

**MINUTES FROM THE SELECT BOARD
NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS**

November 5, 2014

PAGE 1

Board members present: Chairman Cedarholm, Selectwoman Dennis and Selectman Bugbee

Others present: Patricia Jenkins, Carla Wilson, Paul and Annie Gasowski, Chuck Cox, and Town Administrator Julie Glover.

1. Chairman Cedarholm calls the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Chairman Cedarholm welcomes Art Guidano from AG Architects as the first to be interviewed for the Needs Assessment RFP. The protocol will be ½ hr. presentation and then 15 minutes for questions.

Mr. Guidano hands out some materials. His 5 person architectural firm is located in Dover, NH and has been in business for 26 years. The RFP identified 3 keys things for Mr. Guidano.

1) Needs analysis 2) Facilities Review 3) Site Alternatives Analysis. He will talk about experience and process tonight. They have done numerous municipal projects over the years. They just completed Durham Town Hall. They have done space needs for Rye, Dover, Londonderry and Somersworth. Londonderry and Somersworth turned into building projects. They renovated Farmington, Wolfeboro, and Rochester Town Hall. Doing a space needs study takes a blend of understanding office needs and the public needs. It is different than a commercial office space in that their job is to integrate those needs. In commercial office space you do not have the same public needs. Functional organization is important.

As a small firm, Mr. Guidano stays involved with the project. He has a team that he has worked with for years. They have switched to Norway Plains for their civil engineering due to the issue with Tighe & Bond. They work with JSN Associates for structural engineering out of Portsmouth and Bennett Engineers out of Freeport for mechanical and electrical engineering.

They understand the importance of historic buildings and Town Center. Further examples of historic restoration would be the Rivermore Landing in Newmarket and the joining of two New Englanders with a connector between them up in Center Conway. They have done a lot with rain gardens and permeable pavements. With the Lee Town Hall being right next to the bog, this is something to be sensitive to along with watch what they do with dark skies requirements. Most important is to reduce energy use. There are so many effective options for heating and cooling systems now. They will be sure to look at smart growth. He is LEED certified.

The Site Analysis will involve looking at the site capacity, wetland setbacks, soil types, building area, environmental impact and site comparisons. The process is where the success of the project is built. Municipal projects require support of the public. The tax impact is the biggest issue. Setting goals and how they communicate are simple things that they will focus on. Main step with the space needs analysis is data collection; looking at old reports and studies that have been done; provide questionnaires and evaluation forms to the staff, board and commissions to fill out and follow-up with interviews. A public survey is also important. There are roughly 4300 Lee residents at the present time. The projections show as many as 4500 by 2040. They will use existing surveys, maps, tax maps, aerial photos, google earth or Bing to get a sense of what the site conditions are.

**MINUTES FROM THE SELECT BOARD
NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS**

November 5, 2014

PAGE 2

They will take all of this information and construct a Conceptual Design to show how a building will fit on a different site or existing site. Mr. Guidano asks where the Town stands on the recent new Library Building construction. TA Glover explains that the Board recently tasked the Library Building Commission with designing a building that will fit in a \$1.7 million dollar cost. The previous designs were too costly. Mr. Guidano tries to bring flexibility to the project. He tries not to have set ideas. His job is to listen, get a sense as to what is important to the community and figure out how to create that by providing options. Community participation is key especially after the space needs analysis is complete and they have a sense of size. At that time they would do a presentation where people could have input and ask questions.

Design issues to deal with functionality, what are adjacencies, codes issue, is it accessible, historic character concerns, energy performance, work space efficiency, site issues and image of open government. Architecture should reflect this if it is good architecture. Through it all Mr. Guidano and his team are accessible, local and available.

Selectwoman Dennis agrees with the importance of community participation and flexibility. In Durham, Mr. Guidano and his team brought various new ideas to a public hearing for input at a deciding time in the design stage. Selectwoman Dennis states that the third important thing for her is looking at previous studies that have been done. Mr. Guidano asks if the Town Center Study was ever completed. Chairman Cedarholm indicates that it was completed.

Selectman Bugbee is looking for the cost for all of their options. Mr. Guidano explains that part of the process is to include the cost for each idea.

Chairman Cedarholm is particularly keen on preserving the historic Town Center. He asks Mr. Guidano how they would go about assessing and evaluating the value of historic character and connectivity of all of the public and private facilities in Town Center. Mr. Guidano states that this would be a very subjective process in terms of what value you put on historic character. It would be important to gauge public opinion through a survey identifying how concerned people are with the historic character. It is important to Mr. Guidano to bring back the old and give it new life. It connects us to our past, but it also addresses our needs for the future.

Selectman Bugbee asks him to elaborate more on things AG has used in the past in addition to surveys and presentations in order to engage the community. Mr. Guidano adds that they provide all information to be posted on the Town website for the public to see. They completed surveys in Rochester and Rye. Public meetings need to provide clear and plentiful information for the public to be able to comment on.

3. Chairman Cedarholm welcomes Tom House from THA and Nick Isaak as the second group to be interviewed for the Needs Assessment RFP. Mr. House is the lead architect and Mr. Isaak has his own practice as well. Mr. Isaak is teaming up with Mr. House because he owns a rental property near Lee Town Center and is interested in making the Center of Lee a better place. Mr. House is LEED Certified and is LPA Certified. He proceeds to go over company employee work chart. Mr. House was on the team that worked on the Charrette in Lee in 2009. The assessment of the existing buildings will enhance the level of services with the community.

**MINUTES FROM THE SELECT BOARD
NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS**

November 5, 2014

PAGE 3

Their approach to achieving all this is to have an open book. Include the citizens in the meetings. By doing this, everyone is on the same page. Synthesize existing information so you come in under budget and on time. Mr. House thinks that the RFP left out public involvement. He proposes to create a Public Information Plan (PIP) whether it is videos on the TV or website. This is the legacy for Lee that they will be working on. Mr. House and Mr. Isaak worked on the Charrette together. For the preliminary work, Mr. House mentions meeting with department heads first and identifying deficiencies. They will look at life safety issues and examine existing conditions within a ½ miles radius. In the past 5 years Mr. Isaak has done several projects in Durham. For example he worked on the Grange project in Durham, keeping the historic character. He also worked on the Durham Public Library Feasibility Study. Mr. Isaak thinks that most of the work has already been done throughout the years and now the Town needs a team that can synthesize all the information and come up with a concise summary moving in the right direction.

Selectman Bugbee asks them to elaborate on the PIP. Mr. House wants to sit down with the Board and the department heads to come up with a game plan. Then inform the public on the ideas that they come up with.

Selectwoman Dennis appreciates using existing resources and acknowledging that due diligence with research is critical.

Chairman Cedarholm asks how they would synthesize the information. Mr. House states that meeting with the department heads and staff is most important to do first. Mr. Isaak does not want to reinvent the wheel and do the research all over again (spending more money). He would take the information that is still valid, compile it and look for missing links or holes then bring it forward to the different departments.

Chairman Cedarholm states that he is particularly interested in preserving the historical character in the Town Center and incorporating Smart Growths elements. He asks for some examples where they have done this type of work. There was no answer to this question.

Selectman Bugbee asks them to speak to their experience with dealing with old buildings in terms of renovating and/or repurposing. They said the Grange in Durham and some old mill buildings.

Chairman Cedarholm asks about the St. Michael's Parish in Exeter. Mr. Isaak states that they turned the garage into a meeting room.

4. Chairman Cedarholm welcomes Dennis Mires as the third candidate to be interviewed for the Needs Assessment RFP and informs him of the format. Mr. Mires is the president of a seven person firm out of Manchester, NH. David Sherbourne is with him tonight and will be supporting Mr. Mires. The Mires firm is currently working on the Dunbarton Town Hall and Theatre restoration by making it accessible as well as more energy efficient. They are also working on the Rumney Library restoration. They just restored a mill in Nashua as part of the Broad Street Parkway project. In Bellingham, MA they did a 14,000 square foot new town hall. In Sunapee, a Safety Center; Tamworth, town offices; North Hampton, municipal town

**MINUTES FROM THE SELECT BOARD
NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS**

November 5, 2014

PAGE 4

complex master plan study. They have experience working with State Historic Preservation Local Districts that have indicated that their local buildings are historic or are in a historic neighborhood. In terms of a process the first step in these public processes that they find to be successful is to collect the available data. There is a lot of data on Lee's Town Center complex. Updated ordinances and programs need to be collected. Selectwoman Dennis asks Mr. Mires to speak more to the audience about the program piece. Mr. Mires states that currently the site is defined by a wetland on one side, a boundary on the other and the road along the front. There is a limited land area. They want to make sure that the buildings have the square footage to accommodate the new program and the program as its projected, they like to use 20 years. Or they maximize the way they would add on to the facility and add parking in the future.

In terms of assessment besides the physical and program issues, they would review the proposal to comply with building and energy code and ADA access. They would then determine the best way to generate alternatives. In order to get the Town to support a proposal they have to buy into and understand. The voters have not had the benefit of listening to the development of all the considerations that have gone on. So they have to be very clear on the need.

Mr. Mires goes through each possible expense. As the budget develops, if there are renovations then there will be a contingency added.

Mr. Mires presents the plans to reconfigure the existing buildings after the Library moves to the Bricker property.

Selectman Bugbee asks Mr. Mires how he would engage the public. Mr. Mires states that it was helpful during the Library discussions to have a variety of people present to comment along the way. Mr. Mires mentions a 'committee' several times. Mr. Mires suggests using charrette process after the committee has narrowed down the ideas to 3 or so. They would also post everything on the website.

Chairman Cedarholm asks Mr. Mires how he would go about assessing the historic character of Town Center and incorporating that into a new project. Mr. Mires refers to when they first proposed a Library they keyed off the prominent materials and building details in the current Town Center. Chairman Cedarholm asks Mr. Mires how he would bring us into a Smart Growth approach; for example, connectivity between the buildings and reusing spaces and properties that are already somewhat developed. Mr. Mires states that this is the big question if it is decided to move the Town Offices elsewhere.

Selectman Bugbee asks Mr. Mires what he has done recently with other historical buildings to preserve and reuse them. Mr. Mires talks about the Dunbarton Town Hall. They are proposing an addition as well as renovation. The Rumney Library has been renovated closely to the existing building. Solutions are always evolving.

5. There is a general discussion. TA Glover begins with stating that there is value in talking with the people who use the building every day which is a completely different perspective from the public's thoughts and desires about the building. TA Glover acknowledges the experience and

**MINUTES FROM THE SELECT BOARD
NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS**

November 5, 2014

PAGE 5

knowledge that Dennis Mires has when it comes to renovating and reusing municipal buildings but AG Architects also has experience. It appears from Mr. Mires' answers to the Board's questions that the public only seems to be involved once he has designed the building. He referred to a 'committee' after the building was designed. Art Guidano gave the best answer to this question to involving the public by saying conducting a survey and/or poll people at the Transfer Station on Tuesday, Thursday and maybe 2 Saturdays. TA Glover thinks that AG Architects gave the most well-rounded presentation and probably the best answers to the questions that the Board had.

Selectwoman Dennis also believes that AG did a nice well-rounded job. She thought Mr. Isaac was engaging and Mr. Mires has the historical experience. Selectwoman Dennis did not hear him not include the public.

Selectman Bugbee personally liked AG the best. The public and employees need to have a say along the whole process not just at certain points.

Chairman Cedarholm agrees with the TA Glover with respect to AG Architects and their emphasis on public involvement. Giving the public choices to react to is valuable.

TA Glover points out that the subject of sidewalks will need to be discussed if the Town intends to tie areas together. Selectwoman Dennis states that she had a conversation with someone from DOT regarding sidewalks which may be helpful in the future.

Selectman Bugbee points out that THA completed our Charrette and Dennis Mires worked on the Town Center Report; AG would be a fresh set of eyes that could bring in a new set of ideas. TA Glover agrees that at this point a fresh set of eyes would be a good idea. Selectman Bugbee brings up the question of what is timeline on this project.

Chairman Cedarholm asks if there is public comment.

Pat Jenkins states that all three were very different. She describes the first group (AG) as 'friendly' and wanting to involve everyone in hopes of getting it right. The second group (THA) came in with all the different sub-committees or sub-contractors. She found them difficult to follow; they spoke very quickly. The third one (Mires) did not talk about staff or public input. She was comfortable with the first group and could talk with them. Ms. Jenkins felt as though she could talk with the second group but they will just answer her questions and not put too much thought into it. She thinks that Mires has preconceived ideas.

Carla Wilson does not think that Mr. Mires heard what was said about would you address the public as well, but she realizes that he should have known to do that. She seconds what Ms. Jenkins said. She was more enthused about the first group than the second one. There is a benefit with a fresh set of eyes, but there is also a benefit in someone who has an overall perspective; who has worked with this Town already.

Chuck Cox states that he thinks Mr. Mires is quite competent and has enjoyed working with him. We need to keep in mind that we need to keep the public involved in every aspect.

MINUTES FROM THE SELECT BOARD
NEEDS ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS

November 5, 2014

PAGE 6

6. Chairman Cedarholm motions to adjourn at 8:30 pm. Selectwoman Dennis, seconds. All in favor. **Motion Carries.**

Minutes transcribed by:

Denise Duval, Town Secretary

11/24/14
Date

Minutes accepted by The Lee Select Board:

David Cedarholm, Chairman

Carole Dennis

Scott Bugbee