



Town Manager
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TOWN OF GROTON

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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

Brian Bolton
Anna Eliot
David Melpignano
Becky Pine

Research and Analysis Subcommittee

Gary Green
Alison Manugian
Halsey Platt
Lynwood V. Prest

Meeting Minutes for Research and Analysis Subcommittee

Meeting Date: February 23, 2015
Meeting Time: 8 a.m.
Meeting Location: First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall, 173 Main Street, Groton
Members: Gary Green, Alison Manugian, Halsey Platt, Lynwood V. Prest
Others: Gregory Sheldon (chair of the full Municipal Building Committee)
Handouts: Agenda, Zoning bylaw detailing thresholds for levels of site plan review (§218-25)

Halsey Platt asked Alison Manugian if she knew about the Groton Dunstable Regional School District's (GDRSD or School District) needs for office space in the Prescott School building after eighteen months. Alison Manugian shared her impression that the GDRSD is happy to remain as a tenant as long as the price is right and the renovation schedule fits the School District's needs. Alison Manugian assumes that the School District would move out while renovations are being done. The School Committee in consultation with the School Superintendent would need to evaluate future needs. What if the School District moves out during renovation and then finds that it no longer requires the Prescott School space.

Regarding costs, Alison Manugian said that last year's budget for the building was \$40,000 but that the total cost for use of the building – which includes snow plowing and janitorial services – is about \$70,000 to \$75,000.

Alison Manugian explained that the School District already has a plan for exiting Prescott School. In those projections, the School District plans for square footage that is half of the space that the administration currently occupies in the building. Gary Green asked for how each room in the Prescott School is presently utilized and Alison can collect that information. Also, the School Committee currently plans to explore future capital improvements needs next year although there is no current expectation that the School District will require a new school.

Gary Green asked Alison Manugian about potential plans or need for space to accommodate special education programs. Alison Manugian will consult with Superintendent Kristan Rodriguez, but she is not sure that the School District requires any additional space for running new special education programs. Gregory Sheldon asked Alison Manugian if she was aware of a possible need for Prescott School space expressed by the Town of Harvard. Alison Manugian stated that there was an exploration by the Town of Harvard for temporary office and storage space while that town renovated its Town Hall. The plan did not go forward because the building lacked the electrical amperage needs for the office space and there is no way to effectively divide the office space into separate, secure work spaces.

The group discussed the various municipal space needs that might be expressed by the Groton Public Library (GPL) Trustees or the Council on Aging. Gary Green thought that brainstorming municipal needs would proceed most effectively with the Town Manager in the room. Gregory Sheldon noted that that GPL Trustees plan to meet with the other subcommittee towards the end of March. Gary Green stated that ideally data would be logged consistently between subcommittees so that we end up with usable data for the desired use of the Prescott School. Halsey Platt asked Gary Green to work on a template or form to help log the data and he agreed to perform that task.

Lynwood Prest distributed a handout -- zoning bylaw detailing thresholds for levels of site plan review (§218-25) -- and explained that there is some building inspector discretion for determining the size of a proposed renovation project in interior square feet. Possible areas to address in a building renovation include:

- electrical system,
- heating system,
- meeting current Energy Code (i.e., insulation and some lighting requirements),
- accessibility requirements,
- sprinklers, and
- any hazardous materials remediation (possible asbestos floor tiles).

The number of interior square feet affected sort the level of effort required to meet the Planning Board's site plan review thresholds. A structural review of the building would be required regardless under building codes but Lynwood Prest explained that the costs of preparing a level 3 site plan are substantial since stamped engineering plans are required. Alison Manugian commented that the building codes do not allow a series of piecemeal projects to be performed within a short time frame in order to avoid a larger engineering review.

At a minimum, Lynwood Prest advised that he does not see how a renovation could stay within the Level 1 threshold. However, if the uses of the building change from public, then the Planning Board review will require a Level 3 site plan review. Lynwood Prest introduced the idea of establishing a set of parameters for anticipated building use and then hiring a specialty contractor whose task is to provide cost estimate ranges. The Town would need to define the type of use (municipal only, split use or full business use).

Halsey Platt directed the group to consider drafting a presumption of use for the 27,000 square feet. Halsey Platt said that comments so far suggest that the Committee is looking at School District uses, some nonprofit uses and some commercial kitchen uses. Gregory Sheldon said that the present view is that the School District would occupy the third floor, shared public and nonprofit space would be on the second floor and that the first floor is the most wide open in terms of a mix of commercial, municipal and nonprofit use. Halsey Platt agreed to work on a draft vision of use and occupancy.

Alison Manugian will outline zoning obligations. Alison Manugian expressed her concern that too narrow a focus on arts use would not be beneficial. Gary Green stressed that he wants to explore the Town's legitimate space needs for the Prescott School rather than encouraging use in order to fill the building.

Next meeting of the full group is this afternoon at 5 pm and then again on March 9th. Next meeting of this subcommittee will be Monday, March 2nd at 9 am.

Alison Manugian moved to adjourn the meeting at about 9 am. Halsey Platt seconded and motion carried (4:0).

Notes by Fran Stanley