

# Daily Times Chronicle

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## Landlocked parcel Selectmen back \$100K for consulting services

By JOHN WHITE

BURLINGTON — The Board of Selectmen voted this week to support an article which would provide \$100,000 to fund a consultant with regard to the landlocked parcel.

The town has owned the 270-acre parcel, located at the interchange of routes 3 and 128, since an eminent domain taking was executed in 1986.

It is stated in the article that the fund would be used "for expert real estate appraisal services, engineering consulting services and other professional expertise to evaluate the value and marketability of the landlocked parcel ..."

"I certainly think we need some professional expertise," commented Town Administrator Robert Mercier.

As he has stated previously, Mercier said he expects considerable activity regarding the property this year.

"There is a lot of energy out there about the landlocked parcel," he commented.

There have been inquiries to the town about the property in recent years, Mercier has stated, though no formal proposals.

lac Fairview (the largest owner of the site), now Prentice Properties, gained right-of-first refusal for any commercial development on the property. The right was granted for 20 years and expires this year.

The stated reasons for taking the land, which borders Bedford and Lexington, were to preserve open space and protect the water supply. Any change in that designation requires two-thirds votes from Town Meeting and the Legislature.

The vote to support the article was 4-0, Gary Gianino was not present.

The bond issue by which the town is paying for the property expires in 2008.

The town originally paid \$810,000 for the property, but that figure was challenged in Middlesex Superior Court.

In December 1987, a jury ruled the land was worth \$10.5 million. That figure was reduced to \$8.2 million in subsequent negotiations with the primary property owners. With interest on the bond issue, the cost to the town exceeds \$14 million.

Another result of those negotiations was that Cadil-