



**Town Manager**  
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**TOWN OF GROTON**  
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**Municipal Building  
Committee for  
Prescott School**

Greg Sheldon, *Chair*  
Anna Eliot, *Vice Chair*  
Halsey Platt, *Clerk*  
Gary Green, *Member*  
Alison Manugian, *Member*  
Becky Pine, *Member*  
Lynwood V. Prest, *Member*

### **Meeting Minutes for Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School**

Meeting Date: April 21, 2015  
Meeting Time: 5 p.m.  
Meeting Location: Town Hall, First Floor Selectmen's Room, 173 Main Street, Groton  
Members: Becky Pine, Greg Sheldon, Gary Green, Halsey Platt, Alison Manugian, Anna Eliot, Lynwood Prest  
Others: Ann Wortman, Sue Lotz, Patricia Lawrence, John Petropoulos, Mary Jennings, Jeff Gordon, Richard Lewis, Mike Rasmussen, Alberta Erickson  
Handouts: Agenda, draft minutes from March 23, 2015 and April 6, 2015, Open Meeting Law violation complaint, draft presentation for April 27 Town Meeting by Greg Sheldon, May 2<sup>nd</sup> preparation materials, sample May 2<sup>nd</sup> advertising

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Greg Sheldon opened the meeting at 5 pm. Greg Sheldon asked members to review the draft minutes from past meetings.

*Becky Pine moved to approve the draft minutes from March 23, 2015 as corrected. Anna Eliot seconded and motion carried 6:0 (Lynwood Prest absent).*

Lynwood Prest enters the meeting.

*Becky Pine moved to approve the draft minutes from April 6, 2015 as corrected. Alison Manugian seconded and motion carried 4:0 (Alison Manugian, Halsey Platt and Lynwood Prest abstained).*

Greg Sheldon introduced the Open Meeting Law violation complaint submitted by Alison Manugian to the Committee for its review. There was some description of the nature of the alleged violation. Fran Stanley stated that she spoke with the Town Clerk regarding this complaint and the Town Clerk recommended that the Committee list the open meeting law violation on an agenda for an upcoming meeting, discuss in that future meeting, decide on the violation, then reduce decision to writing and send a copy to the Commonwealth [Office of the Attorney General, Division of Open Government]. Committee members agreed to follow this process and Greg Sheldon directed Fran Stanley to put this complaint in the next full committee agenda.

Greg Sheldon reviewed his draft of comments to be made on behalf of the Committee to Town Meeting on April 27, 2015. One or two slides of the Prescott School and an invitation to the May 2<sup>nd</sup> open house/public meeting will be displayed.

The Committee discussed the representation to send to appear on Jane Bouvier's cable T.V. show on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Greg Sheldon will attend as the chair and the group agreed to have Anna Eliot and Becky Pine as additional representatives to discuss the Committee's work and promote the upcoming event on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Public Engagement update by Becky Pine is directed toward advertising for and planning of the May 2<sup>nd</sup> open house/public hearing event. Becky Pine said that the letter sized version of the flyer was submitted to the Groton Herald to be published in this week's newspaper. The Groton Herald rates are reasonable. Becky Pine also submitted a letter to the editor as well.

Banner came in at \$375 for its cost. The mock-up for the banner was acceptable to the Committee. Becky Pine will arrange to have the banner delivered to Town Hall on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> so that it can be hung up on Tuesday, the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Alison Manugian has worked on the printing of signs. There will be three sandwich board signs and several posters. Alison Manugian will ask the printer to complete the print job by Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. Becky Pine asked for help to distribute the posters. Becky Pine noted that emails with flyer information will go out from the School District to parents. Also, the Town Manager will arrange for a flyer with Prescott School facts to be a part of the Town Meeting packet. The reverse of the flyer can be used to display the list of Prescott School building facts.

The Committee discussed how to label the floors of the building on the building layout diagram. Halsey Platt noted that removing the gymnasium from the second floor or upper level diagram would be helpful for those who are less familiar with the building.

Becky Pine asked whether there would be a Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting at 4 pm for planning and set up for the Open House on Saturday. Fran Stanley was directed to post that meeting as a public meeting.

Becky Pine has name tags for the committee members. Markers, stickers and butcher paper may also be collected or purchased. Becky Pine stated that she did not think that the Committee had time to review the Google forms database of suggested uses in advance of the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

Mark Haddad leaves the meeting.

Refreshments introduced as an idea by Becky Pine. An array of refreshments that includes coffee, cider, donuts, water could be fairly simple says Halsey Platt. Perhaps that could be organized on Friday afternoon. Greg Sheldon asked for the total to be kept under \$1,000 for the entire event, advertising included.

Anna Eliot, Gary Green, Jack Petropoulos leave the meeting.

Patricia Lawrence commented that there may need to be more of a draw in order to get attendance up at 9 am on a Saturday.

Mike Rasmussen commented that the exercise as designed lists municipal uses that would be revenue negative from the Town's perspective. Mike Rasmussen said that without the context of the cost, he is not sure what you end up with. Lynwood Prest commented that not including lease or sale in any of the seven categories is incomplete and unbalanced. Halsey Platt noted that this is the initial invitation to imagine new uses that is not cost dependent at this point. Halsey Platt agreed that the money is incredibly important for going through Town Meeting, but this is a committee process that will address the money piece in time, understanding that without a solid economic plan a proposal will never pass Town Meeting. The Committee members are aware of this consideration and do not want to spin wheels on a plans that do not advance. Ann Wortman offered the Roudenbush Center in Westford as an example of a successful way to renovate an old municipal building and give it productive community uses.

One discussion point was that uses and economics are different from ownership. Mary Jennings said that there are a number of ways to make this building financially viable and that selling the building is not the only financially sound choice.

Greg Sheldon said he cancelled the meeting with Mr. Evans last week and he wanted the Mr. Evans agenda item to not take up too much time in a busy agenda for this municipal committee. In part, Greg Sheldon explained that he not want to show favoritism for any particular future use. He said that he wants transparency and fairness in the committee's actions. When time comes and the stage arrives for evaluating the proposals and, then the Committee will gauge the energy for the vision and the finances that support the most viable proposal. So, Greg Sheldon wants a category for private purchase or private sale.

Mary Jennings said that she disagrees, commenting that the past two town meetings have explored a zero cost to the Town project. She doesn't think that 'for sale' should be anywhere on the "Express Your Preferences" visioning categories which are –

1. Arts,
2. Education,
3. Community,
4. Recreation/Sports/Fitness,
5. Leased Space/Commercial Uses,
6. Municipal, and
7. Other.

Alison Manugian is inclined to stick with the 'use' model for the open house, but there needs to be money attached pretty rapidly so that the public can test out its actual appetite for investing in the building. Recalling the recent Town Meeting votes on the proposed sale to Greg Yanchenko, the first vote to sell failed by eight votes. The second Town Meeting vote to sell failed to reach the required two thirds majority by only two votes.

Mike Rasmussen recommends three categories only as sufficient for the exercise: municipal, nonprofit or for profit. Alison Manugian commented that without applying financial numbers to the various ideas, then this may not move the committee and the process in a helpful direction.

Sue Lotz said that she thought the goal of the town committee was to find an alternative to selling the building and she is concerned that broadening the uses to lease or sale can dilute the committee's process. Greg Sheldon said that the envisioning and public conversation should bring the Town together. Next, the Committee will focus on financial models and try to find the most viable plans. The Committee's goal is to present Committee results by Fall Town Meeting on October 19, 2015.

Greg Sheldon asked for a vote to see if categories can include lease or sale as an eighth category "private sale/private purchase" with a bullet of retail. Or, category number 5 could be changed to "private commercial use", suggests Alison Manugian. Alison Manugian said that this addition of ownership to uses is a mix that seems to muddy the issues.

*Greg Sheldon moves to create an eighth category of private sale in the Express Your Preferences exercise for the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Meeting. Lynwood Prest seconded and motion failed on a 2:3 vote (Greg Sheldon and Lynwood Prest in favor; Alison Manugian, Halsey Platt and Becky Pine against; Gary Green, Anna Elliott absent).*

Greg Sheldon will invite the group to engage in a public conversation on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Greg Sheldon prefers that preferences are not registered as cumulative voting. Stickers numbered 1 through 4 would be useful to see what people's first choices are.

*Alison Manugian moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 pm. Halsey Platt seconded and the motion carried 5:0 (Gary Green and Anna Eliot absent).*

Next full committee meeting: Monday, May 18, 2015 at 5 pm

Notes by Fran Stanley