

## **Minutes of the Municipal Building Committee**

February 23, 2015, Historical Society Museum, 5pm

Present: Members: Chairman Paul Newlin, Virginia Allis, Adelia Bardwell, Anita Husted, Judy Markland, Fred Orloski, and Darcy Tozier. Also attending were Susan Baron and Dan Denehy.

The minutes of the February 12 meeting were unanimously approved.

The group reported on the informational tasks assigned at the February 12 meeting as follows:

- ZBA has not yet met to consider special permits for possible uses of town offices at Library Building and Community Center at Town Hall. (Fred)
- Planning Board will meet on 2/24 to discuss any site plan issues for possible use of Library building as town offices and EMS facility. (Judy)
- Town employee comments on John Wroblewski's plan for town offices at Library Building: Lynn Sibley says that the plan is generally workable but the location of the vault is too public, there is inadequate storage space, and it would be preferable for the municipal secretary to be located between the town clerk and town administrator (Virginia). The assessor is quite happy with her current office and both she and the treasurer feel that there is inadequate space for files in the offices indicated for them in John's plan (Anita). Bill Smith indicated that the Water Dept. just needs a "cubbie area" in close proximity to a conference area for meetings; the Board of Health primarily needs a conference area because its main file storage is currently in Williamsburg. (Adelia)
- Lynn Sibley doesn't favor offsite file storage for reasons of accessibility but primarily because of the likely expense. (Virginia)
- The South County Emergency Management System currently pays \$32,000/year for use of its Deerfield facility. It is quite anxious to find a new location because of the eviction deadline from Deerfield. Each town will need to approve the relocation. SCEMS would reimburse Whately for [unspecified] remodeling and building expenses via rent payments, but Boards of Selectmen cannot approve contracts with a duration longer than 3 years. John Wroblewski's SCEMS plans were reviewed by the director but the SCEMS Board of Oversight has less ambitious thoughts about space needs. (Jonathan Edwards, via email to Paul.)
- The Regional Library System wants to sell the library building and is not interested in renting it. (Paul)
- The board of the Senior Center does not believe that the library building is a good fit for its needs.
- A draft version of the Community Space Needs survey was presented by its author, Susan Baron. The group liked the survey and suggested adding a question about the time of day when space would be needed, which Susan agreed to make. The community group

contact list which Judy had prepared was also approved. Susan will prepare an interactive pdf file to be placed on the town web site with hard copies to be available at Center School offices and the library. Paul will talk to Mark about getting an email address for return of the online surveys.

- Dan reported on the Building Commissioner's comments on codes (email attached). The ADA code is administered by the Architectural Access Board. If the project cost is more than 50% of the fair value of the building, then ADA compliance is required, but the Board has in the past approved variances for historical buildings. (It was noted that the actual cost of window repair was around \$80,000 and that the additional \$30,000 was for hazmat removal and consulting, bonding, insurance, contract supervision, etc. which would not be included in the building permit.) A wheelchair lift would be permitted at town hall. Sprinklers are confusing. Fire codes require a sprinkler in a building with more than 7500 sq. feet where substantial renovation is being considered if the water supply is adequate. However, the building code may require sprinklers because of the second floor assembly space and this provision does not have a water supply exemption, although there may be another compliance option. As an historic building, town hall is exempt from the energy requirements.
- Judy has not yet reviewed grant possibilities.
- Judy discussed ways of determining the value to a town of preserving its history, noting that there are both monetary and cultural aspects and that they are difficult to reconcile, and she distributed a handout with more detail on each. On the cultural side, preservation has been cited as important for preserving the charm and sense of identity of a community, creating a sense of community pride and facilitating social networks and interaction, creating a sense of heritage and well-being, and helping preserve ethnic or other social identities. On the economic side, academic studies have universally found a positive impact on property values through preservation in historic neighborhoods as well as a positive impact on local and regional economies, through tourism, enhanced property values, job creation, attracting business and professionals to the area, etc.
- The space needs survey should shed light on potential rent options from use of the town hall auditorium. It was noted that any rents that might be received from SCEMS at the Library Building would offset Deerfield and Sunderland's share of SCEMS expenses only and would not provide Whately any additional net revenue or income towards operating the rest of the building.
- Mark had distributed a summary of the state's position on use of volunteers in construction and rehabilitation projects and it was agreed that, while possible, this would be difficult because of insurance, liability, etc. It might be feasible at Town Hall where projects could be more easily compartmentalized.
- No realtor has yet been located. (Virginia)
- Nothing was done about septic evaluations. (unassigned)

There was general discussion of the intent of MOPC's Option 1, and whether it was intended that the town be presented with a combined package for buying and rehabbing the Library Building

and rehabbing Town Hall at the same time. Dan urged that this not be the case. Judy said that it was her interpretation that accepting Option 1 meant that the town was committed to keep Town Hall viable and to rehab it gradually as a community center. She also noted that CPA funds could be used for most, if not all of this and it should not affect the tax rate directly.

Fred distributed an outline of issues for comparison of the two design option concepts, explaining the basic steps necessary under each. For option two, with town hall used as offices, there are two possibilities, one with offices on the second floor and one with offices in the basement. It was agreed that it would be very helpful for the architects developing the designs.

Mark is drafting the RFP for the design concept work.

Paul agreed to draft an update on the MOPC process for the Scoop and Judy distributed a piece promoting the survey for the Scoop.

The next meeting of the committee will be at its regular second Monday time, 7pm on March 9 at the Historical Society room.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Markland

Documents discussed and on file:

Email from Jonathan Edwards dated February 23, 2015 and titled "Requested Information".

Draft Whately Community Group Survey, undated

"Reuse of Whately town hall and what triggers compliance", email from FCCIP James Cerone to Dan Denehy, dated 2/23/2015.

"Value of preserving one's heritage", one page handout, undated.

"Six Practical Reasons to Save Old Buildings", National Trust for Historic Preservation, PreservationNation blog.

"Why encourage historic preservation?" Community Tool Box, Implementing Promising Community Interventions, Chapter 26

"State guidance on use of volunteers for public building projects", Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General, "Designing and Constructing Public Facilities", August 2014, page 4.

"Community Space Needs Survey online starting March \_\_\_\_", undated article for Scoop.

"Comparison of Options for Design Concept Analysis", undated.