

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE

NOTES FROM MEETING

July 10, 2019

Members Present: Jay Butler, Jean-Pierre Minois, Mike Twomey, Patrick Reffett, Tim Olson, Jack Lawrence

Members Absent: Jeff Hubbard, Bill Olson

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM), Lee Sollenberger of Design Technique (DTI); Designer/Architect, Drayton Fair of Lerner, Ladds, Bartels (LLB); Steven Walsh, COA Executive Board; Jack Hauck, Ed Howard, and Kristen Weiss, Historic District Commission; Sean Farrell, Board of Selectmen; Lesley Wayland, Board of Health Agent; Dorr Fox, Coordinator for the Historic District Commission

Mike Twomey opened the meeting at 5:02 PM in the Memorial Room at Town Hall.

Historic District Commission (HDC) Walk-Through in Town Hall, 3:00 – 5:00 PM Today

HDC Walk-Through Attendees: Ed Howard, Jack Hauck, Kristen Weiss, Mike Twomey, Dorr Fox, Drayton Fair, Tim Olson, Lee Sollenberger, Shawn Farrell, and Jack Lawrence.

Mike asked Ed Howard to discuss the results of the walk-through of Town Hall. Ed noted that the major focal point on historic issues within Town Hall was the grand staircase vs. the addition and specifically the elimination of the staircase. He also noted that the HDC voted 5:1 in favor of Option B to preserve the grand staircase and develop an addition. Ed asked Jack Hauck to comment as well.

Jack Hauck said he felt the walk-through was an excellent meeting as much of the wainscoting, walls, and all of the windows will be preserved. He had no issue with the grand staircase being removed. He felt that the interior should be designed so as to bring back the design as it once was. He also wanted to preserve the jail, or at least the door of the jail. Jack then read his list of things that need to be preserved: the grandfather clock; rededication of the Memorial Room on the second floor and reinstallation of the large plaque there; the weights and measures cabinet and the need to catalog the items inside; restoration of the front and side entry ways; no change to wainscoting; preservation of scones on the second floor; keeping the exterior the same and restoring it; keeping the railings on the staircases; preserving the spindles; preserving the archways; placing archways in new areas as appropriate; removing the outside access ramp; removing the fire escape, and removing the shed at the left rear of the building.

Kristen Weiss, member of the HDC and Site Manager for Cogswell Grant, a working farm and historic house museum in Essex, MA, an Essex National Heritage Area, also made some

comments from the walk-through. Kristen first noted that the plans for the interior of Town Hall looked great, especially the reproduction of the woodwork. She wondered how the second floor proscenium could be preserved given that Option A takes out the staircase. Drayton agreed to look into it. She also commented on the arched windows for the second floor offices that because of their ceilings, hid the arches over the windows. Drayton suggested that a soffit could be designed to make the arches at least visible from the outside of the building.

Jay first asked who participated in the walk-through (listed above) and then asked Drayton if what he heard today would affect the conceptual cost estimate done last March. Drayton didn't think the info he learned today would be overwhelming but he did suggest that the focus on the interior historic preservation might eat into the contingency.

HDC Vote for Option B

Jack Hauck noted that the recent HDC 5:1 vote to support Option B and preserve the grand staircase was a strong vote with only he dissenting primarily due to cost. Ed Howard said that the sole HDC member who was not present when the HDC vote was taken, Scott Clemens, had offered to send his written comments in support of preserving the stairs if needed. Jack Hauck suggested that as we move forward that we talk in terms of "revitalizing" Town Hall vs. "refurbishing". The HDC members left the meeting at this point.

LLB Presentation by Drayton Fair

Drayton first reviewed the Option A layout that had been updated after recent town hall employee interviews and noted some potential changes. He will try and preserve the jail cell or at least the door by reconfiguring the proposed conference room. On the first floor, it may be necessary to move the internal hallway door closer to the center of the building. The toilets on the second floor still need to be moved. Next he showed the three elevation drawings (Options 1, 2, and 3) for the rear of the building that had been presented at a previous meeting. And once again, he stressed the need to effectively move the main entrance from the front of the building to the rear so that handicapped persons would not be treated as second class citizens by not allowing them access to the main entrance. Drayton next showed three new rear elevation options 4, 5, and 6. Option 4 showed both rear doors as symmetrical with gables overhead. Option 5 was sort of a mashup of styles while Option 6 was showed a transom over the door that allowed access to the elevator to indicate that it was the main entrance. Jack asked about adding an awning of sorts to provide protection from the elements. Drayton said he could look at it but noted that this would protrude a ways out from the building. Several other discussions ensued about these options and potential variants but no decisions were made.

Drayton next showed the Option B layout that had not been updated to the same level of Option A. He noted that the bulkhead for the left rear entry door was to remain. The proscenium on the second floor was preserved and the stairs to the mezzanine were to be walled off part way up. He then pointed out once again that the addition could not be seen from the street. Then, he represented the three options for an addition. Jack noted that Bill Olson had voted against Option

B in part because he felt the focus would shift to the design of the addition and take away focus from the rest of the building.

Board of Selectmen (BOS) Vote for Option A – Shawn Farrell

Shawn Farrell proceeded to explain the vote of the Selectmen to recommend Option A. He explained that the money was the foremost reason as the Selectmen are constantly concerned over the tax rate. Bill Olson was concerned, not only over the focus on the addition design and what the HDC might require, but was also somewhat concerned over what might be found in the ground. Several members of the BOS noted that the stairs are not much used, many people who don't come into Town Hall are probably not aware of them, and they are not a centerpiece. Shawn said that had the stairs been located at the front entrance, it might be a different story. He also pointed out that since they don't meet code, a waiver will be necessary. Mike noted that it may be possible to save parts of the stairs once disassembled, and maybe the stair railings could be used elsewhere. Finally, Shawn indicated that we need an efficient building and that spending the extra money on an addition was not worth it. Mike noted Ray Whipple felt the same way.

Mike then asked what the committee should do – support the Selectmen's decision or try and fight it? Jean-Pierre noted that the committee first voted for option A and most recently reversed itself and voted for Option B. Mike noted that it was Jay who insisted on keeping Option B as an alternative to Option A. Shawn said that he could not envision the voters supporting the more expensive Option B. Patrick suggested supporting the BOS vote. Jean-Pierre supported the BOS vote. Jay passed on commenting. Tim suggested supporting the BOS for a lower cost alternative. Mike noted that as an advisory committee to the BOS, the THBC charter required us to poll voters for their opinions and present options to the BOS. Jack Lawrence made a motion that the THBC endorse Option A, especially since the newly formed Capital Committee has uses for the money thus saved. The motion was seconded and voted yes unanimously. Shawn Farrell went on to say that the committee presented the BOS with two options and the BOS picked one. And then noted that we are behind on the time-line. He stressed that we cannot miss the Fall Town meeting for our next project milestone. He then thanked the committee for their efforts. Drayton congratulated the committee as well on their vote and then went on to note that the committee now needs to choose amongst the rear elevation options.

The conversation then turned back to the Option A rear elevation drawings. Shawn suggested making the door that allowed entry to the elevator more prominent. Tim, Shawn, Jack, and Drayton then discussed side lights, porticos, potentially a glass paneled door. Jay noted that the HDC had more or less the final decision but Drayton advised that we needed to give them some direction. Option 5 was recommended but no vote was taken.

Project Timeline Discussion

Drayton noted that given the current status, that LLB would not be able to complete a Detailed Design but would have something appropriate for the Fall Town meeting. Mike asked Drayton if there were a near term milestone or a project report date that we could focus on in terms of

setting up the next THBC meeting. Drayton suggested a month from this meeting. Jack asked what we will be able to show at Fall Town Meeting. It was suggested the Option A office layout, latest cost estimate, and site plan. Mike suggested 3D renderings, elevation drawings, site plan, and cost estimate. Tim asked what LLB needed to develop the site plan and suggested they contact him directly with any questions. Drayton will send out any drawing details, especially the elevation drawings, and other updates as they develop them. Mike suggested putting them in the DropBox. Jean-Pierre asked about the scope for the next meeting. Lee asked for the date. Mike suggested Wed., August 7th for the next meeting.

COA Presentation by Mike on Option A vs. B

Mike recognized Steve Walsh of the Council on Aging Executive Board who noted that Mike had met with his committee to explain the project. While the committee did not vote on Option A vs. B, as they had differing viewpoints, they appreciated the update.

Concern Over Deed Restriction on Town Hall

Mike asked Dorr Fox if he had looked into the possibility of any deed restrictions on Town Hall given the listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Dorr said he had not done so but felt there were not any unless the Town received a grant at some point in time. Mike explained the situation with the Essex Town Hall. Dorr agreed to check into it.

Temporary Relocation of Town Hall Employees During Construction – Patrick Reffett

Patrick reported on his investigation into the potential use of the second floor of the Patton Estate for temporary housing of some Town Hall employees during construction. Patrick had previously submitted an email report to the committee. Space may be available for 9 – 11 non-retail employees, but lots of work would be needed to make that possible. This would include carpet cleaning, plumbing, and HVAC. WI-FI is fair and will require a booster. He is still looking for other spaces, some quite nearby. Mike asked if he were looking at Gordon Conwell and Patrick assured him he was and was planning a walk-around there. Jack recommended he coordinate with the PILOT committee and Patrick assured him he would do so. Patrick will continue to coordinate with Joe Domelowicz.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Mike next asked Jay to get the minutes of the last meeting approved. Jay asked for a motion and a second to approve the 6//27/19 minutes and they were approved unanimously, after Jay accepted several corrections from Jack Lawrence.

Outreach Efforts

Patrick mentioned that all persons having hamiltonma.gov email addresses were getting the THBC meeting agendas sent to them via the “ALL” command.

Soil HAZMAT Testing

Lee reaffirmed John Sayre-Scibona's comment made at the last meeting that no soil HAZMAT testing had been done around the building. John had said that the test had not yet been done as they will wait until closer to construction start to do so since any hazardous findings may require immediate reporting to the state and timely remediation. Lee noted that since the committee has chosen Option A, and thus no digging of an addition foundation is required, no test will be done, as long as construction soils (e.g., septic system expansion) are re-used on the site.

Action Items Status:

- Drayton and Mallory – Provide information and advice to Mike to allow him to initiate request for waiver to remove ADA access ramp on side of building. – a decision must first be made on the rear entry options.
- Mike/Mallory/Drayton/Lee – Come to an agreement on building “gross square footage” for discussion of building renovations and recommend guidelines for public discussion of cost per square foot. – Mallory looking into it
- Mallory – Provide size comparison between the Memorial Room and the Option B second floor meeting room.

New Action Items

- Drayton and Mallory – Miscellaneous Option A layout changes - relocate second floor bathrooms; develop soffits for second floor offices to display arches over windows; consider way to preserve proscenium on second floor; develop way to preserve the jail cell door and/or jail cell on lower level; consider moving first floor interior hallway door closer to center of building.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:46 PM.

Mike set the next THBC meeting for Wednesday, August 7, 2019 from 5:00 - 7:00 PM in the Memorial Room at Town Hall.

Secretary

Jay Butler

Attested 7/11/19

