

Rochester, Jacqueline

Subject: FW: Add to our agenda for tonight - Bonded capital projects - 3 perspectives

Importance: High

From: ptemple6@optimum.net <ptemple6@optimum.net>

Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 1:27 PM

To: boardofselectmen <boardofselectmen@wiltonct.org>

Subject: Bonded capital projects - 3 perspectives

CAREFUL - From outside - CHECK before you CLICK.

Dear Board of Selectmen—

I write this email wearing three hats—as Co-Chair of the Police-Town Hall Building Committee, as the Friends of Ambler Farm Board of Directors President and as a resident/taxpayer. Each one of those roles has shaped my opinions and compels me to ask for a few moments of your time, before your meeting tonight...

1.If I can help promote the *direly needed work in **Town Hall and the Annex***, just say the word. The PTH Building Committee was originally tasked with evaluating those needs and recommending a solution and was disappointed and frustrated when that was removed from our purview. I would be delighted to contribute in some way now because I absolutely understand how serious the needs are.

2.As you now know, *the Town is required, per the deed, to make the **Raymond Ambler House** a space for public use and is 25 years delinquent in that commitment. To fulfill that obligation I ask that you keep \$950K for the RAH in the capital projects 5-year plan for FY25. Two-thirds of the project has already been completed so it would be logical to finish it before starting the many other necessary projects.*

When you stopped by the farm on March 9, Bas asked if the 2019 revision to our Special Permit (allowing for more rentals) was working out positively. I explained that it hadn't to a great extent yet because it is difficult to make the Carriage Barn available to the public when we typically have to use it for a myriad of purposes on any given day since it is our only enclosed area. *When the RAH is able to open its doors and patio, the Town will have an additional amenity and Friends of Ambler Farm will have desperately needed indoor space.*

Similarly, I ask (implore, actually) you to keep the \$1.1M for the **Yellow House** in the capital projects plan for FY26. I know you are keenly aware of its condition and its value to the operations of FOAF, but there are two other considerations I want to emphasize... *When the topic of demolishing the YH comes up I'm reminded of the tremendous outcry regarding 183 Ridgefield Road in 2016. Since the YH is a Town-owned property I'm afraid the backlash could be even more intense and detrimental to both the BOS and Ambler Farm.* I don't mention that to intimidate, but rather just to plan for. Also, as we mentioned briefly when we spoke to you on February 5, *once the renovation is complete FOAF could pay rent that would essentially subsidize the bonding, perhaps even in its entirety over time. That could be an attractive selling point to voters.*

3.And putting on my third hat as a resident/taxpayer... I find the working conditions of our Town Hall, Annex and FOAF employees--and the fact that a FOAF staff member lived in the poor conditions of the Yellow House until mid-2020—far beyond unsatisfactory. Embarrassing actually. I urge you to create, execute and adhere to a true master plan to take care of these valuable assets in a timely and proper manner. I'd much rather my tax dollars provided upkeep than catch-up.

Also, I'm not alone in finding the idea of voting on bonding referendums for something other than school buildings, athletic fields/facilities and roads refreshing 😊

Thank you for *all* you do and your very thoughtful deliberations.

Kind regards,

Patti Temple

Drum Hill Road