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Town of Stonington
Permanent Committee to Study the Needs and Use of Town Public
Buildings Including Town Hall Facilities
July 7, 2009

A special meeting of the Permanent Committee to Study the Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings Including Town Hall Facilities was held on July 7, 2009, at the Stonington Police Station.

Present: Charles Ballato, George Brennan, Tony Cassata, David Christina, and Stephen Singer.

(1) Call to Order

George Brennan, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

(2) Town Hall Study - RFP

Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. - Presenters Charles W. Boos, AIA, James P. Sperry, ASLA, and Elizabeth Berman, Interior Design.

Charles Boos provided a background on the company's municipal experience. James Sperry discussed the approach to the project and items to be considered i.e., understand the environmental constraints, community, short and long term capability of the site. The information is then used to create a matrix that identifies key elements.

Elizabeth Berman discussed the concept of virtual town hall and space planning effects. She provided general thoughts on integration and technology.

Charles Boos stated it is important to understand the construction of the building. If the project proceeds to construction, all problems should be identified during this stage.

The space program needs assessment starts with gathering data, identifying future and current space needs, and assessing adjacencies. When the space needs program is in place, project phasing begins. This process is important since it affects project cost.

Questions: Stephen Singer stated the Board of Education is considering relocating and perhaps there would be broader potential for the study. Charles Boos responded that there may be eligibility for state reimbursement. The caveat to that is the Board of Education would be required to occupy that space, however, it can be integrated into the study. Tony Cassata questioned the definition of long term. Charles Boos commented 50 years. As far as IT considerations, the building has to be flexible, with electrical capacity for future needs, as well as data closets. He then questioned what has been driving the space needs for various projects that Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. has done. Charles Boos stated that town halls have been used and overused. In looking at the Stonington Town Hall it appears to be a building that will support municipal office space, however, it may not be suitable for meeting space. The building type is ordinary construction, masonry and wooden floors which presents a challenge to create meeting rooms. It is not only the challenge of sufficient space, but the load bearing capacity. Tony Cassata questioned how virtual town hall will affect the footprint. Mr. Boos responded that overall the introduction of virtual town hall and use of technology, usually results in a reduction of the footprint. David Christina stated there has been dialog about the Stonington Town Hall being a historical building. On a scale of 1 to 10 what would

your read be as to its historical significance. Charles Boos state he did not believe it had historical significance. The double set of stairs would be nice to keep, but the challenge is to provide accessibility to the main entrance. There are opportunities for a side approach that would qualify as a main entrance. The building is well proportioned and a nice symbol. It is worth extending its life. There are possibilities to consider and evaluate various spaces, but public assembly should be located elsewhere. Stephen Singer questioned the process to identify alternative sites for sub-functions, etc. Charles Boos stated the Town's property would be analyzed and the appropriateness of these sites would require discussion with the Committee. Creating the matrix will help to do an investigative report.

The Lawrence Associates, Architects/Planners, PC - Present ers Richard S. Lawrence, President, The Lawrence Associates, James Oates, Principal, Anchor Engineering Services, Inc., and Rudolph M. Milfort, Vice President, LMG Consulting Engineers, Inc.

Richard Lawrence provided qualifications and past experience with historical municipal buildings.

To meet the objectives, Lawrence Associates would do the following:

- Prepare and distribute a survey form.
- Conduct initial meetings with all department heads.
- One-on-one meetings with Selectman and each department head.
- Survey existing conditions, code evaluation, and prepare a matrix of current space use.
- Determine growth potential and finalize a space needs assessment and perform a site analysis.
- Based on the information, create some creative space solutions by capturing existing unused spaces, solve some of the space needs, solve traffic flow in the building, create swing space (critical to renovations), and alternative design solutions.

To evaluate the use of technology in the design process, a space needs comparative analysis will be done to include square footage needed and electronic document scanning and storage. Some documents can now be stored offsite. Mr. Lawrence suggested that more could be done with electronic formats.

The methodology to provide and select alternative approaches will be done by formulating options and preparing a subjective ranking system. Every project has some obstacles. The priority is to receive approval of the voters by conducting public meetings and educating residents.

James Otis reviewed site considerations; parking, traffic, pedestrian circulation drainage, utilities, and regulatory agency approval process. Physical and regulatory constraints will be identified. The Committee has expressed a desire to provide more capacity in the building and add meeting space.

Rudolph Milfort discussed mechanical, electrical, and fire protection considerations. An evaluation of all existing mechanical equipment is done and a recommendation of system(s) is based on architectural solution(s). Energy efficient features are recommended with an emphasis on low maintenance and timely payback. A

design philosophy is based on selecting simple and economical systems. Primary design focus is on user comfort. Green sustainability is always a goal in designs.

Questions: Stephen Singer questioned the proposal in the cost section it states fees were limited to a single site. How would the pros and cons of various alternatives beyond the campus be assessed. Mr. Lawrence responded that it was unknown as to the number of sites, but a fixed fee could be developed. Tony Cassata questioned if there are any numbers on how the use of technology affects space and efficiencies. Mr. Lawrence felt it would vary in each town. Mr. Cassata stated in the design phase Lawrence Associates would present options. How much technology is weighted in that to present to the client. Mr. Lawrence stated it is a combination of operations and technology. Stephen Singer questioned the previous work done on the town garage building. James Otis responded an environmental assessment of the site was completed in 2001.

Noyes, Vogt, Architects, Inc. - Presenters Thomas Gribbin, President, and Mary Clark.

Thomas Gribbin provided a background on the firm's experience and discussed similar town hall projects. Mary Clark discussed the Groton Town Hall Annex and Gilford Town Hall Annex. Mr. Gribbin stated that he believes technology does not eliminate physical space requirements.

He stated the Committee is looking for a feasibility study that will give decision making power to bring to the public. He reviewed the process used for the Redding Town Hall renovation. The same process would be used, conducting interviews, prepare space planning diagrams, and determine how to reorganize this building into a more efficient space.

Questions: Stephen Singer questioned if the Town of Groton made the decision to relocate offices. Mary Clark responded that the town hall had no room left and the town looked at the larger complex and what entities could be extracted from the town hall. It was the town itself that made that decision. Stephen Singer stated if it is determined that more space is needed in addition to what is already there, one option would be to make modifications to the existing building. How would Noyes, Vogt, Architects identify potential suitable sites. Tom Gribbin responded that the feasibility of sites would be evaluated. If the proximity issue is removed, then it is looking at the site and feasibility of construction. If different sites are part of the equation, one has to look at construction and accessibility. Various components within the Department of Public Works would be evaluated as well. The intent is to look at the Stonington Town Hall and the immediate complex and conduct a survey to determine the functionalities and interpersonal relationships. Outside of that, an equitable fee would be negotiated. David Christina stated the Redding Town Hall is a strong parallel to issues in the Stonington Town Hall. He questioned the demographics and how space needs have served the community since the project's completion. Mr. Gribbin stated Noyes, Vogt, Architects, Inc. did not look at the demographic in terms of growth, but Redding had an idea of what was needed in terms of size versus population. George Brennan stated the most convenient location is critical to residents. Thomas Gribbin agreed and stated keeping the scale that is reasonable for the neighborhood is important and the expandability for future growth would be addressed. David Christina questioned what the firm proposed

for the Stonington Town Hall three years ago. Mr. Gribbin stated it was an interview based on qualifications, but there was no requirement to bring in any ideas for additions.

(3) Correspondence

None.

(4) Adjournment

There being no further business, Stephen Singer motioned to adjourn at 8:58 p.m., seconded by Charles Ballato, and the motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by,

Maureen L. Carboni, Recorder

George Brennan, Chairman