

# TOWN OF HARVARD

## MUNICIPAL BUILDING COMMITTEE



**Meeting Minutes** – Meeting # 33 – Public Presentation – 27 January 2012, 7:00 – 9:00 PM, Volunteers Hall

### Attendees

Wade Holtzman, Peter Jackson, Chris Cutler, Lou Russo

Marie Sobalvarro, Ron Ricci, Drayton Fair, Aimee Lombardo, Jason Maurer

#### 1. Introductions

16 emails were received via MBCmailit@gmail.com, public input has been given great consideration. Review of project progression and upcoming schedule. Drayton added that the project is still in schematic design – there is still room for refinement and choosing of specific materials. More public input is welcome.

#### 2. LLB Presentation of Hildreth House Scheme

Review of program, Scheme Three was clearly a favorite and was developed into the scheme presented tonight.

Site plan: New driveway, parking on west with covered drop off/pick up area.

Ground floor: entry lobby, mechanical space, elevator and stairs.

Main floor: reception area, glass; matches existing first floor of Hildreth; contains most of public use space; terrace bridges addition and existing Hildreth House.

2<sup>nd</sup> floor: no second level to addition, classrooms and offices.

Elevations: make use of natural light (lots of southern facing windows); glass bridge between old and new. Addition is “hidden” behind original Hildreth House.

#### 3. LLB Presentation Of Town Hall Scheme

Review of program, schemes 1 and 2 (1.5) were preferred; trying to reconfigure existing addition would be expensive (hand dig elevator pit) it makes more sense to demo and rebuild. Scheme 2 elements with Scheme 1 size.

Site plan: not much change; allows for potential parking expansion.

1<sup>st</sup> floor: vestibule on west, open floor plan including public counters with security gate.

2<sup>nd</sup> floor: volunteer government space, larger meeting space (with partitions).

Shared scheme created by MBC to build out second floor; more enclosed spaces, cost associated with building out 2<sup>nd</sup> floor; Historical preservation more cost effective.

Elevations: “Elegantly simple” configuration; symmetrical (4 windows on each side); entry space “announced” using glass/larger windows; telescoped addition, simple trim.

#### 4. Public comment

Marc Vilain: Would like to maintain second floor as an open space for dances and other community events. Supports elevated stage, wants a mid-sized performance. Drayton: Building structure will be reinforced, partitions could be moved and floor finishes will be discussed. Stage is flat to the ground; an elevated stage would need to be handicapped accessible (cost associated with a lift and ramp), use of wing walls to focus on stage area.

Stu Sklar: Also supports having an open space for public use that fits somewhere between Volunteers Hall and Cronin Auditorium; asks for MBC’s thoughts on the schemes presented tonight.

Pete: Schemes presented execute minimal practical size, following many evolutions in the last six weeks.

Lou: MBC explored build-out of second floor, full build out would be more expensive than what is being presented tonight. Given pro/con list, this is the preferred scheme and allows for more flexibility.

Wade: It was important for MBC to do their due diligence (through drawings and financial computations). The scheme presented tonight offers the best value.

Chris: Satisfied with the process, feels very comfortable with the scheme we have landed on.

Marty Green: What is the capacity of upper Town Hall? Drayton: 200

Mort Miller: What is the cost of the project? Drayton: That is the next step in the design process (program, design, and then itemized cost estimate). Mort: Look at project in context of continuing recession and dwindling housing values, can the town afford this at this time? Pete: as soon as we get numbers, MBC will be meeting with CPIC. How do we space these projects out? If we wait longer, costs may increase, we've already waited too long to deal with Town Hall.

Mary H. Turner: Happy to see flexible open community/meeting space but would like to see a consideration for an elevated stage area. Would the first floor retail space be open to public for small meetings? Drayton: still exploring options and where to locate security break.

Chris Ashley: Concerned that there might not be enough storage areas at Hildreth given large dining space. Is there intent to restore original "bell tower?" Drayton: Goal is to restore cupola and exterior of Town Hall.

Chris A.: Not a fan of the two level window for the Town Hall stairwell, thinks it looks out of place and detracts from rest of building. At what threshold of use will we be forced to develop additional parking? Drayton: LLB was not charged with exploring site work options (being saved for a later time), but is looking at zoning and parking requirements. Pete: Parking options were explored as a part of the previous MBC, space to the north of the building could be used as a future parking site.

Glen Frederick: also concerned with parking at Town Hall.

Stu Sklar: Supports keeping 2<sup>nd</sup> floor open and restoration of stage; created an on-line petition to maintain 2<sup>nd</sup> floor space. Petition has been up for 8 days and already has 255 signatures with comments. Illustrates public support for stage area and open 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Town Hall.

Sharon McCarthy: Even with partitions and carpet, finds it hard to believe that you could maintain two meetings at the same time. (And given that, why would you put carpet on the floor?) A moveable carpet is just an inconvenience (and very heavy to move). How much do the dividers weigh? Drayton: we haven't chosen a product yet, intention is that they would be portable.

Bill Cordner: Sound absorbing material should be a part the design of any public space. Read a letter: "Let us praise great places." Importance of gathering places – community performance provides a "soul" to the community.

Carol Herbert: What is the seating capacity of the Hildreth House dining room? 100 people.

Lisa Rosen: Likes balance in Town Hall design, very proportionate. How often are all the second floor rooms used simultaneously? No need to divide the space in a permanent way. Supports open second floor – leaves space more flexible for future use. Pete: Expansion area (on first floor) could be used as a meeting room, potential for four simultaneous meetings (five if we use stage area as a meeting space). Lou: how often does volunteer government meet at the same time? It is unusual for six meetings to all be scheduled for the same time.

Marc Vilain: What is the usual attendance at a BOS meeting? Marie: depends on the issue being discussed, but usually 30 to 50 people.

Eric Broadbent: Good to see cost differences between two schemes, and consideration of value of community gathering space. Understands that we might pay more now – but gain long term benefits.

Diane Cordner: if you can't have two meetings at the same time in the open second floor space – why set up partitions? Drayton: diagram shows maximum flexibility. Pete: three meeting spaces should meet town's needs, open space remains flexible.

Diane: What is the seating capacity for Hildreth (dining room space)? Showing 100 seats, tables could be moved, but expectation is to host lunch every day.

Lori Granville: Loves design work on Hildreth. To support Eric's comments made concerning Town Hall; just because it costs more, doesn't mean we should say no. Sees the enthusiasm for an open performance space. Moveable partitions seem redundant (is we are keeping it open, let's do it.) Thanks to the MBC for doing the extra work; important to see the due diligence.

Paul Richards: What is the size of upper Town Hall (compared to Volunteers Hall)? Pete: 2-3 times bigger.

Eric Broadbent: Will the Town Hall basement be used and/or excavated further? Drayton: at this point, addition would not have a basement, the attic space in new addition would house mechanical equipment.

Chris Ashley: If the community's wisdom is that the upper Town Hall stay open, would it be possible to install a scissor lift in the floor to elevate stage? Explore acoustic treatments in ceiling to mitigate sound issues?

Bill Calderwood: Likes open upper Town Hall, with hard floors. Hildreth: Was on Hildreth landscape effort. Also likes that the parking is hidden. Expands parking for Hildreth and the rest of the town, can be further expanded into the woods if needed.

Pam Cochrane: Supports creating a space that invites the public back into the use of Town Hall Beautiful scheme for Hildreth.

Jim Elkind: on behalf of Energy Advisory: looking ahead to systems and overall cost. Misconception that green building will cost more up front and take a long time to recoup investment. If we build 15 - 25% more efficient than building code, will make back money in three years (with a projected savings of \$3-8 thousand per year). Build an efficient building that goes beyond code, will make space more enjoyable. Pete supports. LLB is obligated to present those numbers as a part of their charge.

Tim Clark: Since the main entrance is being moved from ceremonial entrance, how do we make new entrance more obvious? (Town Hall isn't even labeled as Town Hall.) How do we signal parking and entry? How do we announce the entrance? Are there grants for historic presentation? Yes, wherever we can raise funds we will.

Tim: Supports historic preservation of both interior and exterior. Stage is an important interior historical element. Would it be possible to set a half stop in elevator to function as stage lift? Preserve pocket oak doors that are a part of the stage area.

Presentation will be available on the town website (and Harvard press website), email address is still open. [MBCmailit@gmail.com](mailto:MBCmailit@gmail.com)

Meeting adjourned.

Rachel Holcomb