

Minutes of the Municipal Building Committee

Town Hall, July 28, 2015 4pm

Present were Chair Paul Newlin, Virginia Allis, Adelia Bardwell, Jonathan Edwards, Anita Husted, Judy Markland, Fred Orloski, Ed Sklepowicz, Darcy Tozier and John Wroblewski. Also present were Mark Pruhenski, Dan Denehy, and Deerfield resident Bruce Hunnen.

The minutes of the July 14 meeting were approved with spelling corrections.

The first topic was discussion of the various options for the design of town offices and SCEMS space at the WRMLS building. Judy expressed her disappointment at the submittals from HAI architects, noting that they hadn't included the work that they did on the town office plans submitted just prior to our forum but reverted to the prior plan which no one really had found satisfactory. The site plan HAI submitted is both incomplete and confusing, since it shows the new driveway opening onto Long Plain Rd for SCEMS, but not the new SCEMS driveway just within the circumference of the parking lot itself.

There was general agreement that the plan which John Wroblewski had circulated to the committee by email prior to the meeting was better suited to the town's needs. That plan makes better use of the existing office space area and provides a larger meeting room for the town while giving SCEMS over 1500 sq feet of office and living space with the windows they sought along the north wall. It was agreed to prioritize this plan and to send it to the SCEMS Board of Oversight for their comments. Mark will do this.

John Wroblewski encountered the HVAC people for WRMLS at the building and ascertained that the three existing offices each have their own thermostats and that there is a separate thermostat along the windows in the open area where the library system had cubicles.

Discussion turned to the height of the wall dividers separating the offices to be constructed in the open area. Judy had circulated an email (attached) from her brother, an architect specializing in commercial and institutional interiors, commenting on the relative wall heights. His comment was that partitions not extending all the way to the ceiling are inevitably flimsy and that conversation will carry from one office to another. He also noted that it is important that light fixtures be placed appropriately for each office. John said that the 8' panels can be stabilized so that they are not flimsy. Dan noted that moving the light fixtures is easily accomplished. Virginia commented on the town employees' need for privacy and quiet and that, unless things are built correctly from the beginning, the problems never will be fixed.

Fred and others who have worked in offices with less than full height walls said that the noise levels were not significantly higher or annoying and that there actually was some privacy. It was also noted that full height walls would require major changes in the heating ducts, individual office heating controls, AC and air circulation, lighting, and fire sprinklers which would cost an additional \$230,000. Judy noted that she had worked in areas designed for open landscaping and low partitions and subsequent insertion of taller partitions and walls without HVAC changes led to major temperature control issues.

There was some discussion if this would be a worthwhile expense and if townspeople would approve this higher rehab costs. It was noted that 5 people have occupied one of the large meeting rooms with low (4-5 ') height partitions.

It was agreed that the committee should tour a facility with 8' panels, both to see them first hand and talk to those working in the offices for their comments. Mark will remind HAI that they had said that they would try to arrange such a visit.

John and Fred met with one of the building inspectors at WRMLS to discuss the town office and SCEMS plans. He indicated that the town does not need formal bid-ready documents prior to building, just stamped drawings and itemized cost components. Judy noted that it is important to check the state's municipal bid requirements as well as the building commissioner's standards.

Mark reported that town counsel has drafted a purchase and sale agreement which has been sent to the library system for their review. He also has draft wording for a warrant item for the special town meeting scheduled for September 29 which would change the authorization for the remainder of the \$50,000 voted originally for conceptual designs so that the remaining funds can be used for developing bid-ready plans for the construction. A second special town meeting will be necessary to approve the actual construction spending.

Judy had circulated an email noting that Berkshire Gas offered free energy audits to commercial customers and had suggested that it might make sense to ask for one for many reasons, including a start towards getting their approval to allow SCEMS to have a separate gas meter. It was agreed to do this once the town owns the building.

The appeal period for the special permit approval for the zoning change for the WRMLS property has lapsed, so Mark will file the special permit.

No date was set for the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Markland

attachment

documents discussed during the meeting and on file:

HAI Architects, Options e and f Proposed Floor Plan, Options a and b Proposed Floor Plan, Options c and d Proposed Floor Plan, all undated.

Wroblewski concept plan for town offices and SCEMS, file entitled "7.28.15 concept plan.pdf"

Attachment 1

Email from Bill Markland, Moody Nolan Architects, to Judy Markland

From: "Markland, Bill" <BMarkland@moodynolan.com>
To: "'Judy Markland'" <jmarkland@lmstrategies.com>
Subject: RE: 4 Sandy Lane - SCEMS options
Date: Fri, 24 Jul 2015 17:14:46 +0000

I think your wall discussion is being presented in a confusing/deceptive manner. What they are talking about is "full-height" walls versus walls taken to the underside of the ceiling grid. This is a common area of contention in budget-driven discussions. Developers always want walls to underside of grid. Their big savings is not in the walls but in the labor/material for ceilings. A good architect will always fight for full-height for the following reasons:

- Non full-height walls are just clipped to the ceiling grid they can feel "flimsy". Someone shuts a door and everybody's pictures rattle.
- Full-height walls allow for individual ceilings in each space. The ceiling grid can be re-centered in each room so that the lighting is centered. With one grid for the entire space there are no guarantees how the individual spaces work out. You won't know until you see a reflected ceiling plan.
- The same argument applies with regard to changes in ceiling height perhaps higher in the larger public spaces. Not possible with one big grid.
- Privacy is not possible without full-height walls. There's actually a whole other discussion about types of full-height walls and what is required for good sound attenuation. Suffice it to say that basically no sound attenuation is possible with walls taken to the underside. You will hear the conversation from the office next door.

Now I know that the town is all about saving money but I'm afraid you might be getting into areas where you pretty quickly regret not having done things right in the first place. Personally, I think an office should have a ceiling/lighting layout that makes sense and you shouldn't have to be timid about how you shut the door.

wwm

Attachment 2

Email from Jim Cerone to John Wroblewski

From: **FCCIP James Cerone** <JCerone@frcog.org>
Date: Tue, Jul 28, 2015 at 3:26 PM
Subject: RE: plan
To: J Wrob <jwre45@gmail.com>

John, Looks like a good move for the town. Here are some items I said I would research:

- Corridor width is fine, 44" min required
- No fire rating needed for corridors
- Need to designate 2 exit doors from large meeting space with outswing door. I believe one of these will have to be to the rear of building near new stairway in order to meet remoteness requirement.
- I believe the SCEMS build-out can be considered a Live/Work unit as regulated by 780CMR Section 419. It would be classified as an R-2 Use Group. Emergency escape windows are not required per 1029.1 exception 1.
- The building is type 2B construction. The designer will have to choose whether this will be a non-separated mixed use building or a separated mixed use building. If the numbers work out for it to be a non-separated mixed use, you would only need a ½ hr rating for the walls separating the bedrooms from the large meeting space and corridor. Otherwise, it would be a 1 hr separation.

Don't see any other issues I have a copy of the plans here if you need to reference them. I'll run your plans past Andy to make sure he is ok with fixtures, etc.

Talk to you soon,

James A. Cerone

Local Inspector