

**BUILDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES JUNE 06, 2012
APPROVED**

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

Absent: Val Prest, Jeremy Januskeiwicz

Also Present: Mark Haddad, Town Manager; April Iannacone, DPW Assistant

Chairman Petropoulos called the public information session of the Building Committee to Order at 7:00 p.m. He then informed the public that a sign in sheet would be passed around to everyone and thanked them for attending and their interest in the project.

Mr. Petropoulos stated that this public information session was to kick off the design through funding phase of the Center Fire Station Project. This phase of the project the Building Committee would be seeking as much public involvement as possible to make the new Center Fire Station as successful a project for the Fire Department, the Town and the residents.

Mr. Petropoulos stated that the April Town Meeting had approved the land purchase on Farmers Row with about 79-80% in favor. He explained the location of the lot in relation to the Public Safety Building and where in the field/lot the station would be built. The purpose of the meeting this evening was to give residents an opportunity to learn the proposed time line for the project as well as receive input and concerns from residents and abutters so the Building Committee could try to address the concerns. Mr. Petropoulos then turned the discussion over to Mr. Haddad for an update on the status of the land purchase.

Mr. Haddad stated that the purchasing attorney is currently negotiating the purchase and sales (P&S) for the land at the \$350,000. He expects that the final P&S should be completed and brought to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) in about 3-4 weeks. At this time the land is agricultural and the Lawrence Homestead Trustees have a contract with a local farmer to hay the field through the end of 2014. Mr. Haddad stated that at this time the Lawrence Homestead Trustees and the local farmer have come to an agreement to end the contract early while keeping the farmer whole through the end of the original contract.

Mr. Petropoulos stated that a Request for Proposals (RFP) had gone out to obtain individuals and firms qualified and interested in working as the project manager for the construction. A project manager is required to oversee all aspects of the project construction by State Law. Over the next few months the Building Committee would be reviewing all the proposals and determining who will be best suited for the project manager for the Town.

Mr. Petropoulos then went through a Power Point presentation (see copy of presentation attached) and gave a brief description of the current status of the project, objectives for the public information meeting, the next steps for approvals as well as the objectives for the next phase of the project. Mr. Petropoulos explained the timeline for the next phase of the project and how dedicated the Committee would be in following this timeline. He stated that any delay in the timing of this phase would then cause delay along the whole project which could then create a huge expense to the entire project. Mr. Petropoulos stated that the cost of delay will result in the cost inflation on construction and materials. At

an average of 3% inflation cost over a year on an 8 million dollar project would result in an increased cost per day of about \$680 a day.

Mr. Dan Barton, Chair of the Historic District Commission (HDC), then explained the roll of the HDC with regard to the project and their necessary approvals. Their goal is to make sure that the building that is created is done in a sensitive manor to maintain the character of the area. The HDC has not stated that the new station must look like a barn or the houses in the area, but that it blends and co-exists with the properties in the area. The HDC anticipates a few meetings with the Building Committee before an official application is filed and then they intend to have 2 to 3 public hearings for input from the community on the aspects of the design. Mr. Barton stated that the HDC holds regular monthly meetings the 3rd Tuesday of the month for those who may be interested in attending.

Mr. Petropoulos thanked Mr. Barton for his information. Mr. Petropoulos then moved on to explain the traffic management study being done with regard to the impact of daily operations for the new station. He stated that for the full year of 2011 there were 784 EMS calls that came out of the Public Safety Building on Farmers Row and 202 Fire calls from the current Center Fire Station on Station Ave. This means that the total impact to the call volume on Farmers Row would be 202 calls over a year. Mr. Petropoulos stated that the audible warnings that the Fire Department uses are only in the event that they need to clear traffic. At this time approximately 10% of the calls from the Station Ave. Station have a need for audible warnings which the department was anticipating would be reduced once moving to Farmers Row. Mr. Bosselait stated that the goal of the Fire Department is to work with the public and the Town to keep the impact to the area as small as possible.

Mr. Jack Risdien of West Groton asked the Committee who would be doing snow plowing and removal. He also asked if they had thought about a plan for snow removal as plowing may be difficult to do with one driveway as the plan currently shows. Mr. Haddad stated that the Public Works would plow the lot and they would take his information into consideration. Ms. Michelle Collette, Town Planner, stated that a snow removal and storage impact would be part of the Planning Board Application and review process as well.

Resident Chris Christie asked if the plans for the generator had taken into consideration the size, muffler, and position on the lot to be away from residential areas in order to reduce the noise impact of startup and or night use. Mr. Petropoulos replied that these issues would be taken into consideration once they were further into the design process.

Resident Maria Hars stated that the 111/225 intersection was already a difficult intersection and asked if there was a plan to put in a traffic light once the station was constructed. Mr. Petropoulos replied that at this time there was no discussion of a traffic light, but that they would see what was recommended once the traffic management study was complete. Ms. Hars then asked if there was a way out of the Purchase and Sales agreement if the costs grew to a point that they were too expensive and Town Meeting would not approve the actual building. Mr. Petropoulos replied that all costs of construction and sewer connection were rolled into the proposed costs that had been presented at the Town Meeting to approve the purchase of the land and that the majority vote at the time was that people understood the cost and the plan and approved the land purchase. Mr. Haddad stated that there would not be a way out of the P&S once signed.

Resident Alison Eydenberg stated that the intersection of Elm St. and Main St. was dense with homes and traffic volume currently and that with the Truck Exclusion on Mill St. the tractor trailers that now navigate that turn onto Main St. have trouble. She asked if there had been any decisions made as to how they are going to navigate the traffic in that area during heavy commute times. Mr. Bosselait replied that the Fire Department as well as the Building Committee understood that this was a sensitive area of concern to the public and this information was what the professional traffic management study. Ms. Eydenberg then asked if they intended to modify any of the roads based upon the results and information received from the traffic study. Mr. Bosselait stated that at this time they had not yet talked about any modifications but he did not believe that any would be necessary as the trucks currently use these roads as they are. The main intent of the study was to determine the best routes to use to avoid some of these traffic concerns.

Mr. Petropoulos stated that he would be sure to address Ms. Eydenberg's concerns regarding the density of the homes and the children in the area on the frequently asked questions list on the website once the Committee had received information on the traffic study.

Selectmen Peter Cunningham stated that when the BOS petitioned the State for the truck exclusion on Mill Street they were informed that the Elm Street Route was already the official route designated by the State as the truck route.

Resident Berta Erickson stated that she was concerned about the visual impact of large brick buildings and asked the Committee if they could try to incorporate more wood and natural surfaces over bricks. Mr. Petropoulos replied that the Committee would keep this concern as part of the public input while working on the project, but that they would likely let Dore & Whittier recommend what would be best for the building design and structure. Mr. Bosselait stated that when constructing public safety buildings they had to consider sustainability during storms. Ms. Erickson agreed with this need but requested that the Committee look into alternatives, or if they did have to construct using brick could they look into options of covering it in different ways.

Mr. Petropoulos then introduced Mr. Don Walter, the architect from Dore & Whittier, Inc. to update the Committee and the public on the project.

Mr. Walter stated that the early concept design work has been on going. At this time there is a meeting scheduled for next Friday to solidify a plan to move forward with and look at imagery studies. He expects there to be a lot of input and a give and take process through the design phase. One thing they are looking at is the design of buildings at Groton School as well as the farm houses and barns in the area and try to come up with a concept that meets somewhere in between the two in order to fit in with the surroundings. The schedule that they are planning is to work on completing the design through the end of the summer, then work on the construction documentation process detailing exactly how the building it to be built in order to go to bid on the construction phase in mid-November with a 6 week bid process to be opened and reviewed just before the end of December.

Mr. Petropoulos then asked the public if they had any questions for Mr. Walter.

Resident Steve Webber asked Mr. Walter if they were planning on building a low or zero energy building structure. Mr. Walter replied that they were going to take as many steps as they could to keep the energy costs low, but they did not intend to go for a L.E.E.D. certificate.

Resident Chris Christie asked if they were going to consider the stretch code requirements to try to keep the energy operational costs down. Mr. Walter replied that the requirements of the stretch code are to be 20% more efficient than the State building code requires. At this time they intended to look at the L.E.E.D. protocol but may not officially go through certification. He stated that the intent was to look at all aspects of the energy efficiency from the cost to install vs. the cost to operate.

The Committee thanked Mr. Walter for his time and information.

Mr. Petropoulos then informed the public of the changes that the Committee was going to go through. At this time he and the Fire Chief would be exiting the committee in order for two new members to join for the next stages of the project. Resident Steve Webber has been appointed to the Committee with a range of knowledge on financial, design and construction aspects. Mr. Petropoulos stated that the Building Committee would be seeking another resident who may live near the site to be purchased to have a voice for abutter input.

Resident Maria Hars then asked the Committee if they had thought about the costs to operate the new larger building and if the long term intent was to hire more full time staff how that would affect operating costs. Mr. Petropoulos replied that any increase in regular operating costs had not been discussed or determined at this time. Ms. Susan Daly stated that at this time there is no intention of hiring more full time staff to go to a 24/7 operation as soon as the building is constructed. The Department intends to continue to rely on the on call staff for operations just as it is today. Mr. Bosselait stated that right now the Department is functioning with staff and equipment in 2 different buildings. The main goal and intent is to move everyone under one roof for a more efficient model for response time.

Resident George Wheately stated that the plans for the building include 6 dorm rooms as well as an exercise room and asked if the Committee felt that both were completely necessary. He also asked if the Committee had considered working out arrangements with the local gym for membership of the department as an alternative to the exercise room. Mr. Petropoulos replied that through the Committees research he had stopped into the new Ayer fire station unannounced a few times and had seen at least one member of the department using their exercise room each time. He stated that Ayer had seen the advantage of having the ability for the department to be able to exercise and train for the "what if" situations and then be able to respond immediately from the station for a call if necessary. Mr. Petropoulos stated that the bunk rooms were added to the plans because at this time the Fire Department has current members of the staff that at times during certain events stayed the night now even without a real place to sleep. They were also added to the plans because while designing the building the BOS wanted the Committee to think about the long range needs out to at least 50 years from now and some day it just might be necessary to pay for people to stay at the station on a nightly basis.

Ms. Maria Hars asked if there was any way to construct the building in phases rather than build the entire 18,500 square feet of building at one time. Mr. Petropoulos replied that due to inflation in the construction costs it would ultimately cost the Town more to build in phases as she suggested. He also requested that Ms. Hars take a tour of the Ayer fire station with him in order to see what another community determined necessary with far less square miles and smaller population than the Town of Groton. Mr. Bosselait stated that they were looking at what was going to be necessary in order to improve response time in the largest geographic town in Middlesex County.

Resident George Marsh asked the Committee what the current response time was for a call from either the public safety building or the center fire station. Ms. Daley responded that the average response time currently during the day when staff was on site was 7 to 8 minutes, but that it was longer when they were on call status and had to go to 2 different buildings.

Mr. Petropoulos then moved on to explain that the Committee was going to continue to seek public participation and input during the process and would really like to have an abutter consider appointment to the Committee. He then informed the public on all the ways to contribute and stay informed through the process.

Mr. Petropoulos thanked everyone for their time and input and ended the public session at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

April Iannacone
DPW Assistant

Date Approved: 8/20/12