Report to the Harwich Board of Selectman

Monday June 11th 2012 7 pm

Part One

Note the three documents used to guide the work of the Harwich Middle School Repurpose Committee

Agreement between the towns of Chatham and Harwich with respect to the formation of the Monomoy Regional School District (Section 5 Location and Ownership of Schools and F Harwich shall lease to Regional District).

Harwich Middle School Repurpose Committee charge approved by the Board of Selectman, November 7th 2011

Letter from Mass. School, Building Authority regarding the possibility of declaring the Harwich Middle School surplus by the Monomoy Regional School District and turning it over to the town of Harwich for repurpose

A letter was sent to Mr. Jack McCarthy, Interim Director MSBA. A copy of that letter received by Mr. Merriam and the response from Mr. McCarthy were forwarded to Supt. Cragin as Regional Transition Superintendent of Schools Monomoy Regional School District. The three key points in the Feb 16th, 2012 letter were: *since the renovated Harwich Middle School has been in service for more than twenty years the MSBA would not recoup a portion of the grant received in 1990 that was funded in part by a grant from the state's school building assistance program.* With regionalization it is probably safe to say that the town will not be seeking funds from the MSBA for a project in the future. (More importantly, the Monomoy Regional School District is not eligible for an MSBA Grant unless it first studies multiple options to address a facilities deficiencies. For closing potential options now that could help solved school building problems throughout the District in the future will affect the MSBA's consideration of current and future statements of interest and proposed projects. **Therein lies the rub for the Monomoy Regional School District.**

close to the transitioning process within the regional district priority one at this time is not the repurposing of the Harwich Middle School. As a former school committee member priorities now taking precedence are negotiating teacher contracts, adopting a joint personnel and financial management system, developing board policy, and the hiring of a new superintendent. That is not to say that as part of the district's strategic planning it will not be incumbent upon the regional board to address the Middle School issue sooner rather than later, as it is a resource that could be a nuisance and costly to maintain as an empty building. An analysis of the future needs of the Harwich Middle School will need to be address by the Regional School Committee in the future.

Although our committee has not met with the Monomoy Regional School Committee I did meet with the Harwich School Committee at their regular scheduled meeting on May 2nd, 2012. At that time Harwich teach, Larry Burkhardt briefed the school committee on the potential consequences to the Harwich Astronomy Program located at the Harwich Elementary School if the dark side viewing were altered in any way within the Middle School parking lot. The school committee noted his concerns. Previously, Superintendent Cragin had brought to the attention of the Repurpose Committee her concern for the inadequate parking/sidewalks at the elementary school which requires parent drop-off/pick-up from the middle school parking lot. Dr. Cragin believed if the middle school is repurposed that additional elementary parking/drop-off should be incorporated into the plans. Mr. McManus indicated to Mr. Merriam that the Planning Board Site Plan review process was by-passed when the elementary school was sited.

Part Four

A number of interim steps have been taken regarding the scope of responsibility:
***The Committee toured the middle school**
***Architectural/Engineering drawings have been reviewed** (but yet to be reviewed are maintenance records and assessment of operational costs.)
***Identification of site/building use restrictions, limitations and remedies** (partially complete).
***Determination of how best to divide the elementary/middle into 2 or more separate properties** (still being explored)