

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

September 17, 2020

Members Present: Mike Twomey, Jean-Pierre Minois, Jack Lawrence, Tim Olson, Jay Butler, Darcy Dale, Rosemary Kennedy, and Patrick Reffett

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM) - John Sayre-Scibona and Lee Sollenberger of Design Technique (DTI); Designer/Architect - Lerner, Ladds, Bartels (LLB), Drayton Fair and Mark Ritz; and Steve Astulfi, abutter

Mike Twomey opened the Zoom audio/video teleconference at 1:01 PM.

Past Meeting Minutes

Jay made a motion to accept the 9/10/20 meeting minutes which was seconded. Jay then reviewed comments by Lee and asked for and received a unanimous roll call approval vote. Mike asked Jay about the last non-meeting on 9/2/20 where a quorum was attained but the meeting was inadvertently not posted. Mike indicated his plan to listen to the audio tape of the meeting and develop some meeting notes for approval at the next meeting.

LLB Proposed Town Hall Meeting Presentation for 11/14/20

Drayton made some summary comments before going through the presentation slides. He plans to show: a new rendered site plan showing the two large trees mentioned at the last meeting and the updates to the DPW fence; updated floor plans; two new renderings of the second floor meeting room; the project schedule; and an updated table showing the total project cost.

Drayton asked how far back in the project did he need to go, i.e., showing current conditions at Town Hall such as over-crowding, storage and safety concerns. Mike did not think he needed to repeat what was already shown at Town Meeting. Drayton then showed his first information slide that prompted several comments. John thought it was important to clarify what building upgrades were being addressed and what building and system upgrades were proposed as most voters might not understand. Mike and Darcy agreed, and Darcy suggested using the word "improvements" or "alignments" and Jack suggested "compliance" that was accepted. John questioned highlighting accessibility since it covered only the ramp approval, but Jay noted it covered the entire interior building layout with door widths and other ADA issues. Drayton agreed. Jean-Pierre suggested more construction details and Jack agreed. Rosemary suggested that some verbal explanations would be needed during the presentation. Rosemary suggested that Drayton could add verbal comments on several things without adding more detail on the slides. Jay suggested and Drayton accepted developing some backup slides with more detail that would only be shown if necessary. At this point, Drayton asked who would give the presentation at Town Meeting. Mike was unsure and said it was not yet decided.

Drayton next showed the site plan and mentioned that a newer version was in development by DeVellis, as the one shown did not have all of the trees shown or the fence correctly angled. Steve asked about the fence that would border his property in terms of material, i.e., cedar and if it looked the same as the current fence and where it would be located. Mark indicated the fence would be similar to the current fence but was unable to give specifics, i.e., 1 x 8 foot or 2 x 8 foot boards, but did say it would be located on the property line. Mark also noted the generator was located on the building side. Mark will double check the entire southern fence details.

Drayton next showed the updated floor layouts and explained each in some detail. Patrick raised an issue with the grand staircase and the loud noise currently made by anyone walking up or down. This precipitated a discussion on what could be done. Drayton noted that typically a carpet runner would be recommended but we have designed all hardwood floors and did not have any rugs in the building, and that while rubber or applied treads could be considered, they were not very effective. Jack noted that noise from the staircase could mitigate noise from the rest rooms and then suggested sound proofing the walls or some other form of mitigation. Darcy wondered if Joe D. noticed the current noise issue. Drayton said he would think about it but said insulation will be added to the walls and noted that he did not think the stairs would be used as much with the new elevator.

Jack then brought up the thought that the side door might be considered for emergency egress only if it were necessary to get approval of the variance request to the MA AAB to remove the current ADA access ramp. Drayton noted that both the front and side doors might need to be considered emergency egress only. Mike offered that restricted building entrances might be in the future regardless. Jay asked if the front and side doors could be considered as emergency egress and employee only entrances, and Drayton felt they could. Jack objected to a caste system where only some could use certain doors. Drayton thought that Town Hall was using a key system, but Patrick said that an RF card key system was in use for all doors for employees. John wondered if the current system will be upgraded. (Secretary's Note: The PM&C CD Cost Estimate dated 19 August 2020 shows 2 card readers as item 761 260000 on page 19.) Drayton suggested placing the issue on the RFI log and said that making the side and front doors both for staff only entrance/exit and emergency egress for all others would likely solve the MA AAB variance request. Rosemary was concerned over the fact that the public could not use the front door which they currently do on a regular basis. She pointed out that Wenham had a similar problem with their Town Hall and had moved the main entrance to the rear. She felt awkward about the approach that was taken by Wenham, and does not want to ruin the front entrance of our Town Hall. Mike pointed out that Wenham removed the front walkway into their building and had no Memorials in front of the building. However, he noted that the front door could be opened for special occasions or functions as a platform for speakers. Jack noted that we were taking out the front parking spaces anyhow. Drayton noted that making the front door an emergency egress only would require taking off the door hardware to which the HHDC would likely object. Rosemary asked if we could keep the hardware on the door as the HHDC will require it. Jack suggested a brass sign plate advising that the building entrance was in the rear.

The discussion then shifted to available parking spaces around the building. Patrick contradicted Jack's earlier statement about the removal of parking spaces in front of Town Hall by pointing that they are still there and are needed to meet minimum code requirements. Jack felt the front parking spaces should be removed if the front door was not to be an entrance as they would create ambiguity. Darcy asked if the spaces could be for assigned staff parking only, e.g., police, fire, etc. Drayton pointed out that the current count of spaces puts the total at one over the required number and if we removed the front spaces we would be under the required number as we had already removed two spaces to allow space for the two trees to hide view of the cell tower. He did admit he might be able to find space to add a couple but was uncertain. He also mentioned that the bid documents could go out and we could address the situation later. Rosemary was concerned over the potential loss of the front spaces. Steve Astulfi pointed out that many people park in the front spaces to visit the Memorial and that most were elderly. Making them park in back of Town Hall would be a hardship. Darcy suggested making these spaces limited to 15 minutes or for Memorial parking only. Mike liked the idea of Memorial parking and suggested that we not discuss this issue at Town Meeting.

Status of MA AAB Variance Ruling

Drayton mentioned that the variance application was underway but Mark noted that we had not yet received the requested support letter from the HHDC but will check on it. Mark will join the HHDC meeting next Tuesday evening. Mike said he will talk to Scott Clements about the importance of the letter. Mike suggested that Drayton use the front and side door egress only argument at the next MA AAB meeting to get approval to remove the ramp as it was our highest priority. Jack mused what would happen if we needed to provide a ramp for the front door. Drayton noted that he could design an aesthetically pleasing, landscaped ramp for the front door, but was not recommending it.

Continued Discussion on Interior Building Layout

Rosemary asked about the jail cell in the basement and wondered where the jail cell door would be installed with the new design. Drayton noted that it had not yet been decided. Mike explained and Drayton demonstrated on the floor plan where the original jail cell was located and suggested marking on the floor where it was. Mike also suggested using the door as an entry into the conference room but Drayton was not sure it would meet ADA width requirements. Rosemary felt nostalgic about preserving the door and Mike agreed. He suggested mounting it on the wall and encasing in glass. Jack also suggested marking the floor where the jail cell was previously located. Drayton suggested he could make a new door by making the jail cell door a window. Mike finally suggested we discuss what to do at a later time.

Darcy asked if there was adequate storage for all of the chairs in the second-floor meeting room. Drayton pointed out that the AV closet was oversized so it could fit some chairs but there was an elevator and storage in the basement. He noted that creating space for storage was expensive.

Drayton next presented two new renderings of the second-floor meeting room which showed the horizontal cables stabilizing the ceiling and walls. The ¾" to 1 " diameter horizontal cables will be encased in plastic sheathing which will be painted white. The corresponding two vertical

tensioning supports for the cables located on each side of the room, at each end of the cables, will also be covered in plastic and painted white. Jack thought that the vertical supports were not necessary as he did not think the horizontal cables would sag. He used a sailboat analogy with its mast rigging when sailing into the wind to explain his thoughts. Drayton and Mark disagreed as they had consulted with their structural engineers. Darcy asked about the height off the floor for the cables and Mike thought at least 12 feet. Rosemary asked why the cables were needed, so Drayton explained that the building was bulging outward about 6 inches and the cables are meant to keep the building from spreading. Tim offered to get more photos of this trend if needed.

Drayton next showed a previous slide from the Fall 2019 Town Meeting presentation that showed the Total Project Cost of \$9.7M and suggested he use the same format for the upcoming Town Meeting to show the current estimate of the lower \$9.3M. However, he asked if we needed to wait until we received all of the bids and then use the bid numbers to show the more realistic cost. John said yes, as did Mike. Rosemary asked to be reminded when we will get the final bids and Mark said November 6th.

Mike said that Drayton should spend some time during the presentation explaining the interior design details such as what will be restored and what rooms might look like. Drayton agreed. Mark suggested showing a visual of old vs. new. Rosemary liked this idea as her conception of new might be different from someone else.

Jack asked about the details for installing the modular vault and specifically if the floor of the Town Clerk's office will need to be torn up to install the vault. Mark said that the floor would not need to be torn up as entry through the double door or DPW entrance can handle it.

John asked who will make the presentation at Town Meeting and said that Drayton was the one. John also thought we should show pictures of existing conditions and explain the storage conditions, acoustic problems, etc. Rosemary and Darcy thought the worst photos the better. Mike said he would go along with that idea. Rosemary said it wouldn't hurt to show current photos vs. renderings of the second-floor meeting room.

Jack brought up the fact that the plan to solve the excess file cabinets and general storage problems was to be addressed by the digitization of files as part of the paperless initiative. He noted that nothing had been yet advanced in this area. Jack also supported the idea of showing photos to demonstrate current problems, e.g., ADA issues, structural problems and sprinklers.

Jay made two suggestions for the presentation. He felt a slide was needed to show all of the approvals by Hamilton Boards and Committees to date to show the support for the project. He also felt we needed a slide to show Pilgrim Hall where the employees will be housed during construction and stress the \$200k in savings owing to the no cost lease from Gordon Conwell. Drayton asked Mark to get some photos tomorrow. Jack suggested a long shot showing the available parking. Lee noted that there will be a 10:30 AM meeting at Pilgrim Hall tomorrow.

Jay then asked about the location for the 11/14/20 Town Meeting. Rosemary said it was still in discussion but she thought it would be indoors at the High School.

Rosemary said that we should have a slide showing the financials. Dayton said that in addition to the Total Project Cost, we needed to explain the cost in terms of how an average homeowner might be affected, we needed to include something like how many cups of coffee it was worth. Jack said that we needed to explain the effect on the tax rate for an average homeowner.

Drayton felt that he should have someone such as Rosemary introduce him by explaining the effort was put into cost savings and other relevant facts. He also said someone should speak after his presentation answering any follow-on questions and urging people to vote for the CPC grant and vote for the project at the upcoming special election. Darcy asked about the CPC grant of \$3M and asked for assurance that the CPC could afford it and that it was independent of other issues. Jay said it is. Jay went on to explain that he hoped the CPC grant was on the Town Meeting warrant first so that he could briefly speak to it, but not emphasize the effect on future large grants needing bonding. Then Rosemary could speak and introduce Drayton. Jay also emphasized that a 2/3's vote was required for the grant to be approved.

Darcy asked if we should ask the Fire Chief to speak to the safety issues with the current building at Town Meeting. Mike said that the current chief, Ray, was out on a 3 month leave but that the assistant chief, Kirby, would likely agree to do it. Mike said he could ask him for brevity.

Project Schedule

Jean-Pierre asked if we could show more detail of the construction timeline. Drayton said that he could expand the schedule to show the 14 months, but the schedule's graphics would become smaller and difficult to read. John thought that the employee move-in should be a separate line item. Mike suggested that voters only want to know a few key dates. Tom announced that the project advertising was sent to the Central Registry today. Mike announced that he would ask the Building Dept. about a project review, and the Hamilton Historical Society and the American Legion about the preservation of historical items during construction. He will report next month. Tim announced that a new person was hired and started yesterday who will be in charge of inspecting the septic system.

Pre-Construction RFI Log

Mike deferred discussion of the RFI log until the next meeting.

Mike announced that the next THBC meeting will be a Zoom teleconference on Thursday, October 2nd at 1:00 PM.

Darcy made a motion to adjourn at 3:01 PM that was seconded and voted by roll call unanimously.

A True Record,

Jay Butler, Secretary

