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January 28, 2004

Mr. James Hunt, Director
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office
251 Causeway Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Request for Administrative Review and Advisory Opinion
Proposed DPW and Athletic Field Project
Hingham, MA

Dear Mr. Hunt:

On behalf of the Town of Hingham, Gale Associates, Inc.(Gale) is submitting a request for Administrative Review and an Advisory Opinion for a project to develop a Department of Public Works Facility and an Athletic Field Complex at the "Bare Cove Park and School Depot" parcel off of Fort Hill Street in Hingham, Massachusetts. Hereinafter, the Department of Public Works Facility and the Athletic Field Complex are collectively referred to as "The Project". 50% Design Development plans are included as Enclosure 1. The Project will implement a portion of the recommendations contained in a prior study entitled "Bare Cove and School Depot Master Plan", prepared for the Town in 2002 by Carr, Lynch and Sandell, Inc./Denig Design Associates, Inc.

Specifically, the Town is seeking a determination that the impacts related to the proposed development do not exceed the thresholds of MEPA, thereby requiring the filing of an Environmental Notification Form (ENF), and/or an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Additionally, the Town is seeking an Advisory Opinion regarding whether it may exclude the impacts associated with two possible future projects on adjacent Town-owned parcels, a skating arena and a multi-family residential housing development, in this determination given the lack of certainty and definition associated with these potential projects. It is the Town's intent to forego inclusion of these impacts at this time and, with the MEPA unit's concurrence, to not seek MEPA review of the DPW and Athletic Field project.

Project Description. The goal of the Project is to develop a consolidated DPW facility in order to replace a handful of outdated, non-code compliant facilities. Additionally, the project is intended to address the Town-wide need for additional athletic fields as identified by an earlier Town study. The first construction phase of the project, the development of the site infrastructure, is tentatively scheduled for Spring 2004, pending the completion of permitting and final funding by the Town. The project does not require the issuance of permits or approvals from any state agency, nor does it involve the use of any state funding.

The project site is located on a former Naval Ammunition Depot. The School Depot parcel consists of approximately 55 largely undeveloped acres. The property is bounded on the North by residential development along Beal Street by a portion of the Tucker Swamp to

the west, and by the school bus yard and National Guard Armory to the east. A residential sub-division, "Conservatory Park" lies to the south. With the exception of the Tucker Swamp, the parcel generally consists of upland mixed deciduous woodlands and scrub growth. Consistent with its previous use, there is significant low-rise industrial type building infrastructure, much of which was previously demolished, and some of which remains in use, meeting various Town requirements. The School Depot parcel is contiguous with the larger 470 acre Bare Cove Park.

The proposed DPW building is designed to consolidate a number of DPW functions currently scattered in outdated facilities across the Town. The overall layout of the building is shaped in part by the constraints of the site. In order to maintain the size needed and functional on-site circulation, the building was configured as an "L-shape," with the Administration/Core Area being the vertex and the Maintenance and Vehicle Storage bays being wings on either side.

The Administration/Core Area includes an open office area with a customer service counter in the main entry vestibule. Enclosed offices are provided for the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and the 3 Supervisors (in a shared office). A conference room accommodating 16 people comfortably is adjacent to the Break Area. The Break Area includes a kitchenette, seating for 40 people and 25 lockers. It has large windows and it's own exterior door. The toilet and shower core is located at the inner portion of the Administration block.

The Maintenance Area incorporates open garage bay space for servicing vehicles as well as shop functions and parts storage. The open bays in this area include provisions for a light duty lift, heavy duty lift and an overhead trolley hoist which transverses across 3 bays. A separate fire-rated space at the end of the wing stores oil tanks, drums, hydraulics, compressed air and industrial gases. Hydraulic and compressed air lines would be run overhead to the maintenance stations from this room. An end bay is designated for welding operations. Also included within the Maintenance area is a separate recycling Wash Down Bay. Adjacent to this is the Small Engine Repair and Tree and Park Storage area. Two unisex toilet rooms are also located at this end of the wing. The Paint Bay and Part/Tool Storage are located near the Administration/Core. There is a mezzanine space over the Parts/Tools and Paint Bay that will house the Sign and Woodworking Shop for the Master Craftsman to produce street signs, work signs, fences, etc. This is adjacent and accessible to the large storage area over the Administration Core for additional storage needs.

The Vehicle and Equipment Storage area includes open high bay space, deep enough to store trucks with plows in the winter. A Cold Storage structure of approximately 4,000 sf will be separate from this area at the perimeter of the yard. The Vehicle Storage area will be insulated and heated to a minimum to keep temperatures above freezing in the winter and to allow minor maintenance work on parked vehicles. It is proposed that a waste oil furnace accommodate this heating. Two unisex toilet rooms are also located at this end.

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Structure and Materials. The high bay garage spaces are designed as pre-engineered metal structures with 8' high split face concrete masonry kicker walls and insulated metal panel above. The panels above the overhead doors will be insulated translucent panels to bring natural light into the spaces. The floors of these spaces will be sealed concrete, capable of supporting heavy-duty vehicles. The Administration/Core area is designed as a conventional steel frame with split face concrete masonry veneer and 6" concrete masonry back-up (non-load bearing cavity wall).

Review of DPW Yard Site Design. The DPW building site is located within the upland area to the north of the central access drive. This site provides sufficient space for the primary building, the various outbuildings, staff and visitor parking, equipment and bulk materials storage, and site circulation. The building is situated on the site so as to present the most attractive perspective to the central access drive below and the adjacent recreation area. Site access is provided by an existing paved road which diverts all DPW related traffic from the central access drive well in advance of the recreational areas. This road would require reconstruction and utility extensions.

Customer parking (eighteen spaces, one handicapped) are located proximate to the customer entrance to the front of the building and away from the DPW working area. Staff parking, 32 spaces, is provided along the southern side of the DPW building. The two main outbuildings, a sand and salt barn and an unheated equipment barn for sweepers, mixers, cold patch and similar materials, are located to the northern side of the DPW yard. The deicing chemical (a natural barley based application) tank is sited to enable trucks to fill tanks as they depart the yard, having been loaded with sand and salt. The DPW customarily stores large volumes of bulk materials such a mulch, loam, pea stone, and structural fill. These bulk materials are to be stored in an open and level area to the northwest of the yard which will require little preparation.

Utilities Planning. As part of the Master Plan development, Gale developed conceptual layouts for the proposed utilities needed to service the new DPW building and Athletic Fields accordingly. Gale determined that the Town of Hingham should install a new sewer service running through the center of the proposed access drive, and connecting to the existing sewer manhole in Fort Hill Street. This new sewer service would be designed to service the proposed Recreation Building, the proposed DPW Building and any other potential future uses within the Bare Cove Park area.

Due to the age of the existing 6" cast iron water main, and the possibility of existing leaks in the line, Gale determined that the Town of Hingham should construct a new 10"-12" water main to connect to the existing line in Fort Hill Street. This line would be designed to run proposed irrigation for the 5 athletic fields, and also provide water service to the proposed DPW Building, Recreation Building, and possible future development within the Bare Cove Park.

With the proposed development of several large impervious areas including the DPW yard and parking, athletic field parking and new access drive, a formal drainage system is required. The proposed DPW building will be serviced by a series of deep sump, hooded catchbasins and PVC gravity drain pipes located to collect all runoff from the roof area, work yard and parking facilities. Due to the contents of this effluent (i.e. paint, oil, soap) an oil/water separator be installed prior to outfall into the proposed detention basin. The proposed athletic field parking lot will be serviced by a series of deep sump, hooded catchbasins and PVC drain pipes located to collect all runoff from the paved areas. This drainage system would flow to the same detention basin located south of Building #12. The athletic fields will be graded accordingly to provide for sheet flow drainage with surface and groundwater recharge. The proposed access drive would also be serviced by a series of catchbasins and PVC drain pipes connecting to larger trunk line.

Athletic Field Complex. In February 2002, the Hingham Sports Field Task Force published its Findings and Recommendations following a six month assessment of the status of Hingham's athletic fields and the demands for same. The conclusions of this study documented the chronic lack of multi-purpose rectangular fields in the Town along with a lack of Little League-sized baseball and softball fields. It recommended that the School Depot parcel be evaluated for the potential development for 3-4 new rectangular fields for football, soccer, lacrosse and field hockey, and 2-3 baseball fields. Additionally, the study recommended that a public toilet, concessions building, off-street parking, and a storage building be programmed for this site.

As presently designed, The Project accomplishes these program goals for athletic fields. This scheme includes the layout of three, multi-purpose rectangular fields in such a manner that minimizes earthwork in this area with challenging topography and geotechnical conditions. Additionally, it provides for two baseball/softball fields with foul pole distances of approximately 220 feet. Additional athletic facilities include a half mile waking track, 2 basketball courts, and a 100'X100' skateboard park. There is no lighting for the athletic fields.

Vehicular access to the athletic complex is from Fort Hill Street by means of the central access road. DPW building traffic is routed away from the athletic complex immediately upon entry to the School Depot parcel. The athletic complex parking lot provides approximately 183 spaces for off-street parking. It provides one-way traffic flow through the lot, and is situated to the front of the athletic complex, keeping vehicular traffic separated from recreational uses.

The Project provides for a small, informal wood frame press box and concessions building behind the baseball field backstops. This building is intended to be a temporary, inexpensive concessions stand without equipment. This seasonal building would be suitable for use prior to the renovation of Building 179. Building 179 is currently used by Hingham Public Schools for their facilities maintenance staff and storage. Prior to the renovation of Building 179, public toilets at the athletic complex would be provided using porta-potties.

The Master Plan calls for the renovation of Building 179 as a recreation facility in the final implementation phase under any development scenario, perhaps 5-6 years from the start of the Master Plan implementation. The recreation building would ultimately include public toilets, a concession stand with equipment for limited on-site food preparation, administrative areas for the Recreation Department, a maintenance storage area, and a workout/exercise area.

MEPA Thresholds

Land. The project site consists of 55± acres of which 6.7 acres are existing impervious area consisting of old broken roads, hardstand areas and building foundation slabs. As currently proposed by the Town of Hingham, the Project will result in a slight increase in impervious area over existing conditions, with a total of 7.6 acres of impervious area remaining after completion of the proposed project. The .9 acre increase in impervious area is well below the MEPA ENF threshold of 5 acres of new impervious area.

As may be noted on the enclosed grading scheme, the total area of disturbance (to include the demolition of existing impervious area totals 24.5 acres, less than the MEPA ENF threshold of 25 acres of disturbed area.

Further, the Project site is not in active agricultural use, is not being held for conservation, preservation, agricultural, or watershed preservation purposes, and does not involve an urban renewal project. As such, the project does not appear to exceed the MEPA Land threshold.

Rare Species. Although now largely undeveloped and fallow, the Project site is highly disturbed with old foundations, rail lines, areas of broken hardstand, and utilities throughout. According to the 11th Edition of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas, no estimated habits of rare wildlife, certified vernal pools, or priority habitats are located on the Property. The nearest habitats are located approximately 0.2 mile east of the Property. In addition, the nearest certified vernal pool is located approximately 0.25 mile southwest of the Property. Accordingly, the area is not a designated significant habitat for rare and endangered species. As such, the project does not appear to exceed the MEPA rare species threshold.

Wetlands, Waterways, and Tidelands. The Project site is not located adjacent to any coastal or inland waterways and the development proposal does not involve the dredging or filling of wetlands. A wetlands delineation was completed for the Property in the Fall 2003 in accordance with the DEP protocol by Gale. The Tucker Swamp area has been classified as a Bordering Vegetated Wetland.

The project does involve work within the 100 foot jurisdictional buffer related to the reconstruction of an existing road and associated utilities as it passes the Tucker Swamp. The reconstruction will result in a slight increase in impervious area, but Stormwater Management Policy standards and BMP's will be dramatically improved over the existing

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condition. There may also be work within the buffer related to the detention basin outfall. This work will be reviewed by the Hingham Conservation Commission and completed pursuant to an Order of Conditions, with appropriate siltation control and other mitigation as deemed appropriate. Again, we do not propose direct impacts to the resource area itself. As there is no direct impact to wetland resource areas, the project does not appear to exceed the MEPA wetlands, waterways, and tidelands threshold.

Water. The Project would result in new water usage of approximately 31,500 GPD, broken down as follows:

DPW Bathrooms/showers –	500 GPD
DPW Vehicle Washdown –	2,000 GPD
Recreation Building Public Toilets –	2,800 GPD
Recreation Building Concession Stand –	1,000 GPD
Field Irrigation -	25,000 GPD
(.5 in / week over 500,000 SF @ 12 weeks)	(worst case, not averaged over the year)
Misc. (drinking fountains, etc.) –	200 GPD
TOTAL	31,500 GPD

This total is well below the MEPA ENF threshold of 500,000 Gallons per day. The proposed water main extension within the main access drive right of way provides for a 12" main extended approximately 1,300 feet (1/4 Mile). As a result, the Project does not involve the withdrawal or expansion in withdrawal of water exceeding the thresholds of MEPA, nor does it involve the construction of new water mains more than 5 miles in length or drinking water treatment facilities . As such, the project does not appear to exceed the MEPA water threshold.

Wastewater. The Project will result in the additional discharge of approximately 6,500 gallons of wastewater to the Hingham sewage collection and treatment system (water usage above less irrigation). The sewer from both the recreation building and the DPW building will be connected to an existing sewer that transits the parcel from Conservatory Park to Fort Hill Street.

As a result, the Project does not involve the construction of a new or expansion of an existing wastewater treatment plant, construction of a new sewer main in excess of 5 miles, or a discharge exceeding the MEPA ENF threshold of 100,000 gallon per day, nor does it require a variance of Title 5 of the State Environmental Code. As such, the project does not appear to exceed the MEPA wastewater threshold.

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Transportation.

The proposed project will entail the construction of a new Town of Hingham DPW facility and town athletic complex consisting of two soccer fields; one soccer/lacrosse field; two baseball/softball fields; two basketball courts; a skate park; and concessions building. Trip-generation statistics available from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)[1] were reviewed for use in developing the traffic characteristics of the proposed project. Based on this review, it was determined that the ITE did not have trip-generation information for a similar type facility. Accordingly, information obtained from the Town of Hingham DPW was used to develop traffic characteristics for the public works building, with the number of proposed parking spaces (182) used to develop the traffic characteristics of the athletic complex.

A total of 32 employees are projected to be working at the new DPW facility, with employees generally arriving between 7:30 to 8:30 AM and leaving at 4:00 PM, with a lunch break between 12:00 to 1:00 PM. Approximately 75 percent of the employees will leave the facility in DPW trucks for field assignments, with an average of two employees per vehicle. Visitors to the DPW building are typically expected to be two to three-persons per hour between the office hours of 8:00 AM to 12 noon and 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Based on this information, the traffic characteristics for the DPW facility were developed and are summarized in Table T-1.

Table T-1
TRIP-GENERATION SUMMARY – HINGHAM DPW FACILITY

Time Period/Direction	Proposed Hingham DPW Facility[a]
Average Weekday Traffic	222
Weekday Morning Peak Hour:	
Entering	35
Exiting	15
Total	50
Weekday Evening Peak Hour:	
Entering	3
Exiting	32
Total	35

[a]Based on information provided by the Town of Hingham DPW.

[1] *Trip Generation, Seventh Edition*; Institute of Transportation Engineers; Washington, DC; 2003.

The traffic characteristics of the athletic fields were developed based on the number of proposed parking spaces to be provided (182). Since the athletic fields will serve mainly youth sports, weekday morning peak hour use is expected to be minimal and was estimated assuming 10 percent utilization of the parking spaces provided. During the weekday evening and Saturday midday peak hours, the estimated parking utilization was assumed at 75 percent, with an additional 10 percent assumed to be drop-off/pick-up trips. The directional distribution between entering and exiting traffic was developed based on a review of ITE Land Use Code (LUC) 412, County Park. Table T-2 summarizes the anticipated traffic characteristics of the athletic fields component of the project.

Table T-2
TRIP-GENERATION SUMMARY – ATHLETIC FIELDS

Time Period/Direction	Proposed Athletic Fields[a]
Average Weekday Traffic	502
Weekday Morning Peak Hour:	
Entering	13
Exiting	5
Total	18
Weekday Evening Peak Hour:	
Entering	54
Exiting	101
Total	155
Saturday Midday Peak Hour:	
Entering	91
Exiting	64
Total	155

[a]Based on the number of parking spaces to be provided for the athletic fields and using ITE LUC 412, County Park, for peak hour directional distribution.

Table T-3 summarizes the traffic characteristics of the proposed project.

Table T-3
TRIP-GENERATION SUMMARY – COMBINED DEVELOPMENT

Time Period/Direction	(A) Proposed DPW Facility[a]	(B) Proposed Athletic Fields[b]	(A+B) Total
Average Weekday Traffic	222	502	724
Weekday Morning Peak Hour:			
Entering	35	13	48
Exiting	15	5	20
Total	50	18	68
Weekday Evening Peak Hour:			
Entering	3	54	57
Exiting	32	101	133
Total	35	155	190
Saturday Midday Peak Hour:			
Entering	--	91	91
Exiting	--	64	64
Total	--	155	155

[a]Based on information provided by the Town of Hingham DPW.
[b]Based on the number of parking spaces to be provided for the athletic complex and using ITE LUC 412, County Park, for peak hour directional distribution.

As can be seen in Table T-3, the proposed Town of Hingham DPW facility and town athletic fields are expected to generate approximately 724 vehicle trips (362 entering and 362 exiting) on an average weekday, with 68 vehicle trips (48 entering and 20 exiting) during the weekday morning peak hour, 190 vehicle trips (57 entering and 133 exiting) during the weekday evening peak hour, and 155 vehicle trips (91 entering and 64 exiting) during the Saturday midday peak hour.

Parking as proposed, the project will provide 50 parking spaces associated with the DPW building (18 visitor and 32 staff spaces), with 182 parking spaces proposed for the athletic fields, for a total proposed parking supply of 232 spaces.

A review of the traffic characteristics of the project presented in Table T-3 and the proposed parking supply indicates that the DPW facility and athletic fields will generate approximately 724 new vehicle trips on an average weekday and will provide a total of 232 parking spaces, both of which are below the MEPA Transportation thresholds relating to new traffic generation and parking. Further, the proposed project does not require a State Highway Access Permit from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MassHighway) or

the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) given that the project site does not abut, directly or indirectly, a roadway under the jurisdiction of MassHighway or the DCR. As such, the project does not appear to exceed the MEPA transportation threshold.

Energy. The proposed project does not involve the construction of new or expansion of existing electric facilities nor does it involve the construction of a new fuel pipeline. As such, the project does not appear to exceed the MEPA energy threshold.

Air. The proposed project will not result in an increase in emissions exceeding the MEPA thresholds for air quality.

Solid and Hazardous Waste. The proposed project does not involve the construction of a new expansion of an existing solid or hazardous waste facility. As such, the project does not appear to exceed the MEPA solid or hazardous waste threshold.

Historical and Archaeological Resources. The proposed project will not result in the demolition or destruction of a structure listed in or located in a Historic District listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. The project site does not appear to be located within a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Regulations . No new or revised regulations are provided as a part of this project.

Conclusions Related to MEPA Thresholds. In summary, the proposed project does not appear to exceed the thresholds of MEPA and, therefore, would not require the filing of an ENF or EIR. Accordingly, we respectfully request a written determination confirming that the impacts related to the proposed project are below the MEPA thresholds.

Other State Level Permits Required/MEPA Jurisdiction. It does not appear that the Project requires state level permits. The project is not on or adjacent to a state highway, does not have significant wetlands impacts, does not involve Historical structures, does not involve rare or endangered species habitat, and does not meet the criteria for a sewer extension permit. As noted previously, the project does not involve state funding. As a result of this determination we additionally respectfully request that MEPA make a determination of no jurisdiction.

Impacts of Possible Future Projects. There are two possible future projects that are being explored by the Town on adjacent parcels, a skating arena to the west of the Project, and an Housing Development to the northeast of the Project. Unlike the DPW / Athletic Field Project, neither of these projects have been funded for planning, design or construction. Both are the subject of study by Town Committees, who are in a "fact finding mode". At this preliminary stage the committees are considering the feasibility of the projects, possible scope of the projects, and final site location and possible layout of the projects. It should be noted that there has been substantial opposition voiced by immediate

abutters to the site initially proposed for the skating arena. As neither of these projects have been planned or designed (with the exception of a privately funded preliminary skating arena siting study by Gale) it is not possible to determine the potential impacts of each project, nor the potential for state level permitting, nor the use of state funds. However, we have attempted to estimate possible impacts as follows:

Skating Arena Scope and Impacts. The initial concept plans for the arena (Enclosure 2) call for a pre-engineered metal building enclosing two full "sheets" of ice with a total area of 71,478 S.F. We are advised that if this rink project is approved, the preferred scheme would call for one ice sheet which would significantly decrease the size of the building and the parking area required. Again the scope and schedule of this project is far from defined, however, this appears to be the most ambitious buildout scenario. The building would be approximately 35 feet high. It would require 190 parking spaces, and generate approximately 1,100 new vehicle trips per day. The area of disturbance would be approximately 4.5 acres. The total roof area and the required parking area would result in an increase in impervious area of approximately 3.3 acres. A State Highway Access Permit would not be required from MassHighway or the DCR for the skating rink development.

It is not apparent if the arena would involve wetland impacts. On the parcel currently under study by the Town it is possible to lay out these facilities with no direct impacts to wetland areas, and still maintain a 100 foot buffer to adjacent property lines. Under some alternative siting schemes being discussed, intended to achieve a greater property line setbacks, there may be wetland area impacts.

The skating arena would require the extension of the water main an additional 230 feet beyond the DPW/Athletic facility stub and would require approximately 5,000-10,000 GPD of potable water. Additionally the facility would require a 500 foot sewer connection to the existing main, and generate approximately 5,000 –10,000 GPD of additional wastewater.

Housing Development Scope and Impacts. The initial concept plans for the housing development are even less well defined, and more numerous (Enclosure 3). If built, the most likely development scenario is a 45-unit rental property development by the Hingham Housing Authority with 1 and 2 bedrooms, and or 20-50 unit, moderate and market rate development of single, duplex and triplex homes. The following assessment of project impacts is based on very broad assumptions.

The total area of disturbance would be approximately 18 acres, assuming a density of 8 units/acre. We further assume the typical unit would have 2 bedrooms for a total of 190 bedrooms and a resultant demand for 20,900 GPD sewer and water based on Title V requirements of 110 GPD per bedroom.

This development would require approximately 143 new parking spaces based on 1.5 per unit and generate approximately 900 new vehicle trips per day. The total roof area and the required parking area would result in an increase in impervious area of approximately 4 acres. A State Highway Access Permit would not be required from MassHighway or the DCR for the housing development.

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It appears that the housing development would involve wetland impacts, however the planning is far too preliminary to quantify what they might entail.

The housing development utility concepts are unknown, and it is uncertain if they would bring utility connections through the school depot parcel or straight out to Beal Street. We cannot predict the length or size of either sewer or water connections.

Conclusions. The Skating Arena Project and the Housing Project may or may not be funded and constructed, and may or may not be built in the locations currently under consideration. Their impacts are ill defined at this time. While the Town recognizes the need to avoid segmentation of projects as a means of minimizing potential project impacts relative to the MEPA review thresholds, we do not feel that it would be inappropriate to proceed with the DPW and Athletic Field project at this time, without the consideration of the impacts of the possible future projects for the Skating Arena and Housing Project. Obviously, if one or both proposals go forward at sites contiguous to the DPW/Athletic facility, and once quantified, the impacts, when coupled with those of the DPW/Athletic facility, exceed MEPA thresholds and there is MEPA jurisdiction by virtue of other state permits or funding, the Town would be pleased to consider combined project impacts in seeking a MEPA Certificate. At this time, we respectfully request that the Secretary render an opinion which enables the Town to go forward with the DPW and Athletic fields project without consideration of the potential impacts associated with the possible future Skating Arena and Housing Proposals.

If you should have any questions regarding our request or require additional information in order to complete your review, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,

GALE ASSOCIATES, INC.

William J. Seymour

William J. Seymour, P.E.
Director, C.E.T. Division

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cc: DPW Building Committee
Rink Committee
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