

# *Burlington Union*

## **Landlocked Committee voted out of business**

**By Arthur Katz**

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Burlington -

The Landlocked Parcel Advisory Committee went out of business Wednesday, when Town Meeting members defeated Articles 14 and 15. Article 14 would have funded further activity on the LLP Committee, and Article 15 would have broadened the scope of the discussion to include more than conversations with Patriot Partners.

Patriot holds an option to meet whatever terms the town sets on disposal of the LLP, if it chooses to do so. The option expires May 2010.

An amendment to Article 15, submitted recently by the Land Use Committee, would have authorized that board to develop a means of gauging the interest of the town in the parcel was also turned down.

All three articles were defeated by wide margins – no roll call or standing votes were requested.

But what to do – or not do – with the 247-acre site remains unresolved and appears headed for discussion in the Board of Selectmen.

When Moderator Philip Gallagher called on town boards that had taken positions, he found little support. The LLP Committee itself voted against Article 14 by a vote of six to three; Ways and Means voted unanimously against it; Selectmen voted five to nothing not to support it; the Conservation Commission offered resounding no; and the Land Use Committee was split.

William Beyer, chairman of Ways and means said, “We didn’t want to put up town funds at this point, because we don’t know what we will get for our money.”

“We are in favor of continuing the dialogue with the town to see where this can go,” said Land Use Chairman Sally Willard. “We think it is backward to be talking with the developer before we have figured out what the people and town want for this property.”

Larry Cohen spoke on behalf of the Conservation Commission.

“The commercial development makes no sense with so much other building going on in town,” he said. “We simply should wait until the option runs out in 2010 before doing anything. The land has value and we have to figure out how to protect it.”

Opinion among Town Meeting members was mixed, but a significant number signified their interest in continuing a dialogue about the land in some form. Roger Bell, a member representing Precinct 6, argued for spending whatever money was necessary to make the decisions that would be best for the town.

James Tigges, also of Precinct 6, opined, “In the present economy, we aren’t going to get any help from the state or the federal government, and we are going to need to use this asset to help us through the coming bad times. Let’s continue the discussion.”

Annmarie Comer, Precinct 2, said, “We need to be able to use the land that we have spent \$14 million on. I have never been there and it appears that most other Town Meeting Members haven’t either.”

Members who had visited the parcel were asked to rise during the evening. Less than a half dozen people stood.

Attendance at Town Meeting was almost as high as the initial meeting Sept. 22. Fourteen members had not signed in for the September session and 15 were absent last week.

All members of Precinct 6 were in attendance the first night, and just a single member was missing the second meeting. Only five Town Meeting members missed both the hearings.