

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 16, 2019

Members Present: Jay Butler, Jean-Pierre Minois, Tim Olson (part-time), Jeff Hubbard (part-time), Mike Twomey, and Patrick Reffett

Members Absent: Allison Jenkins

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM), Lee Sollenberger and John Sayre-Scibona of Design Technique (DTI), and Designer/Architect, Drayton Fair and Alicia Maillett of Lerner, Ladds, Bartel Architects (LLB)

This Town Hall Building Committee (THBC) meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean-Pierre Minois at 5:05 PM in the Memorial Room at Hamilton Town Hall.

Drayton began the meeting with a Power Point presentation on the preliminary building renovation plan ideas. Tim Olson said he would send a copy to everyone.

Drayton first mentioned that he had interviewed the staff at Town Hall on two occasions and thus was able to develop the proposed office layouts using his modeling software.

On the first slide, he pointed out the various boring locations in the area around the building and noted an AUL (Activity Use Limitation) area in the DPW parking lot that needed to be avoided. Tim and Mike explained the history of the AUL that involved a past investigation that found a contaminant in the soil. This slide also noted possible locations in case DPW offices were to be moved into the garages and potential location for a new septic system. Drayton also noted that his team has completed the assessment of building existing conditions, including structural, and has found no serious issues.

The current building has 4020 gross square feet (GSF) on both the first and second floors for a total of 8040 GSF above grade. However, usable space is only 3157 GSF on the first floor and 1011 GSF on the second floor, but with inclusion of the meeting space, 2022 GSF. Thus, the total usable space above grade is 4168 GSF and with inclusion of the meeting space, 6190 GSF. He noted that the building was not very efficient. Drayton determined that current offices required 5245 square feet, but when adding in common spaces, circulation, toilet, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing, the required space by using a 35% factor the required space would be 7080 GSF.

Drayton's presentation offered three Options of small, medium, and full width, 3 story additions, which could be added onto the back of Town Hall. The additions would house, as a minimum, the elevator. The basement was not identified for office space in any Option. The major difference in the options, in addition to the size of the additions, was the size of the restored

second floor meeting space. Option 1 requires relocating the DPW offices (450 square feet) to the DPW garages, along with required new septic system connections. All three options required moving the DPW fence back to keep the same number of parking spaces, and thus will require relocating the underground gas tanks. Options 2 and 3 require relocating the septic system and may require enlarging it if the size of the second floor meeting area demands such.

Option 1

This would be a 1000 square foot per floor, 3 story addition located on the right, rear corner of the building that would house at the basement level, an elevator and a new vault. Two rest rooms and an employee break room are also located in the basement. Entrance would be in the right rear of the building at grade level. The first floor of the addition would contain the elevator and ADA compliant rest rooms. The approximate 450 square foot DPW offices would be located in the DPW garage. The individual, enclosed offices have been carefully sized so as to be fully ADA compliant including door opening size for wheel chair access. Department Managers have been allowed space for a conference table and chairs. A 14 person, enclosed conference room has been created on the first floor and a smaller enclosed one on the second floor. The Memorial Room has been converted to offices and the second floor meeting space for 125 people has been set aside for meetings. The offices on the second floor require access via the meeting room so Tim asked if a wall could be set up to allow access to offices without going through the meeting room. Drayton said that was possible. In response to a question from Jay, second floor offices would have a hung ceiling to enclose them. Patrick asked Drayton to change the office designation for Community Development to Community Coordinator. Drayton allowed for some future expansion in the number of staff, including an office for another accountant, space for another person in the Town Clerk's office, and a Human Resources Office.

Option 2

This would be a 3 story, 5200 square foot per floor addition on the right rear of Town Hall that would intrude on the existing septic system. The DPW offices would stay in the current building envelope and the second floor meeting room would be larger. The septic system would not only need to be relocated but would likely need to be larger. This addition would provide storage in the basement level, and office space and new rest rooms on both the first and second levels. The second floor meeting area would increase from 1505 in Option 1 to 1888 in Option 2.

Option 3

This would be a 3 story, 7400 square foot addition per floor that would be the full width of the Town Hall building. This addition would also require a new septic system. The addition basement level would afford storage and some offices while the existing basement would have storage, employee break room, and two rest rooms. The first floor of the addition would contain offices and ADA compliant rest rooms. The second floor of the addition would contain offices and rest rooms as well. The second floor in the main building would allow for a complete restoration of the original meeting space and have a mechanical lift to access the restored stage.

There also could be a fourth floor connection to the mezzanine level. Entry to the building would be at the left rear corner of the building.

Option 1 Modifications - Mike

Mike asked why not use the basement for offices as he felt that acceptance of this project would be based on the lowest possible costs. He did allow, however, that at some time in the past that the drainage system in the ground behind the building was damaged and that it would first need repairs to prevent potential water ingress into the basement. He further asked that Option 1 be “bare boned” based on placing all offices, elevator and new rest rooms within the envelope of the current building, and using the basement as necessary for offices. He also suggested reducing the recommended size of the offices and perhaps removing the space allowed for Department Managers to have conference tables to accomplish fitting everything into the building envelope. While not advocating for this baseline Option, per se, he felt the design exercise was necessary as the question would likely be asked by some who wanted to appreciate the lowest cost possible for the project. His suggestion was not debated further. Drayton agreed to look into this modification.

Option 1 Modifications – Jay

Tim Olson indicated that Town Manager Joe Domelowicz wanted to initially refrain from using the basement for offices, if possible. Most agreed that the basement be used for storage but that the area needed to be environmentally controlled. Jay suggested that we reduce the size of the Option 1 second floor meeting space of 125 seats by approximately half and using that freed-up area to allow keeping the DPW offices in the building, but keep the Option 1 addition with elevator, vault, and rest rooms. The basement would be set up for storage, employee break room, and as meeting space for various Town Boards and Committees. Jay felt that the need for a 125 person meeting space was minimal, especially since it would not be large enough to hold Town Meetings. Jay also noted that the Memorial Room was the current meeting room for all Boards and Committees and that only a few of those meetings exceeded capacity. Patrick indicated that recent Affordable Housing Trust meetings could have used 65 seats. John brought up the fact that the second floor meeting space was the single most important layout factor to decide before much more could be done. Initial discussions had left open the consideration for full refurbishment of the second floor as in Option 3. He noted that the Committee needed to come to a decision on whether or not the voters would be interested in this meeting space and what size was desired. Jeff agreed to bring up the question at the next Selectmen’s meeting next Tuesday. Jay asked if John could tell us what it cost Topsfield to completely refurbish their second floor meeting space that is approximately the same size as Hamilton’s. John said he would see if he could come up with that number. Jay and Patrick felt that restoration of the second floor meeting space, either full as in Option 3, or Option 2 with 125 seats, was likely more a wish, desire, or nice to have as opposed to a need, especially as these options would significantly affect the costs. Drayton felt that he could look at Jay’s proposed modifications and in the case of the basement, enlarge the existing windows somewhat to make the space more attractive for meetings.

Option 3

There was not much discussion about this option as it seemed this option might be too expensive, especially since most felt the completely restored meeting space would not be large enough for Town Meetings.

Septic System

While both Options 2 and 3 will require relocation of the septic system, even option 1 may require it depending on whether or not it could handle the additional capacity of the second floor meeting area and the addition of toilets and showers for the DPW offices relocated to the garage. As part of his investigations, Drayton did look at some potential new locations.

HAZMAT

Jay asked Lee and John about the status of the HAZMAT investigation and Lee indicated that he and John had solicited proposals from three companies with two finalists whose proposals will be reviewed next week. Jay asked if the HAZMAT work included investigation of the the gas tanks in the DPW yard since even with Option 1, the tanks would need to be dug up and relocated. Both Lee and John corrected Jay to explain that the current HAZMAT investigation involved only the building itself, and not the ground around it. It was their understanding that relocation of the gas tanks was part of another effort already underway and separate from the Town Hall project. Jay suggested that since the tank relocation had been on hold, and that it was now likely to become part of the building renovation project since the DPW fence will be required to move back.

Costs

A discussion on the costs of renovations suggested \$450 per square foot for construction costs and \$600 per square foot for project costs. Mike did some “back of the envelope” calculations that guesstimated that the difference between Option 1 and 2 would be \$1.1M and that the difference between Option 2 and 3 would be \$2.2M, with Option 1 costing around \$8M. As a result, most felt that Option 3 was not realistic. Drayton noted that he had planned on doing only one detailed cost estimate, depending on the option chosen by the Committee. A discussion ensued about the potential reaction of Town Meeting to Options at very high cost levels, definitely for costs over \$10M. John suggested that any proposal for renovations will need to be translated into the projected effect on the tax rate.

Drayton mentioned the idea of a potential, landscaped, graded ramp to the front door for handicapped access but Mike felt that this would not be acceptable nor would the continued existence of the handicapped ramp on the side of the building. The Committee will need to try and figure out what cost level might be acceptable.

Jay Butler made a motion to approve the 12/20/18 meeting minutes that were approved unanimously.

Jean-Pierre asked about how best to keep the Committee informed of activities given the time between meetings. John offered that the progress reports he provides to Tim might be circulated. (After the meeting, John asked that he and Lee be copied on the distribution of meeting minutes.)

Jean-Pierre suggested the next meeting of the Committee be Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 5:00 – 7:00 PM in the Memorial Room at Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.

Secretary

Jay Butler
Attested 1/18/19