

Selectmen endorse Town Meeting articles anyway

By PAT BLAIS
Staff Writer

STONEHAM - The Board of Selectmen endorsed two Town Meeting measures aimed at extending short-term leases along the future Tri-Community Bikeway, despite questions about whether continued use of that land would benefit the proponents of the planned Weiss Farm apartment redevelopment.

During a meeting last week in Town Hall, the Selectmen voted 3-to-1, with Selectman Ann Marie O'Neill dissenting, in favor of Articles 1 and 2 for this Thursday night's Town Meeting (which is being held after The Stoneham Independent's deadline).

Presently, longer term leases for the railroad right-of-way, where the bikeway will presumably be built sometime beginning next year, are scheduled to expire on June 30, when all of the land will revert back to a solely open-space zoning designation.

According to local attorney Charles Houghton, representing local businessmen Marty Murphy, of Montvale Plaza, and Cleveland Fence owner Skip Cleveland, his clients are asking for permission to stay on the town-owned property abutting

their parcels until Oct. 15.

Murphy requires the space for overflow parking, while Cleveland still has materials stored on the land. Without the extension, Houghton claimed, both businessmen will be forced to vacate the

premises, an action that will harm their ability to operate.

"All I'm trying to do is get two-and-a-half months for the businesses. It's not going to hurt anyone," said Houghton.

LEASES, A3