

**Municipal Buildings Strategic Plan
Advisory Committee
Minutes
Tuesday, November 25, 2014
7:00pm
Senior Center
14 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook**

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE
MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS STRATEGIC PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Municipal Buildings Strategic Plan Advisory Committee held a regular meeting on Tuesday, November 25, 2014 in the meeting room at the Newtown Senior Center, Sandy Hook. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.

Present: Chairman Jay Maher, Bill Brimmer, Walt Motyka, Jim Filan, Scott Cicciari, Mike Marinaccio, Michelle Ku, Rebekah Harriman, Paul Lundquist

Absent: Kathy Hamilton

Others Present: Geralyn Hoerauf of Diversified Management, Public Works Director Fred Hurley and one member of the public

1. Review and Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Chairman Jay Maher motions to accept minutes. Bill Brimmer seconded. Paul Lundquist abstained from the vote due to his absence from the last meeting. The motion was approved unanimously, not including Paul.

2. Report on DPM Presentation/Update to Board of Selectman Nov 17: Geralyn went to Board of Selectman meeting on November 17th and brought the board up to speed on where this advisory board currently stands. The Board of Selectman (BOS) wanted to know if we understood the advisory boards charge and purpose, and Geralyn informed the BOS that this board was still working on that and shared with them the mission statement that was discussed at the last meeting. Geralyn also put in a request to the BOS that they appoint someone from the Fairfield Hills Authority to join the advisory board.

Jim mentions being a part of the joint Board of Selectman, Board of Finance, and Legislative Council meeting and felt that they only wanted the committee to focus on the 3 buildings (Hook & Ladder Building, Town Hall South, and the Senior Center). He felt that the committee is only going to get money approved to work on those 3 buildings and so should only focus on those buildings. If the Board of Education decides to turn over one of the schools to the town, it isn't going to be done within the next year. Paul who was also at the meeting stated that he felt there wasn't a red light given to the other buildings, just that these 3 be the immediate priority. Jim clarified that he didn't mean to suggest that we didn't want to have as much information as possible on all buildings.

Walt stated he didn't understand how you limit the scope to certain buildings when you are trying to develop a plan. If it's already been decided, Walt questioned the point of the committee. There is a need for a plan to look all the facilities and assess at least to some level and then utilize the information when

it starts going the direction of asking what are the potential use of *all* of the facilities. Walt does not want be confined to a specific timeline.

Mike feels target has moved, based on the discussion and from Jim's feelings from the joint BOS/BOF/LC meeting.

3. Discussion of Town-Owned Properties with Director of Public Works:

Newtown Hook & Ladder Building: The oldest section of the building is in the middle and essentially additions on either side of the building. It is recommended that the left side should be demolished. There are problems with the sub-soil. The oldest part of the building, years ago had been envisioned to become the next home of the social services administration. The center part of the building is sound. It is functioning. The east side wing, closest to Main Street, is structurally fine. Rebekah asks about the useable square footage of that building. The property is town owned, but it is involved with the Mary Hawley Trust. Paul asks for clarity on Mary Hawley's trust concerning the usage of the Hook & Ladder Building.

Town Hall South: Currently houses Police Department, Social Services, and Park and Rec departments. This building is structurally sound. There was a water problem, but that has been resolved. Roof has been redone. It is a functioning building but whether there is enough square footage for the police, Fred states, is not up to him. It's the call of the police station. If it was available to them, they would fully utilize the entire building. Parking is an issue with this building. It has already been redesigned twice, but it is at its max capacity.

Senior Center: It has been described as a California architect's statement in New England. The roof lines are a nightmare. There has never really been enough room for what goes on in this building, but it is a functional building. The parking area is slated for a re-do in the next few years. The building itself is sound. The HVAC systems are due for an overhaul and could be redone with a reasonable amount of money. The building is being switched over to public water this week.

The Adventure Center was here before the senior center. There is a unique lease agreement between the Adventure Center and the Town.

Jim asks Fred about setting up a tour of Town Hall South and Hook & Ladder Building.

Scott mentions that the Police Building Fund is launching a campaign this week. He reads a quote from First Selectman Pat Llodra that will be published in an article in the Newtown Bee in their December 1st issue:

"I believe that the current police facility located within Town Hall South is inadequate to serve the needs of our police force.

"The building design and layout was appropriate for its original purpose, tractor sales, but does not support well the workings of a modern police force. The building houses three other functions — communications, Parks and Recreation offices, and Social Services," she added. The Board of Selectmen identified this building as one of the first to be examined by the recently appointed municipal

facilities study group... There is no project plan in place that would address the need for an improved police facility. However, the current [Capital Improvement Plan] proposal includes funds that could begin to respond to a recommendation from the committee," Mrs Llodra said."

Scott explains that a group of Newtown Residents came together to see if they could raise the necessary funds to potentially build a new building. The groups charge is to raise the money, it is not saying that it will build a new building, but reasons that if they raised \$15 million and presented that to the town, potentially the town would be more willing to discuss building a new police station much like they did when GE presented the town with money for a new community center.

Fred Hurley mentions that part of this move for a new police station stems from the events of 12/14. On that day, there were 3 separate command posts because the current police station was not big enough to handle that effort. There was a command post at the Emergency Operations Center and a command post at the Sandy Hook Fire Department in addition to the police station. When people looked at what went on they were amazed at how well everything functioned, but a lot of people picked up a lot of slack and it all wasn't really connected. The concern is that if anything like that ever happened again in the future, you can't always be lucky and rely on individuals picking up the ball.

Geralyn feels that from this conversation is that its already been decided that THS is inadequate for the Police Station. The committee needs to be careful about the characterization of "inadequate". Is it inadequate because of the structure, or spatially? Rebekah clarifies that it is inadequate as it stands right now.

Mike feels that the committee needs to press Pat Llodra for more clarification on what the BOS is expecting from the committee. Walt agreed and feels like we need to "fact find" before we do anything else.

4. Discussion as to role of a Facility Condition Assessment Consultant Firm: Jim suggests going to the BOS with an appropriation request on these 3 buildings and a separate request to fund our activities in the next budget so the money is there. That way while the study is going on for the 3 buildings the committee can continue to work on the committee's mission.

(Scott leaves meeting at 8:27pm)

Walt suggests that before the physical assessment begins, the committee needs to know the legal restrictions of the various buildings. Geralyn suggests inviting town attorney to a meeting to discuss this.

Jim suggests making a motion to ask the BOS or an appropriation of some figure and at the same time have the town attorney do the work on the legal restrictions.

Motion: Jim motions to ask BOS to make appropriation of \$60K to retain a consultant for the initial 3 buildings. Jay Seconded.

Geralyn suggests being more specific in the motion to the BOS and states we need to include space needs in the motion. Walt wonders how you can limit the space needs to only a few groups. He suggests we tell the BOS exactly what we need and then have the BOS come back and say, we can only give you XX amount. Why is the committee making cuts before asking for a sum of money to get work done?

Bill states that the committee needs to start work on these three buildings. Walt says the only way he'd support that is if it became a Phase A to evaluate 3 buildings. The future 5 or 6 buildings will be additional cost as well as determining the space needs after we have evaluated the buildings so that the BOS knows the whole story up front. Rebekah states she feels the space needs assessment needs to happen parallel with the physical assessment and not afterwards.

Mike suggests an amended motion as \$XX.00 for phase A to do physical assessment on 3 buildings as well as space needs for departments. Phase B would address fully the physical assesement of the remaining buildings.

(Jay leaves meeting at 9:00)

Jim withdraws the original motion.

Motion: Jim motions for the appropriation of \$60,000 for Phase A, which is the physical evaluation of Town Hall South, the Multi-Purpose Building and Hook & Ladder Volunteer Fire Company Fire Station, and includes a space needs study of current Town functions that may appropriately be housed in these buildings. The Advisory Committee will present to the Board of Selectmen a request for additional funding to complete the physical evaluations and space needs assessments of the remaining Town-owned buildings as Phase B of the Municipal Buildings Strategic Plan. Bil seconded. All approved.

Geralyn will present the motion to the Board of Selectman at their December 15, 2014 meeting.

5. Next meeting is Thursday December 18, 2014 at 5:00 pm in the Council Chambers of the Newtown Municipal Center

Meeting Adjourned at 9:17 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Aileen Nosal, Clerk