

Statement read by Al Hamilton
Select Board Meeting - October 25, 2023

Mr. Chairman

One of the most important duties of the Select Board is the effective administration of the tax monies taken from the public. While the public is not entitled to perfection in this administration, I believe it was and is entitled to more effective oversight than in the matter of the so called "St. Marks" park.

I stood on the floor of Town Meeting and advocated for the funds to finish this project as the least expensive way out of a bad situation. I have further advocated that we put this sorry affair behind us and move on. Despite this I perceive that based on how this project was conceived, managed, and funded, there is a lingering reservoir of skepticism and mistrust in our community directed at our municipal government's ability to responsibly manage and account for the monies used in this project.

While the skepticism and mistrust fostered by this project were the results of prior boards actions, it falls to this board to take proactive steps to reassure the public that it has the capacity to responsibly manage the funds provided by the taxpayers. This is even more important as we anticipate asking the public for large sums for a school project and potentially other projects.

I have reluctantly concluded that a necessary step in regaining this trust is an independent audit of the project. I respectfully request that the Select Board place this matter on its agenda at its earliest convenience. The goal should be to identify and quantify the direct and indirect costs associated with this project including legal, engineering, design, administration construction, and other costs associated with the project. The result should be presented in a public forum and to Town Meeting.

I believe these actions are necessary to regain public trust and assure a skeptical public that the Select Board takes its responsibility for the effective administration of public monies seriously, as I know it does.

I request that this address be entered into the minutes and will provide an electronic copy to the Board.