

Soil tests set in town's try to find site for new school

By EUNICE KIM
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Abington will soon begin testing the soil at the former Griffin's Dairy property off Plymouth Street to see if the land is a suitable location for a new middle school.

"This will give us more definitive information (as to) if it's a viable site or not," said Shawn Reilly, a member of the middle school site selection committee.

CHG of Hanson, a geotechnical engineering firm, is expected to start testing the soil on the town-owned parcel within two weeks.

The school committee awarded the contract for the work to CHG last night. The company

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Abington set to test possible school site

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submitted a bid of \$3,750.

The committee accepted PCI of Wilmington's \$3,970 bid as a backup.

Six companies submitted proposals in response to the middle school site selection committee's request for bids.

The 16-member committee is having the old Griffin's Dairy land studied to see what parts of the 64-acre expanse, if any, could be used for a school building, road and playing fields. The committee is looking at about 25 acres of the land for a school that would house grades 5 through 8.

The property is one of about 25 the committee is considering. Other potential locations include Pohorecky Farm, a town-owned parcel off Chestnut Street, and privately owned land throughout town, Reilly said.

The committee is focusing on the former Griffin's Dairy because "it's the one that holds the most potential," Assistant School Superinten-

dent Peter Schafer said.

Abington-based Celco Construction, which is donating use of an excavator, will dig 20 test holes throughout the upland portion of the site. Most of the holes will be about 8 feet deep, with a couple going down 12 feet, said Michael Donovan, a site selection committee member who will be operating the excavator.

CHG will take soil samples from each hole for testing and analysis. The holes will all be refilled.

The work will be conducted over two days and is scheduled to be done by the end of February. A report is due within 10 days of the digging.

The tests are expected to reveal where the water table is, where other samples should be taken, and how much preparation work would be needed if the site was picked for a middle school, Schafer said.

After finding out if the land is suitable for a school, the site selection committee will determine what further testing of the property or other proper-

ties should be done, Reilly said.

In November, town meeting approved \$98,500 for land studies at possible sites for a middle school.

The site selection committee will recommend a location. The town plans to apply for a state school building construction grant in 2007.

If Griffin's Dairy is determined to be unsuitable for use as a school site, the soil testing will still provide "valuable" information to the town, school committee Chairman Wayne Rogiers said.

The senior center committee is considering 2 acres of the property for a new senior center.

In other business last night, the school committee selected Gale Associates of Weymouth to complete architectural and engineering design for the Early Childhood Center roof.

The company — one of 10 that responded to a request for qualifications — will test the leaky roof and redesign it for no more than \$107,631. It also will oversee removal and replacement of the 20-year-old roof.

Schafer recommended Gale Associates to the school committee last night.

"They've done more work in this area . . . than any other company," he said.

School committee member Russell FitzGerald said the company is closer to Abington than the second choice, Russo Barr Associates of Burlington. That company will perform the work if a contract cannot be worked out with Gale Associates.

The roof project is expected to start after the school year ends. A contractor has yet to be selected.

Special town meeting in November appropriated \$1.13 million to replace the Early Childhood Center's roof. The money will be taken from the town's stabilization fund over a 10-year period, and those withdrawals will not raise taxes.

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