

**BUILDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES APRIL 4, 2012
PUBLIC HEARING
APPROVED**

Present: Jack Petropoulos, Chairman; Jeremy Januskiewicz, Vice Chairman; Mike Bouchard, Clerk; Val Prest; Susan Daly, Ex-Officio; Chief Joe Bosselait, Ex-Officio

Absent: Halsey Platt

Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Land Use Assistant

Chairman Petropoulos opened the public hearing at 7:02pm and stated that the Committee had an item of business that they needed to conduct first. He said they had been asked to discuss the possibility of voting to have Dore & Whittier not proceed with the elevations on the Lawrence Homestead Trust property but to instead focus their efforts on the Station Ave (GELD) property and the Prescott School property so as to make sure the comparisons were comparable between the three (3) sites.

Chief Bosselait asked if Dore & Whittier was willing to do that and if it would cost more to have it done. Chairman Petropoulos said that they were willing to do this and that it would not cost more. He added that the committee was not asking Dore & Whittier to redesign but just asking them to make sure the comparisons were apples to apples. Ms. Daly agreed with having the comparison done. Kevin Lindermer asked how GELD's engineer, Places, information would be dealt with adding that if it was a peer review it would be okay because he did not want competitive issues.

Chief Bosselait made a motion to request Dore & Whittier to evaluate the other two (2) sites (Prescott & Station Ave) to make sure that all three (3) comparisons were apples to apples. Mr. Prest seconded the motion and all were in favor with a unanimous vote.

Chairman Petropoulos talked about the work that had been done by the committee to date. He said that the response time study had been completed and was available online. He said that they took all calls over the past three (3) years, had it digitized on a map and calculated a 4, 6, and 8 minute response time. It was determined that none of the three (3) potential sites had significant difference and all averaged a 5 ½ minute response time estimate. He gave recognition to the committee that developed the Tier 1 sites because the perfect site would end up in the middle of the three (3) proposed sites.

Chairman Petropoulos talked briefly about the status of the three (3) potential sites and how each had their positives and negatives. He said that at the last public hearing a resident had asked about a possible agreement that may have been made to not build any additional public safety buildings in the area of the Lawrence Homestead Trust property. Town Manager Haddad said that they did some research and found out that it had to do with the current Public Safety property only not the adjacent sites.

Chairman Petropoulos said that the Committee had looked into the possibility of future expansion at each of the three (3) sites. They took into consideration a future full-time department, additional equipment and new requirements, and improved coverage to the Lost Lake area. The committee did a needs analysis to make sure that the correct size building was being built. Dore & Whittier met with the fire department on numerous occasions and worked on a wish list. This wish list with what was required for building space was further condensed and a final building square footage of 18,550 was agreed upon as suitable by all. This included bays with front and rear exits, day to day operations on the first floor and living quarters, kitchen, dining training and exercise facilities on the second floor.

Chairman Petropoulos said that they had taken time to understand a fire station. He explained the importance of a pole (a safety issue) and why a fire station needed one. He said that they the public was invited to tour the Ayer Fire Station.

Chairman Petropoulos showed three (3) conceptual drawings for the Lawrence Homestead Trust site. The first placed the building near the Public Safety building with the wetlands left in between the two. This would leave the least amount of open space left on the property. The second plan placed the building more toward the rear of the property

leaving three (3) lots in front of it. The third plan placed the building all the way to the right of the property leaving lots to the left. This plan would require the town to purchase the least amount of land and there were no wetlands on this side of the property.

Chairman Petropoulos showed a conceptual plan provided by GELD for the Station Ave site. This showed that the 50 and 100 foot buffer zones of wetlands would be incurred upon by the buildings. He also said that the status of this site currently rested on the Conservation Commission. Town Manager Haddad said that the GELD commissioners and Conservation Commission were scheduled to have further instructions. Mr. Lindermer said that GELD was proceeding quickly and would be refilling under the local bylaw to have the GELD building approved.

Chairman Petropoulos discussed the preliminary cost estimates. Town Manager Haddad said that the numbers provided were the worst case scenarios. Scott McDonald asked how much land they were looking to purchase from the Lawrence Homestead Trust. Town Manager Haddad said that they were looking at between 2.5 and 4.8 acres.

Chairman Petropoulos explained that the next steps were to incorporate any feedback they would receive, to get Dore and Whittier familiar with the Prescott School and Station Ave properties, look at cost reduction options, follow GELD and Cons Com discussions, further evaluate traffic and pedestrian safety issues, continue informing the public, and render recommendation to the Board of Selectmen when they are ready.

Michelle Collette thanked the committee and commended them on their thorough presentation. She said that the Ayer Fire Station was visible to passerby's which she felt was important and was concerned that placing the station at the rear of the property would not stand out as a safe haven. She asked to make sure that storm water management issues were being looked at with all three (3) sites. Town Manager Haddad said that storm water issues were important and were being looked at thoroughly. Chief Bosselait said that they had discussed signage and lighting with regard to the fire station being a safe haven.

Peter Cunningham asked if response time for the responders to get to the station was addressed. Chairman Petropoulos said that response time in was looked at and was the same as response time out. Mr. Bouchard said that they also looked at worst case scenarios such as roads being clamped down.

Chris Christie asked what was going to happen to the current center station and if they could use it to store auxiliary vehicles. Chief Bosselait said that taking vehicles and dispersing them around time would defeat the purpose of having a center station. Mr. Prest added that the existing station was 70 plus years old and had severe cracking from thaw/freezing issues. Mr. Lindermer asked if the current center station could be used as a parking lot thus cutting down on the parking required across the street. Town Manager Haddad said that it was something that could be considered.

Mr. McDonald said that there was a small brook near his house that can turn into a raging brook when there is a storm. He was concerned about water from the brook increasing on his property.

Mr. Bryant asked who designed the Ayer Fire Station and why it was being used as a comparison. Mr. Petropoulos said that the Ayer Fire Station was available thanks to a Groton resident and Ayer Firefighter on the committee. He said that it was roughly the same size as what Groton was looking at but that it didn't need to look the same. Mr. Bryant asked what size Ayer's station was. Mr. Januskiewicz said that it was approximately 21,000 square feet and added that that included a basement. Mr. Bryant asked what was going to happen with the bays at the Public Safety building once the ambulances were relocated. Town Manager Haddad said that they would be utilized by the Police Department.

Mr. Roberts an abutter to the Station Ave site said that he would like to see the current center station utilized and added that he thought the Station Ave site was the best site. He said that conservation was important but the town needed a fire station. Chief Bosselait said that the first committee looked at the current center station site but that because of the size and wetlands constraints it would not be possible to build a new station there.

Kathy Lincoln an EMT and resident from Farmers Row said that having a parking lot across the street from the Station Ave site would add additional time for responders and could be a safety issue should someone fall for

example. She also said that access to Broadmeadow really needed to be improved if it was going to be used as an access road and talked about ensuring the safety of pedestrians including children using the rail trail.

There was discussion regarding the next steps for GELD and whether or not a fire station could fit there if the Conservation Commission required that they move the location of the building.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Dunbar
Land Use Assistant

Approved 5-18-12