


TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH



OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

TOWN HOUSE · 17 COMMON STREET · SOUTHBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS 01772-1662
(508) 485-0710 · FAX (508) 480-0161 · selectboard@southboroughma.com

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Mark J. Purple, Town Administrator 
DATE: May 18, 2023
SUBJECT: Update on gazebo at former Police/Fire Station site

When the Town sold the Police and Fire Station property at 19/21 Main Street to St. Mark's School in exchange for the St. Mark's Golf Course parcel, the existing gazebo (donated by the Peter's School Alumni in 1986; there is a plaque inlaid in the foundation) went along with the property. At the time, the Town had no site to relocate the gazebo, and St. Mark's did not have any imminent plans for the property which would necessitate the gazebo having to move. So the gazebo has remained.

Recently, St. Mark's has begun to demolish the Police and Fire buildings and consider next steps for the property. The question of what the Town may want to do with the gazebo has again been asked by St. Mark's, and I asked our new Building Commissioner to inspect the gazebo and provide his assessment.

According to Mr. Burlingame, the gazebo is generally in decent condition for its age. The decking, ceiling and structural members are generally in good condition, but the asphalt shingles will need to be replaced in the next 1-3 years. The foundation is fairly substantial, and would not be able to be moved. Given the large (20 feet by 20 feet) size of the structure, including the roof (which because of the steep pitch is a total height of 18-19 feet), moving it would be costly. A new foundation would need to be constructed, and once moved it would trigger making the gazebo handicapped accessible, which it currently is not. Although difficult to place a value on a 37-year old structure, Mr. Burlingame estimates that it would cost approximately \$40,000 to replicate it today including a new foundation and making it handicapped accessible. It would likely cost more to move the structure and place it on a new foundation with accessibility modifications, than it would be to build a brand new gazebo.

If the Town were to commit to relocating the gazebo, should a suitable location be designated, it would appear that we would have to be willing to commit significant funds not including moving expenses. This does not include future commitments for regular maintenance of a 37-year old structure. Before I begin to solicit any suggestions from departments on where we could possibly move it, I want to make sure that the Board is committed to the financial responsibilities that go along with the decision. Given the way the FY24 budget was structured, including substantial one-time (i.e., ARPA) funds, it would not be my recommendation to assume this level of responsibility.

Thank you.