

# Fundraising for community rink put on ice

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By Catherine Bart

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This ice rink in Cape Elizabeth was donated for public use by community members. *File photo courtesy Jay Brandeis*

CAPE ELIZABETH — The Cape Community Arena’s request to begin fundraising for a proposed ice rink was tabled by the town council, with councilors in favor of hosting a workshop to further discuss the project.

On Sept. 13, councilors expressed the support of a potential ice rink in Cape Elizabeth but also said that approval of fundraising before the project itself had been approved may misrepresent the process. The proposed ice rink has not yet received town council approval.

In an August town council workshop, members of the Cape Community Ice Rink brought forward plans to create a community ice arena at Gull Crest, next to the public works facility, after the success of a temporary outdoor ice rink located next to town hall on Ocean House Road.

Prior to the Sept. 13 meeting, Allison McLaughlin, member of the Cape Community Arena Fundraising Committee, sent a letter to Town Manager Matt Sturgis with the request for town approval of the fundraising initiative.

“At this time, the CCIR seeks formal approval from the town council only to begin fundraising efforts for the proposed CCA project,” said the letter. “CCIR understands and acknowledges that there will be other gates and approvals before the town consents to the project as a whole, however CCIR feels that commencement of fundraising efforts is critical to realizing the success of this project. Town approval is necessary in advance of fundraising because the proposed project will be located on town property and will be donated to the town upon commissioning.”

At the meeting, McLaughlin said, in response to councilors’ concerns about the timing, that the committee did not want to misrepresent where the project was in the process.

“The last thing we’d want to do is misrepresent where we are in the process, but we are at a pivotal point,” she said. “I think what we can represent to you right now is that we’ll make every effort to communicate with the town, with potential donors, with the community as to what we’re doing. We want this to be a very transparent process because we’re at the very beginning of this process.”

Projects that involve a town asset require town council approval, said Sturgis.

The council has not received anything else about the project beyond an initial presentation from the Cape Community Arena in August, said Council Chair Jamie Garvin. Members of the public have emailed the council since then about the fundraising approval.

“There was concern that this project was being advanced without appropriate public input, public scrutiny, opportunity for comment, etc.,” he said.

As the project moves forward, there will be opportunity for public comment, Garvin said.

“This is still very, very, very early on,” he said.

Approval of fundraising this early in the project may communicate to the public that the town-owned facility is available, and therefore, the ice rink is already approved for the location, said Councilor Penny Jordan.

“I just am cautious about the messaging,” she said.

The council voted to table the fundraising initiative 6 – 1, with the plan to have a workshop on the project in October.

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