

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE

NOTES FROM MEETING

October 30, 2019

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

Members Absent: Bill Olson

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM), Design Technique (DTI) – Lee Sollenberger; Lerner, Ladds, Bartels (LLB) Architects – Mallory Demty and Drayton Fair; Board of Selectmen (BOS) members – Darcy Dale and Rosemary Kennedy (and Jeff Hubbard); Hamilton Historic District Commission (HHDC) members – Ed Howard and Scott Clements; Hamilton Development Corp. and Planning Board member - Rick Mitchell; Option C Promoter - Doug Trees; Patton Homestead Board member - Carin Kale; Finance Committee (FINCOM) member – David Wanger; Robin Davis; and one other.

Mike Twomey opened the Town Hall Building Committee (THBC) meeting at 5:00 PM in the Council on Aging Building.

Meeting Minutes

Mike asked Jay Butler to get the past meeting minutes approved. Jay asked for a motion to approve the October 24, 2019 meeting minutes which was made, seconded, and voted unanimously.

Building Option Discussion

Mike noted that Town Meeting had voted for Option B but noted there were other things to consider.

Hamilton Historic District Commission (HHDC) Draft Letter

Ed Howard reported on a draft letter to be sent from the HHDC to the THBC and passed out several copies.

Doug Trees mentioned that while Option A was designed, Option B was still in the Concept Phase, and thus it was a good time to address all of the HHDC concerns with the building design. Mike mentioned that Option B is a simpler design than Option A so the Detailed Design could move faster.

Rick Mitchell reminded everyone that at the last THBC meeting it was decided that the committee would go back and get Town Counsel's opinion as to whether or not the committee need to strictly follow the recommendations from the HHDC on the interior design of the

building. Mike said he had some info on that subject that will be released later in the meeting. Rick mentioned further that he thought that the HHDC was very focused on the Town Hall renovations whereas they have not commented in the past on the design of other historical buildings.

Mallory mentioned that the use of CPC funds required the building design to meet the US Dept. of the Interior historic preservation standards (Standards) and that LLB had been requested by the HHDC to meet these Standards as well.

Scott Clements mentioned that there could well be a cost savings if we followed the Standards. He pointed out that the Town Hall is the only surviving building in the historic district of the same vintage, and thus an important building. Scott then started to go over the list of items in the draft HHDC letter to the THBC. The items requiring attention to historic preservation detail were segregated into exterior and interior. In the case of the exterior design details, Mike and Scott agreed that the current design meets all of the HHDC concerns with the only concern being the appearance of the exterior addition which needs to be developed further. Mike mentioned that the addition designs shown at Town Meeting were conceptual only. Mike further explained and Scott concurred that the design of the rear entrance (now the main entrance) of Wenham Town Hall is the type of design that should be considered. In the case of the interior design for Hamilton Town Hall, the current design meets most of the HHDC concerns except for a few items. These concerns were: how to treat the trim on ADA non-conforming doors; a request to keep the second floor stage intact; the need to address the spatial flow of the second floor considering the stage, balcony, domed ceiling, and the second floor offices, all of which Scott declared was a revolutionary concept to address. Scott also noted that the design should not contradict the symmetry on the second floor as we switched the axis of the design and bisected the archway. Mike noted the concern over the need for office space. Scott finished his remarks by noting that Option B does not conform to the Standards and that we should not want this building option design to be an example of poor attention to historic preservation. Mike thanked him for his efforts and said we will consider his inputs.

Option C Proposal

Doug Trees passed out copies of a new site plan and noted that the rear entrance of town hall will become the main entrance. He noted that the capacity of the second floor meeting room when compared to the available parking spaces, there would be a problem. Thus, he felt a new layout was necessary. His solution is to remove some offices from Town Hall, i.e., DPW, and place them in a renovated garage in the DPW yard. He wants to: abandon using the basement; restore the second floor meeting room; and use rod rigging to support the second floor walls and make the design compatible with the room. He mentioned that one of the problems with the Option B design is that it results in a 7 foot ceiling height in the basement and thus he wants the basement to be used only for mechanical systems. He thought his ideas would result in a less expensive project as he cited the industry standard \$550 per square foot cost for renovating the DPW garages and his plan to eliminate expensive \$1M costs for waterproofing the basement as he mentioned the Dave Thompson paper of on the waterproofing of the basement. Drayton mentioned that LLB had not seen this info from Dave Thompson. We will provide him with the

info. Doug also mentioned his plan to eliminate the \$240K elevator with a much less expensive one. Mike thanked Doug for his work and stressed the need for the committee to look at Doug's ideas.

Drayton commented on the fact that he had looked at Doug's ideas and his initial thought was that the cost estimate was very low. He mentioned that the Option B site plans had been costed by two independent cost estimators and that the cost were correlated. For instance, Doug's plan did not come close to appreciating the Option B site plans cost of \$988K. While Drayton noted there was no time to consider all costs for Option C, he offered that he could submit Doug's sketches to get a cost estimate that might be compared better to existing estimates. Mike then asked for Selectmen input.

Jean-Pierre asked if Doug's latest idea was Option C. Doug indicated it was revision of Option C. Mike indicated that the committee will look at it and Doug commented that we need to look at costs inside the building. Mike then indicated that we were trying to make the Spring Town Meeting to ask for construction funds whereas Jay immediately pointed out that it was Mike's idea to make Town Meeting but not the committee.

Jeff asked how much would take to cost Option C so as to get a realistic cost estimate. Drayton said that he depended on what Option C was to be considered since the Option C details changed with tonight's meeting. Drayton offered it would cost \$5K for the estimate and take 2- 3 weeks. Jeff noted that politically that Doug won't go away and thus we need to get an estimate. Lee pointed out that any estimate needed to consider the full project cost which means consideration of the architect's fees, OPM fees, and contingencies, and thus the need to add \$2.9M to construction costs, as Doug's estimate addressed only construction costs and not Total Project Costs.

Mike mentioned several structural integrity questions and wondered about the implications of not needing to do structural bracing for a lowered stage or leaving the second floor intact. Mallory said that while there might be some savings in keeping the stage, that in order to address loading concerns that structural mods will still be required for the floor since the second floor walls were peeling apart and thus need bracing.

David Wanger noted that the difference in cost for the various Options were mitigated by a 30 year bond and noted it was a political situation regarding the choice amongst Option A, B , or C. He noted that Town Meeting voted for Option B with a 2/3's vote. He is fearful of voter confusion and or negative views of the project as the THBC considers other Options. He thinks we should consider the DPW building options later. Mike agreed and said we need to listen to the HHDC ideas first.

Robin Davis spoke and referred to the Town Meeting issue where Town Counsel indicated that the vote was not for a building Option but an amount of money. She noted that Option C was not known before Town Meeting and that no details were available to voters. Thus, if this continues the voters at the ballot box will likely vote no if they don't understand the details. She

went on to express her feelings that Town Hall employees deserve a modern attractive building. She also mentioned the potential need for a large meeting space for concerts, etc. as the only other large venue options were the high school and the Community Center that was privately owned.

Mike noted that the committee was now back in the Concept Design Phase for Option B.

Jeff mentioned that the FINCOM, HHDC, BOS, and Town Meeting all voted for option B, but that all committees were cost sensitive.

Carin Kale felt that she was one of the most confused people after the recent Town Meeting vote. She understands the Option B design where the grand staircase will be preserved and a small addition will be added at the rear of the building for an elevator. She recommends a more attractive addition vs. the one shown at Town Meeting. Mike noted that the addition sketches shown at Town Meeting were draft concepts that need more development and suggested that the addition at the rear of Wenham Town Hall was the type we should consider.

Drayton pointed out that any embrace of changes to the design will impact schedule and that as the construction start date is necessarily moved out the project costs mentioned at Town Meeting will thus increase. The project cost will escalate the longer the project takes. Mike wanted LLB to continue to aim for the Spring 2020 Town Meeting for completing Detailed Design but then admitted it was next to impossible for that to happen. He also admitted that all budget numbers were tied to the schedule. Mallory noted that LLB will do whatever the Committee directs them to do.

Jeff made a motion to ask LLB to spend \$5K for a cost estimate on Option C that was seconded. Doug asked that it be done fairly by taking out those items in Option B that would be removed with Option C. Jay immediately indicated his vote against this motion by pointing out that the committee had already examined approximately 32 design options since the start of conceptual design and noted that many of the most recent suggestions, i.e., keeping the stage; preserving the second floor meeting space; waterproofing the basement; and placing offices in the DPW garages had already been discussed and had been discarded. He felt the committee needed to better understand Option C in terms of design ideas that had already been decided and that the current cursory design paperwork needs to be reviewed by LLB and their thoughts presented to the committee. Jay further commented that the design info describing all of these design options has not been published for general review as it is kept in a private access DropBox. Jay said this will change going forward. Robin mentioned that she had trouble finding the minutes for past meetings on our web page but she was assured they were there as Carin has spent some time reading them. Jay also mentioned that there was a recent blip in getting recent minutes posted but that it will be resolved by next week or so. Jeff countered that politically we need this cost estimate but he withdrew his motion in favor of Jay's idea.

Drayton noted that some details of Option C changed from last week they did not understand all of the details in Option C, e.g., status of the new vault, details on the DPW building, etc. and he

had not seen Dave Thompson's paper on the basement. Mike suggested making some reasonable assumptions. Jack asked if we needed a working group meeting to sort out the specifications. Mike offered that for \$5K we needed to be careful because if you put junk in you get junk out. Drayton wanted the detail put into the plans.

David Wanger asked why the committee was moving away from the Town Meeting vote, and reinventing the wheel. He suggested dealing with the HHDC inputs but that Jeff's pre-emptive political move to cost Option C may show Option C costs too much.

Mike suggested the committee may consider part of Option C to address some HHDC concerns. Since we are back in the exploratory phase of Option B we should consider parts of Option C.

Carin questioned the HHDC list as only a few committee members had seen it and wondered how it matches with Option C. Preserving the large meeting room may make sense if it saves money. We should look to the HHDC ideas to save money. Mike suggested that parts of Option C make sense.

Project Direction

Tim made a motion that the committee look at the HHDC list vs. the Option B design and let LLB do this as part of the Option B Detailed Design. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mike noted that LLB was taking away two homework items. The first item was to follow Tim's motion and the second was to estimate the cost of Option C. Mallory noted that Option C was similar to several past options considered and was this a "free for all" attack on Option C. Tim suggested they could suggest changes in layout or organization to consider some Option C ideas. Jean-Pierre wondered if Option C could save some money. Scott noted that Option C agrees with the HHDC inputs. Jeff noted that Option C could be more expensive than Option B.

Robin asked what problem we were trying to solve with the Town Hall renovation project. Mike, Tim, Jack, and others mentioned several reasons, e.g., plumbing, electrical, fire protection, ADA access, bathrooms, A/C, heating, rotting wood trim, leaking roof, etc. She was concerned about employees having a comfortable modern office space. Jay noted that all employees were interviewed at least twice as to their needs for space and furniture and that the template developed for these needs was applied to all building options considered. Robin then wondered about the amount of paper town records that needed to be kept. Mike mentioned the paperless initiative and that we were allowed to digitize most of them to reduce paper. She then asked whether or not that cost was in the budget and Tim explained that the Town Manager was funding the effort.

Rick Mitchell noted the need to focus on Option B. He said that it looked like the biggest issue to consider is the second floor stage suggestion from the HHDC.

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:48 PM. Next meeting was planned for November 13, 2019 to provide LLB with time to consider design and cost information detail based on the votes just taken.

Secretary
Jay Butler