

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Department,
State House, Boston 02133, August 20, 1970.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

In accordance with the provisions of Article LVI of the Amendments of the Constitution, I am returning, herewith, House Bill No. 5357 entitled "AN ACT DIRECTING THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF NORFOLK COUNTY TO CONVEY TO THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF REGIONAL COLLEGES LAND IN THE TOWN OF WALPOLE COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE HILL TOP FARM."

This bill directs the county commissioners of Norfolk County to transfer to the board of regional colleges a parcel of land in the town of Walpole to be used for a regional community college.

The bill requires the county commissioners, with the assistance of a disinterested appraiser, to set a value on this parcel, and to collect that amount from the fourteen towns in Norfolk County which are part of the regional community college area this college is intended to serve. The towns would pay proportionately to their latest equalized valuations. The bill further provides that this sum, when collected by the county, should be paid out to thirteen other towns in the county, proportionately to their latest equalized valuations.

I believe that this area of Norfolk County should have a regional community college. This parcel of land appears to be an appropriate site, obtainable at a reasonable cost.

The property now owned by Norfolk County belongs to all the cities and towns in that county, since they participated in its original purchase and in the subsequent improvements made to it. The bill, however, would assess the total cost on some towns, and distribute the money to certain other towns. I believe that if it is determined to set a value on this property and collect it from the towns in Norfolk County within the area the college will serve, that the money should

be returned to the entire county. All the communities in the county have an interest in this property. If the money is returned to the county, all the communities will share it by having their annual county assessments proportionately reduced.

I further believe that the public interest would be served by having the value of the property set by appraisers which include independently selected persons.

I therefore recommend the bill be amended as follows:—

By striking out section 2 and inserting in place thereof the following new section: — SECTION 2. Before conveying the aforesaid parcel of land as provided in section one, said county commissioners shall determine the value of said parcel, which value shall be set by agreement of three qualified disinterested appraisers, one of whom shall be appointed by the county commissioners, one by the board of regional community colleges, and a third to be selected by the other two.

After conveying said parcel of land to the commonwealth, the county commissioners shall certify the value of said parcel as determined, which shall hereinafter be deemed to be the cost of said parcel to the county, and shall transmit such certification to the director of accounts.

The cost of said parcel as so determined shall be borne by the following towns in the county of Norfolk and shall, in addition to the amount levied upon each such town as its share of the county tax, be levied upon said towns in the proportion which the latest equalized of all said towns: — Bellingham, Canton, Foxborough, Franklin, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Norfolk, Norwood, Plainville, Sharon, Walpole, Westwood, and Wrentham.

The county commissioners shall issue warrants requiring said treasurers to pay to the county treasurer the amount so assessed, at such time as shall be fixed in the warrant by the county commissioners. The amounts so received shall be a receipt to the county which shall be used to reduce the county tax levied on the city and towns of said county.

Respectfully submitted,

FRANCIS W. SARGENT,
Acting Governor of the Commonwealth.