

**VILLAGE OF HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**JUNE 10, 2003**

A Special Meeting was held by the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, June 10, 2003 at 8:10 p.m. in the Meeting Room, Municipal Building, 7 Maple Avenue.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Wm. Lee Kinnally, Jr., Trustee Bruce Jennings, Trustee Marjorie Apel, Trustee Peter Swiderski, Village Manager Neil P. Hess, and Village Clerk Susan Maggiotto.

**ABSENT:** Trustee Michael Holdstein

**CITIZENS:** None

**Mayor Kinnally:** The purpose of this special meeting is to consider Resolution 54:03, the appointment of a Community Center architect.

**Village Manager Hess:** A feasibility study was completed last year on the Community Center which provided four options to renovate or improve the center. It was reviewed by a number of groups, including the Parks and Recreation Commission, but no consensus was reached. In our February joint meeting with the Board of Education we decided to develop a joint *ad hoc* committee representing the schools, the Village, teen groups, and Parks and Recreation personnel. I would like to thank the members of the committee who spent so much time in reviewing the feasibility study, discussing it, and coming up the recommendation: Trustees Bruce Jennings and Mike Holdstein, Mary Wirth from the school board, Anne Schnibbe and Gloria Brkich from the senior groups, Ray Gomes, Nancy Gagliardi, myself, and two interns, Eric Zager and Sara Roedner.

The committee unanimously recommended option 4, demolition and reconstruction, but with 10,000 square feet instead of the 20,000 square feet in the feasibility study, for the following reasons. Option 3, a small addition and renovation, would not provide adequate program, office, or storage space; the plan did not provide kitchen space and significantly reduced storage. The building has problems with seepage in the basement areas and resultant mold. An expenditure for a renovation should produce a better facility for youth, seniors, and residents of the community and not try to squeeze all these programming functions into essentially the same space. For years there have been attempts to improve the reputation of the Community Center as a place to hang out for teens. Other improvements over the years have done little to improve that image. We felt that a new facility would attract teens, who will have a stake in a new building, who will watch it grow and help develop it as a place to hang out. New construction has a useful life for bonding purposes of 20 years, whereas a renovation would only be for 15 years. A new facility gives the Village a unique opportunity to have a design which takes advantage of the ravine area and enhances Main Street and

potential development at the former gas station site and at Boulanger Plaza. It can be a nice coordination with existing architecture.

We were directed by the committee to seek out proposals from various firms, which we did: Peter Gisolfi Associates, Christina Griffin, Steven Tilly, Lothrop Associates, and Mitchell Koch. After review of the proposals, the committee recommended Lothrop Associates, but certainly complimented all the other architects who submitted proposals. They all do fine work, but the committee recommended Lothrop for the following reasons. Their firm size is adequate to handle a project of this magnitude. The firm has handled similar type and size projects with success, including community centers, libraries, and pools throughout the county. The fees were very reasonable. We have had experience working with Lothrop Associates on the library addition and renovations, finding this firm excellent in responsiveness and commitment.

Authorization of Lothrop provides that we will start the design process, which is funded by a grant provided by Senator Spano and Assemblyman Brodsky through the New York State Dormitory Authority. The design phase is about \$28,000, well within the \$50,000 we have been granted. The Board will make a decision at that point whether to go on to a design and bid package phase, which is also spelled out in the proposal, based on the estimates of construction cost. We would take bids sometime in 2004, with construction starting in the spring or summer of 2005. That is in keeping with the grants we will tie in from the Westchester County Community Development Program, \$380,000.

We will also look at other grant sources for the project as well as develop a Friends of the Community Center fund-raising effort over the next two years to provide for some of the cost of the construction and for furnishings, etc. for the Community Center.

We also provided a financial analysis of the Community Center showing the difference between a renovation and new construction, and what the cost and impacts would be. That is on a gross basis, and any additional fund-raising efforts will reduce that impact. That will be updated during each step of the review of the project.

**Trustee Jennings:** I was on the committee and I have tried to follow this process fairly closely over the last couple of years. I support the resolution before us. We identified three objectives for the work on the Community Center: maintenance of the infrastructure; aesthetics, refurbishing; and enhanced programming and enhanced community use. Options 1 and 2 address only maintenance and aesthetics. They would do little or nothing to improve and enhance the programming of the Community Center and the community usage of it. If you take community usage and programming seriously, as I do, it only leaves you with

options 3 and 4. After extensive discussion our committee concluded that simply adding a small addition and doing some refurbishing and maintenance of the existing building would probably not successfully enhance the usage. It would not attract more of the young people to come to the Community Center who now do not choose to take advantage of that facility. And it would not give us the flexibility to add new kinds of programming to bring in new sectors of the community who do not now use the building or who have not used it for years.

This logic leads us to option number 4, which is to replace the building. Not a huge building as was originally envisioned, which is unnecessary and unaffordable, but a building at the approximate size and square footage of our present facility. It is financially sound. It is doable. And it will enhance our community significantly, because it will give us a true community center that is used much more broadly as it should be by our entire community. It will also give us an opportunity to add one more element to the restructuring of Main Street, with the Boulanger Plaza project and the renovations that probably will be taking place across the street from the Community Center. We are going to have a beautiful change to Main Street as a result of those projects, particularly if the architecture is carefully thought out.

**Trustee Apel:** When it dropped down from 20,000 square feet to 10,000, what was eliminated?

**Village Manager Hess:** A gymnasium.

**Trustee Apel:** Will it be built in such a way that you could expand later?

**Village Manager Hess:** The current building is 7,800 square feet, so this would increase the size by 2,200 square feet. We are not looking to keep the same shell. I would imagine the ground level will be the current main level. There will be nothing underneath except possibly storage. I am thinking it will be two stories. We have room east and west of the building, and some possibility to the south. There is even some possibility to the north. But that will be a matter of discussions with the architect. We could bring it closer to the street and have a courtyard inside. There are various ways you can do it.

**Trustee Apel:** So a decision was made that there is no need for a gymnasium?

**Village Manager Hess:** It was too expensive, and it would not have the usage that we would like to have.

**Trustee Apel:** But, again, can the building be added onto later? Is there height restriction?

**Village Manager Hess:** No, we could put up a three-story building.

**Trustee Apel:** If we put up a two-story building, could we add a third story?

**Village Manager Hess:** That is the initial cost. But it going to depend on the architect and the wonderful ideas they can come up with. We will not restrict ourselves to anything at this point other than our construction cost of approximately a 10,000 square foot building.

**Trustee Apel:** I always like to look ahead. It is such a wonderful thing, it gets a lot of usage, I am sorry we did not make it bigger: can we build another story? I agree with Bruce and the committee. I do not want to put money into it when the structure itself is not healthful. I think there are a lot of health problems with it. It really is in our best interest to start from scratch. Since it is going to take time, can the money that we have from Spano and Brodsky, the difference between the 50 and the 28, be used to do things like rip up the carpet? Can we do some things to make it healthy for the people that are using it? Can we use that money towards some repairs?

**Village Manager Hess:** Let me check, but I think it is for the renovation and construction.

**Trustee Apel:** I would think we should make some healthy changes between now and then.

**Village Manager Hess:** The mold is in the storage areas in the basement.

**Trustee Apel:** But in the carpet where you come in, I can smell that mold right away. There area few things that we could do between now and then.

**Village Manager Hess:** We will take a look at it.

**Trustee Swiderski:** I am in accord with what Bruce was saying. I have had my own children's parties in that building. I have been to Santa events, and other people's parties, and Democratic Party functions, and I have no affection for the building. I have no affection for the architecture style or its utility, whether upstairs or downstairs. It is cold, it is chilly, it is not friendly. As cheap as I am, and as much as I would like to extend the building, it is throwing good money after bad. I would rather take the hit and do something now instead of trying to make a second-rate building last another 20 years. So as much as the expense on one level wounds me, I would rather do that than throw good money after bad.

**Mayor Kinnally:** A point of clarification. Our taking this step does not commit us to do anything beyond taking this step. I agree with my colleagues that the building is less than

inviting and that people do not gladly go there. It is drafty, the space is not well utilized. And all that glass in the front: if kids are going to go to a community center, they do not want to be in a fish bowl. I have never seen that the building has realized its potential as far as use. I want to join my colleagues in thanking all the members of the committee who came up with a proposal that appreciates what we have, what we need, and what we hope to accomplish.

**Trustee Swiderski:** Was there a discussion of the aesthetics of the final product, so there is a sense of a look and a feel on how it should fit into the community?

**Village Manager Hess:** How it should feel, how it should fit into Main Street: the other construction that will be going on, a beautiful stone fire house next door, the Cropsey Museum in the ravine. Lothrop is very sensitive to the aesthetics; they were with the library.

**Trustee Jennings:** We have had tremendous cooperation and input from members of the community and community groups as we have reviewed the options. As the process continues we will continue to need and welcome input from various stakeholder groups in the community as new possibilities open to us. We have had a lot of discussion of wishes and visions and usages and ideas for new programs that the architects should take into consideration as they conceive the building and come up with a design.

On MOTION of Trustee Apel, SECONDED by Trustee Swiderski the following Resolution was duly adopted upon roll call vote:

**RESOLVED:** that the Mayor and Board of Trustees engage the services of the architectural firm Lothrop Associates for the design of the reconstruction of the James Harmon Community Center pursuant to the firm's proposal dated May 27, 2003 for a fee to be paid from grant proceeds.

<b>ROLL CALL VOTE</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>
Trustee Michael Holdstein	Absent	
Trustee Bruce Jennings	X	
Trustee Marjorie Apel	X	
Trustee Peter Swiderski	X	
Mayor Wm. Lee Kinnally, Jr.	X	

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JUNE 10, 2003  
Page - 6 -

On MOTION of Trustee Jennings, SECONDED by Trustee Apel with a voice vote of all in favor, the Board scheduled an Executive Session immediately following the Special Meeting to discuss litigation and personnel items.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On MOTION of Trustee Apel, SECONDED by Trustee Swiderski with a voice vote of all in favor, Mayor Kinnally adjourned the Special Meeting at 8:35 p.m.