

OLD SAYBROOK POLICE BUILDING COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
January 6, 2014
MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Saybrook Police Building Committee was held on Monday, January 6, 2014, at the Pasbeshauke Pavilion.

Present: Committee Chairman Dan Moran and Committee Members Jerry Brophy, Carol Hanover, Patrick Maher, John O'Brien, Vito Savino, Lee Sparaco and David Wight. Also present were First Selectman Carl Fortuna, Police Chief Michael Spera and Police Commissioner Burnham.

I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Attendance

Committee Chairman Moran called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Committee Chairman Moran led the Building Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Recording Clerk took attendance for the meeting. Committee Member Akin was not present.

II. Meeting Minute Approval – December 9, 2013

Committee Member Sparaco made a motion to approve the December 9, 2013 Meeting Minutes. Committee Member O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion to approve the December 9, 2013 Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against, with Committee Member Hanover abstaining.

Committee Member O'Brien asked that the December 9, 2013 minutes be amended to reflect the decision to round off the Sally Port. This change will add 344 square feet to the Sally Port at an additional cost of approximately \$8,600.00.

Committee Chairman Moran stated that the Committee should officially approve this change for the record.

Committee Member Brophy made a motion to endorse Brian Humes' proposed change of rounding off the Sally Port, thereby adding 344 square feet to the project. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Maher. The motion passed with a vote of 7 in favor and 0 against, with Committee Member Hanover abstaining.

III. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

IV. Update from the First Selectman

First Selectman Fortuna noted that Downes has been invaluable in the demolition process of the old police building. He added that he is hopeful that the building will be demolished in March.

V. Update from Downes

Downes continued the meeting with their project agenda. The following items were discussed:

A. Design Update

Downes stated that the architect is focused on adding details to the drawings. Downes added that one of the areas of contention, the location of the fueling station, was contested by Fire Chief Dunn but approved by Fire Marshall Dobson. As such, Mr. Humes applied for a waiver to allow the roof overhang for the fueling station to be a continuation from the main building instead of having the fueling station constructed with its own separate roof.

B. Meeting with Property Owners

Downes stated that there will be a meeting with surrounding property owners on January 9, 2014. This meeting is an opportunity for neighbors to view the final site design and discuss the variances that the department will be applying for. Downes continued that the only controversial variance that might be an issue is the south property line. There is a dense tree line that runs right along the property line, which will make the construction of a fence impossible. As such, Mr. Humes is recommending that the fence be built seven or eight feet into the property, thereby granting the surrounding property owners an additional seven or eight feet of land. This change will not hurt the project in any way.

Committee Chairman Moran asked if a fence is needed.

Chief Spera replied that a fence is needed operationally. Chief Spera also asked if an arborist has been brought in to determine the condition of the trees near the department. He stressed the need for a fall zone around the department so that a falling tree will not land on the new building.

Downes replied that a landscape surveyor has walked through the property and examined all the trees. Downes added that it would be better politically to trim trees near the department rather than take trees down.

Committee Member Brophy stated that the tree warden should come to the property and determine if any trees need to be cleared.

First Selectman Fortuna stated that the intention is to not take down any trees. He added that the fence will be well into the town's property so the surrounding neighbors will not likely be concerned about this issue. He concluded that the majority of questions will concern lighting and noise.

Committee Member Savino stated that it would be a mistake to make false promises to the neighbors. He added that realistic possibilities should be presented to them.

Downes replied that you can't promise the neighbors anything you can't deliver but you don't want them fighting against your variances.

First Selectman Fortuna stated that the surrounding property owners will be happy as long as the trees stay up.

Chief Spera expressed concern that constructing the fence seven feet into the property would encroach on the back of the service yard.

Downes replied that they would have to consult Mr. Humes' drawings to see how the fence would impact the service yard.

C. Pavement Removal

Downes stated that if blacktop isn't removed from the property then there won't be enough green space and a variance will be required. They concluded that removing all the blacktop will cost \$24,000 but removing enough blacktop to avoid a variance will cost \$9,500.

First Selectman Fortuna stated that paying \$9,500 for blacktop removal is worth the cost to avoid applying for a variance.

Committee Chairman Moran asked if the blacktop removal is a change order or part of the project.

Downes replied that the blacktop removal will become part of the construction cost.

Chief Spera objected, stating that \$9,500 is coming away from the building. Chief Spera added that if a variance is applied for, he believes the other Boards and Commissions will understand that the blacktop is going to get taken out eventually when the green space construction project begins.

First Selectman Fortuna agreed but also stated that there is no funding or plan for the green space at this time. He concluded that this is an easy variance to avoid for \$9,500.

Chief Spera replied that he understands that the blacktop needs to be removed. He simply objects to \$9,500 being lost from the building before construction even begins.

Downes added that the fewer variances that are applied for, the better off the project will be.

Chief Spera asked if the grant money for the park would cover the \$9,500 needed for blacktop removal.

First Selectman Fortuna replied that the grant money would not cover the expense.

Committee Member Sparaco asked about the \$80,000 that had just been approved for the site.

First Selectman Fortuna replied that the money was strictly for demolition and fill of the old police building.

D. Boards, Commissions and Variances

Mr. Humes informed the Commission that he is preparing the final applications and drawings to be presented to the various Boards and Commissions. He added that he has prepared a Statement of Use that thoroughly outlines the details of the project and the seven variances that the project is applying for.

Chief Spera asked if any of the seven variances go beyond standard requests.

Mr. Humes replied that most of the variances concern the service yard so if the town's boards and commissions embrace the concept of the service yard for the department, then there shouldn't be any problems.

Chief Spera asked if there are any examples that can be shown for lighting levels.

Mr. Humes responded that a lighting example panel might be possible.

Committee Member Savino asked how the town can protect against homeowners cutting down trees that don't belong to them but are on their side of the fence.

Downes replied that this concern is a code enforcement issue and does not involve the construction of the building.

Chief Spera again stated that there should be a fall zone around the perimeter of the building to protect against falling trees and tree limbs.

First Selectman Fortuna replied that the town would be better off having arborists come in and prune the trees that present any danger to the building.

E. Pre-Construction Schedule

January 27, 2014 – Architecture Review Board
February 5, 2014 – Planning Commission
February 12, 2014 – Zoning Board of Appeals
February 18, 2014 – Zoning Commission

Chief Spera asked Mr. Humes if he is anticipating that all the proposed variances will be approved by ZBA on February 12.

Mr. Humes replied that if they do not, the meeting with the Zoning Commission will still take place on February 18 but they will delay their vote on the project.

Chief Spera asked if the demolition team for the old building will work for Downes.

Downes replied that the demolition team will work for the town but they will be there to supervise the work.

Committee Chairman Moran asked who pays for traffic management during demolition.

Downes replied that they would coordinate it with the help of the police department. Downes also noted that the department will lose their fuel facility once the project starts.

Committee Chairman Moran asked if Downes knew approximately how much fuel is in the tanks.

Downes replied that they are hoping East River Energy will come to the site and determine how much fuel remains in the tank.

Chief Spera stated that the department needs to know the exact plan for temporary fueling. He stated that the smartest plan would be to buy a tank for temporary use and then give the tank to the Fire Department when the police no longer needed it.

F. Budget

Downes stated that construction costs are still not 100% finalized but the project is close to going out to bid, at which point, exact costs will be determined.

Chief Spera expressed strong concern that a telephone system for the department was not part of the project's overall budget. He added that this issue has been discussed at previous meetings and that a phone system is vital to the completion of the project.

Committee Chairman Moran asked how this cost was removed from the project budget.

Downes replied that the cost for a phone system was never in the project budget but if the Committee wanted to be given a presentation on phone systems, he could arrange such a presentation.

Chief Spera stated that the phone system is a significant cost for the project that the entire Committee believed was included in the budget. He asked if there were other expenses that were now excluded from the original budget.

Committee Member Sparaco asked about the \$194,000 reserved for telecommunications.

Downes replied that the telecommunications money is reserved for wiring and does not cover the cost of the phone system.

Committee Member Sparaco asked about the line item, "Communications equipment and furniture".

Downes replied that the line item is for the dispatching center. Downes added that if the Committee does not have a phone system in mind then a presentation should be given by a vendor or two.

Chief Spera replied that the big problem is that when the town of Old Saybrook voted on the budget and the plans for the new police building, it was widely assumed that phones were included in that budget.

Downes replied that the original budget document and every updated document that they have provided include a budget number and a description of everything included in that line item. They concluded that if members of the Committee do not read the material given to them, then they cannot be held responsible for the outcome.

Committee Member Maher referenced budget documents from August, stating that a line item had been added for a new telephone system.

Chief Spera reviewed the document and added that this version of the budget has \$45,000 added to the budget for a new telephone system with a description that indicates that phones would be included. Chief Spera concluded that the Department would have to meet with vendors to determine what needs to be purchased. Chief Spera also noted that as a taxpayer he is getting frustrated with meetings where he is told that costs are not included in the budget.

Downes stated that the phone system might have been one of the line items that were cut to achieve the referendum budget number.

Chief Spera replied that the night budget cuts were made, the phone system was not on the list supplied by Downes.

Police Commission Chairman Finch asked what the department wants the new phone system to be able to do.

Chief Spera stated that he wants to know what a phone system can do. He added that he needs a presentation where he will be shown what different price ranges will provide for the department. Once he has seen the options, he will choose the system that best meets the department's needs.

Chief Spera concluded that he knew that servers are not part of the construction budget but he was under the impression, as well as the entire Building Committee, that the phone system was part of the budget.

G. Builder's Risk Insurance

Downes stated that the owner typically buys the insurance themselves. This insurance covers the site from fire, flood, hurricane, etc. Downes stated that once a decision has been made, they can go out and purchase it.

H. Ground Breaking Ceremony

Downes advised that if there is going to be a ground breaking ceremony, a date should be chosen as early as possible.

First Selectman Fortuna replied that a ceremony would likely be in the spring or summer.

VI. Comments or Concerns from Committee Members

Chief Spera stated that he is concerned with missing budget pieces and expenses being paid for out of the project's budget that should have been included in the referendum number. He added that the town's taxpayers believed they were voting on a budget that included everything the department would need to operate and it is troubling to learn that at least one major piece is missing from that budget.

VII. Adjournment

Committee Member O'Brien made a motion to adjourn. Committee Member Sparaco seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn the meeting passed with a vote of 8 in favor and 0 against.

The meeting minutes for January 6, 2014 were prepared and respectfully submitted by:

Trent Gerbers
Recording Clerk for the Old Saybrook Police Building Committee