

*Burlington*  
**Daily Times Chronicle**

**TUESDAY**  
April 29, 2008

*3-2 vote by selectmen*

# Landlocked study article is opposed

By JOHN WHITE

BURLINGTON — During a review of warrant articles Monday evening, the Board of Selectmen voted 3-2 to recommend against an article which would create a study committee for the landlocked parcel.

The article, submitted by moderator Phillip Gallagher, is being proposed by Patriot Partners, which holds an option on the town-owned property. Gallagher has explained it is his policy that any article which conforms to the by-laws should be included on the warrant.

While the proposal is not directly under the board's jurisdiction, Town Administrator Robert Mercier commented that the selectmen would likely be asked their

selectmen needed to take a stance on the article, Selectwoman Sonia Rollins noted there is an existing selectmen's subcommittee on the issue — Fay and Ralph Patuto.

Gianino said the article "is quite narrow in its goals" as it involves development concerns of Patriot Partners.

Patuto agreed stating the scope of the article should be expanded.

Selectman Walter Zenkin said a study is important, not because of Patriot Partners, but so the town has more information about the land.

"What do we have here?" is the first issue, stated Zenkin.

Patuto offered a motion to oppose the article "as written."

opinion when the issue is debated at Town Meeting.

The subcommittee would consist of several Town Meeting members and would include representatives from a number of boards, including the selectmen.

Selectman Gary Gianino questioned a committee spending time studying the issue when it might turn out there is little support for opening up the vacant property.

Selectman Albert Fay responded that is how the process works, stating, "It's happened before."

Gianino said he was not against the article, but suggested first getting a consensus of how residents feel about the future of the property.

In questioning why the

The motion passed with Patuto, Gianino, and Zenkin recommending against the article; Fay and Rollins supported the article.

Patriot Partners, best known locally for development of Wayside Commons, has offered to finance any studies needed for the 270-acre parcel. The option expires in 2010, with a one-year extension under certain conditions.

The town owns the land, located at the interchange of routes 3 and 128, through an eminent domain taking executed in 1986. The site, which borders Bedford and Lexington, is basically inaccessible by motor vehicle.

The stated reasons for the taking were to protect the water supply and preserve open space.