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**Municipal Building  
Committee for  
Prescott School**

Gregory Sheldon, *Chair*  
Anna Eliot, *Vice Chair*  
Halsey Platt, *Clerk*  
Brian Bolton, *Member*  
Gary Green, *Member*  
Alison Manugian, *Member*  
David Melpignano, *Member*  
Becky Pine, *Member*  
Lynwood V. Prest, *Member*



**Public Engagement Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes**

Date: January 28, 2015  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Prescott School, 145 Main Street, Groton, MA  
Attending Subcommittee Members: Becky Pine, Anna Elliot, David Melpignano  
Others: Pierre Comtois (Nashoba Publishing), Patricia Lawrence, Greg Sheldon, Alberta Erickson, Mary Jennings, Ann Wortman  
Meeting handouts: Agenda, January 21, 2015 draft minutes

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Public Engagement Subcommittee chair Becky Pine called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Becky Pine explained that fellow subcommittee member Brian Bolton is familiar with electronic media due to his work expertise. She explained that Brian Bolton may be willing to take the lead on creating and managing a lead on a Facebook page for the Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School. The group discussed the need to make sure that participation in a Facebook page complies with Open Meeting Law rules.

The group discussed creation of a Committee website that might be linked to the municipal website. Brian Bolton may want to discuss Committee webpage needs with the Jessica O'Toole, who is the Town's web developer. Anna Eliot expressed a wish that the plan be kept simple and ensure that the Committee has a way to know what is happening across media forums. Information can be sent to the Town Manager and then sent out to the Committee as a whole.

David Melpignano explained his plan to create a five to seven minute video to use to educate groups in the Groton community. The film would have voice over narration. It may make use of archival material that shows what Prescott looked like in the past as well as what it looks like now. The film can suggest possible uses or invite audiences to propose possible uses. Becky Pine asked what David Melpignano would need from the subcommittee. Patricia Lawrence suggested putting contact information for the committee at the end of the video. David Melpignano said that he would like help defining the content and then he can take it from there and shape the material to make it interesting, deal with graphics, etc. Greg Sheldon and David Melpignano agreed to work together to draft content. If video content is drafted, it can be shared with the Town Manager who can then distribute it back out to the larger group.

Becky Pine noted that the Bergmann report, which is only three years old, explored three possible alternatives, yet two of those alternatives are no longer viable. The non-viable suggestions were inn and center fire station.

Anna Eliot explained that those alternatives were explored by the contractor due to the cost parameters defined for the contractor. Specifically, the contractor was asked to suggest an alternative for renovation and use that would be (a) 100% charged to the Town, (b) mixed use/cost of 70/30 split and (c) zero cost to the Town, i.e., a 100% commercial use that even would generate tax revenue.

Subcommittee members wondered whether the renovation work would need to be done all at once or whether it could be phased. Greg Sheldon commented that this sort of question about what an anchor tenant needs and when it would need to be provided may be better addressed by the other subcommittee.

Becky Pine observed how much has changed since the 2012 report. The group discussed that the Senior Center is sending out a survey about what residents want in a senior center and location for a senior center is an important consideration. The group agreed to invite Council on Aging Director Kathy Shelp into meet with the subcommittee.

Alberta Erickson commented on the change in circumstances between the circa 2012 survey and the present and she proposed that a new survey of public opinion be made. Group discussed the mechanics of whether a new survey would be mailed, web-based or some combination of both to increase the response rate.

Starting with subcommittee members, but later opened up to the group at large, the following list of contacts was assembled:

1. Groton Historical Society (storage/exhibition space)
2. Historic Districts Commission
3. Historical Commission
4. Twomey Center – before and after school child care
5. youth sports organizations (particularly indoor sports)
6. Groton Community Dinners
7. Grange (community kitchen)
8. Groton Dunstable School Committee
9. Groton girl scouts
10. Groton cub and boy scouts (several troops)
11. Groton Planning Board (Master Plan vision for building)
12. Groton Cable Access
13. Groton Conservation Trust
14. Nashua River Watershed Association
15. Groton Cultural Council
16. Arts Nashoba
17. Groton Public Library Trustees
18. Nashoba Chamber of Commerce
19. Economic Development Committee
20. Groton Board of Trade
21. Council on Aging
22. John Amirault, commercial realtor
23. Groton Park Commission

David Melpignano stated that he would like for the subcommittee to have a plan so that the information elicited from the public is as useful to the process and goal as possible. Ann Wortman suggested that the outreach effort cast the net wide, asking everybody regarding their interest in using Prescott School space. She noted that the process may uncover a particular use (such as a Dunkin Donuts store) that might support the rest of the non/less remunerative uses for the space.

Mary Jennings suggested that it may be useful to give a list of questions to each community group that suggest the sort of input that would be useful for this subcommittee to have. For example, how many people would anticipate using Prescott School space, frequency of use, space requirements, etc.

Becky Pine invited the group to suggest similar buildings that the subcommittee might either visit or collect useful information from to bring back for this committee's consideration:

1. Maynard School, 63 Summer Street ([www.artspacemaynard.com/](http://www.artspacemaynard.com/))
2. Pittsfield (maybe Lichtenstein Center for the Arts?)
3. Jamaica Plain Arts Center (fire station conversion to arts center)
4. Needham Avery School
5. Milford (old library converted to coffee house)
6. Westford's Routenbush (barely accessible)

Questions to be asked for each of the compared buildings might include:

1. How did the town/group do it;
2. How did they finance it;
3. Square footage costs to bring building up to code; and
4. Budget samples.

Becky Pine observed that there are many examples of former schools being converted to residential housing. She shared her impression that residential housing could always be a fallback position for the Prescott School so not necessarily something that is sought after as a preferred choice.

Greg Sheldon suggested that a press release be put out. The group discussed the dates and times for holding a couple of public hearings. Greg Sheldon stated that the group may need February to prepare for public hearings to be held in March or April. The public hearings might be held on a weekday morning, a weekday evening and a Saturday morning.

Becky Pine will contact Kathy Shelp at the senior center and may check in with GELD about sending a survey out with GELD's monthly bills. Becky Pine collected meeting time availability from other subcommittee members and she will set a meeting time at a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Minutes by Fran Stanley.