear for a ten-year-old facility.



National Property Inspections of Southern CT DBA
National Property Inspections

Edgewood Bath & Tennis, 100 North Benson Road, Middlebury, CT, 06762

April 4, 2020

Town of Southbury,

My name is Giuseppe Volpato (License # HOI 0000878) of National Property Inspections and I performed the commercial building inspection on the property located at 100 North Benson Road in Middlebury, CT. The intent of the inspection is to assess the physical condition and integrity of the property with a report that documents each and every concern, whether mechanical or safety related, which was present on site at that time.

What that report does not contain, nor is it intended to, is the conversation which I had with Mr. Bertram and the other representatives from the Town of Southbury after the inspection. We discussed the very high level of craftsmanship which was executed in the construction of the facility. We discussed the fact that the number of "concerns" listed in the report is actually minimal considering the size of the facility, its age, the number of people who utilize it and the fact that none of the faults listed is difficult or costly to address. Most importantly, we all agreed that construction cost would be at least 4-5 times the purchase price to build such a facility at this time and that said purchase price is therefore quite reasonable.

Sincerely,

Giuseppe Volpato

National Property Inspections

11 Nelson Street

New Haven, CT 06512-3954

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203-871-7214

Inspection Date:
03/05/2020

Inspector: Giuseppe Volpato
Inspector Phone: 203-871-7214

Email: volpato@npiinspect.com
HOI0000878

Some commenters are concerned about Lifeguard salary and staffing issues

- The finance team and our Park and Rec professionals have carefully reviewed the lifeguard issues and are comfortable with the staffing and wages, as listed in the financial analysis. We are following the Red Cross guidelines, although there are no formal regulations on the number of lifeguards required for a pool.

Don't buy Edgewood. Just fix the Ballantine Pool.

- Several commentators have stated that we should not purchase Edgewood. Instead, they say, we should fix Ballantine. Some believe that our cost estimate to fix Ballantine, at \$3,729,000, is inflated. Some don't care about the cost and insist that we fix Ballantine anyway, regardless of cost.
 - Our Task Force believes that the cost to fix Ballantine will indeed be at least \$3.7 million. Both of our experts, Weston and Sampson and Bennett and Sullivan, are highly respected in the construction industry. We see no expert evidence that the cost will be significantly lower than that. It's a major project. It's bigger than some of our recent bridge projects.
- So, if you assume that that cost estimate is realistic, and we decide to pass on the Edgewood purchase, the project to rebuild Ballantine, at \$3.7 million or so, will go before the voters in a referendum. That's the normal process for approving large Town expenditures like this.
- What are the chances that a ~ four million-dollar pool option passes at a Town referendum? Nobody knows for sure, but the Task Force feels that its less likely to pass than a \$2 million-dollar purchase of Edgewood, once all the facts are on the table.
- The point is if we decide against acquiring Edgewood and believe that means we would automatically spend more to fix Ballantine, that might not happen. It's possible that a four million-dollar referendum on fixing Ballantine would fail. At that point, the Town would be without a pool. Of course, Edgewood might still be operational, but the cost is \$1100 per season.
- Fixing or rebuilding Ballantine, without having Edgewood on line, would mean that the Town is without a pool for at least one season, and maybe two.

What are the Anticipated Costs of Demolition for the Ballantine Pool and Pool House?

- Bennett Sullivan estimates that the cost to demolish the Ballantine pool at \$40,000

- Bennett Sullivan also estimates that the cost to demolish the Ballantine Pool House at \$40,000.
- That would be a total demolition cost of \$80,000 if both were to be considered one project and not two individual projects.

Why is the anticipated cost of Ballantine demolition not included in the Edgewood cost estimates?

- The answer is that we did not include the Ballantine demolition costs into the Edgewood purchase price because we don't know what will be eventually be done with Ballantine. There are multiple options to be considered.
- The current bathroom and shower facilities in the Ballantine pool house are still usable. These facilities could be used for other activities, even if the Pool was no longer operational. So, we might choose to keep the Pool House open while we close the Pool itself.
- Ballantine's Pool could be demolished, or perhaps we turn it into a skate park. It's conceivable that the Town could decide to buy Edgewood and also rebuild Ballantine's Pool.
- Another ad hoc Task Force would determine the fate and future use of Ballantine's pool facilities. This one isn't going to make that call.

Why don't we seek ADA Grants to rebuild Ballantine?

- Nobody has looked into specific grants at this point. However, the Town's experience with state and federal grants has not been good.
- Grant money puts the project under tight state controls, which increase the cost. Hugh Sullivan estimates that using grant money would increase the project cost by about one million dollars.
- We ran into that issue when we revamped some of the historical buildings in Town. We used state grant money, and it drove up the costs dramatically. It also gives much control over how the work is done over to the state.

Need for Competitive Bids Through the Towns' Formal Bidding Process

- Getting accurate bids that the bidders are willing to stand behind, takes time and money.

- First, we would have to create a detailed specification of the project. That means we'd have to hire a design firm at a considerable cost.
- Then, put the project out to bid, and the bidders have to spend their time and money reviewing the detailed specifications to come up with an accurate bid.

Need to hire a commercial property appraiser

- Some have requested that we hire an appraiser. The task force is looking into that.

Why are municipal projects more costly than residential construction projects?

- They cost more than residential construction because the building codes for a Pool House (Public Building) outline the minimum criteria for structural floor loading wall and roof loading, wind loading, seismic design, ADA requirements for entry and exit access, toilet rooms, showers. As I stated, the fees for the design professionals are there, an owner's contingency, and the cost for demolition.
- Municipal buildings cost more because the towns usually hire a surveyor, a civil engineer, an architect who hires a structural engineer, a mechanical and electrical engineer for the team of design professionals coordinating the project.
- The Town usually hires a Special Inspector to coordinate the Special Inspections required by Code for all of the components that compose the building. The Town also requires a project contingency, minimum insurance requirements, OSHA certified contractor/subcontractors, prevailing wages if there are grants, labor & material payment bonds, and sometimes a warranty bond.