



TOWN OF GROTON

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Municipal Building Committee for Prescott School

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

Town Manager
Mark W. Haddad

Date: June 23, 2015
Members: Alison Manugian, Becky Pine, Lynwood Prest, Gary Green, Anna Eliot, Greg Sheldon
Others: Patricia Lawrence, Annika Nilsson-Ripps
Handouts: First Floor Framing Plan (24 x 36 inch size) (Prest), Calculated Allowable Floor Live Loads (Prest), Business Model Analysis/Observations (Nilsson-Ripps), agenda, June 9 draft minutes
Projected Phase II and Phase III Action and Schedule of Meetings (Sheldon)

Meeting called to order at 7:06 pm. June 9, 2015 draft minutes reviewed. Several corrections were made to the draft minutes of June 9, 2015 as presented. Only three re-appointed members have sworn in with the Town Clerk so the group will continue its meeting but not take any votes.

Structural investigations report from Lynwood Prest

Halsey Platt cut holes and Annika Nilsson Ripps assisted Lynwood Prest with his investigation. Nothing on the single historical first floor framing plan of 1927 is correct. Therefore, Lynwood Prest measured everything himself. The wood examined was high quality in that it was dense and even more dense than present wood standards describe. Lynwood Prest's conclusions assume that the non-visible portions are in good condition, i.e., with no termite damage or rot damage. The second floor has not been looked at yet and neither has the roof.

To summarize, the live loads are higher than expected. In the first floor, the built up beams (2-2x10s flanking a 6 x 12, but not where brick walls exist) control live loads. Presently, for example, the first floor meeting room may have a 75 pounds per square foot live load capacity, but the floor beam can be replaced or reinforced to increase live load capacity to a restaurant level of use. The entire first floor except for the areas not examined (stairwells) will allow for greater than 100 pounds per square foot live loads. Retrofit can be replacement of the beam or modifying of the beam. Modification of the beam is typically chosen as the preferred method.

The gymnasium is a stiff floor with joists governing the live load. The beams are extremely stiff. Current estimate is 115 pounds per square foot based on 2015 code for allowable wood stress.

Greg Sheldon thanked Lynwood Prest, Halsey Platt and Annika Nilsson-Ripps for their work on this matter.

Survey status

The distribution of the Prescott survey through the School District is going out via emails sent principal by principal throughout the District. Also, the survey was posted to Talk About Groton listserv by a citizen. Groton Electric Light Department staff accepted the Prescott survey and it will go out with their monthly bills on canary yellow paper.

Building Model Analysis

Annika Nilsson-Ripps reviewed much of the information gathered from the survey of other municipal building renovation projects. She found that renovation and funding was often covered by the municipality with additional state funding and grants. Often, the exterior of the building and grounds were maintained by the municipality while interior maintenance was financed by leasing and subleasing. A couple of buildings had a multi-phase renovation plan which allowed the anchor tenant to privately fundraise and or also permitted access to serial grants awarded on a year by year basis. Her conclusion was that the models tended to a collective conclusion that the building can be managed in a way that extracts revenue sufficient for its operating costs.

Becky Pine considered existing municipal entities that might serve in that building manager role: Park Commission, Groton Public Library, Council on Aging, the School District. Under a nonprofit 501(c)(3) formulation, perhaps Friends of Prescott, Arts Nashoba, youth sports organizations, scouting groups, historical society, Groton Board of Trade, the lifelong learning group or the cultural council. Or, even two or more groups could share portions of the building.

Annika Nilsson-Ripps asked about what committee documents are available on Google Drive that is shown on this Committee's Town of Groton webpage.

Becky Pine stated that the Family Pharmacy in Pepperell expressed interest in expanding their business into Groton, perhaps at the Prescott School.

The group discussed whether this Committee can have a conversation with the Council on Aging board or director to see if they have an interest in the building. Lynwood Prest suggested that the decision be made on what the managerial group should do and what a managerial group is capable of. Of all of the groups, which groups have the managerial capacity? Council on Aging does manage their building and there is outside use allowed at that building. Conversation clarified that managerial ability for the building would be with for a group that can manage space by other groups. The other issue is who is maintaining the space and dealing with the large and small incidents that are a part of a fully used space.

Annika Nilsson-Ripps stated that if the vision is to offer the community uses of the building, then that can accommodate school use or leased commercial use of discrete, particular areas of the building. Anna Eliot said the senior center wants its own space rather than shared space from initial reads, but the organization is still evaluating the data from their focus groups and looking at the surveys. Gary Green stated that collecting Council on Aging input is essential to this Committee's work. Perhaps Greg Sheldon and Becky Pine will follow up with the Council on Aging?

Anna Eliot explained the community kitchen concept and said that she does not want to compete with Grange plans. Also, the short term lease of the community kitchen only uses two to three parking spaces. To amplify, with the central location of the Prescott School building and expanded parking, a community kitchen use may not be the best of this building.

Becky Pine said that a lot of the uses we are discussing are ideas that involve the use of a kitchen. Discussion evolved that community kitchens are more specific than office kitchens and the exclusive use needed by a catering kitchen. Gary Green said that we need to understand the market that they are serving so that we do not compete with the Grange's desire to allow for a certified kitchen preparing produce to be sold at farmer's markets, for example. Greg Sheldon will follow up with the Grange.

Greg Sheldon noted that with a 150k annual operating budget projection where an anchor tenant pays 50k per year, then the management organization would need to come up with 100k per year.

Conceptual design charrette

Site plan of the exterior was reviewed by Annika Nilsson-Ripps. Regrading the exterior ground with a retaining wall so that the lower level can be accessed from the Moison Hardware side. Outdoor seating for a café could be accommodated here with full-sized windows. Council on Aging might use some of the outdoor space as well. An elevator would be added to the same side of the building. Would retrofitting include the future needs of the District? Parking can be extended into the rear of the parcel which opens up the garden area and playground area. Alison Manugian noted that site costs for the expanding parking would be sizeable as would moving the boiler. However, there may be avoided costs by planning to make use of the existing kitchen space as a locale for the new kitchen because the sewer connection works, etc. A café and a community kitchen in the Prescott school building would be two separate kitchens not a single kitchen.

The gymnasium stays open in Annika's view of future use. The group agreed with this thought.

Elevator location needs to be central to future uses and funnel traffic by business or commercial tenants. With good traffic flow, then the commercial space will command higher rents. Boiler room may stay and chimney may stay in present locations.

Projected Phase II and Phase III Action and Schedule of Meetings

Greg Sheldon stated that he believed that the Board of Selectmen would be meeting on July 6th. Greg Sheldon reviewed a proposed project analysis schedule. He asked Alison Manugian to look at Management Plan pros and cons. Gary Green was asked to look at financial plans and funding sources. Halsey Platt remains the committee's main resource for estimating costs for the renovation. Then, the group can look at its proposed findings and recommendations. Beginning on August 19th, the committee report could be drafted over the next few weeks which would include an executive summary.

If Committee meets on September 1st, then it might meet again on September 15th and then send report to the Board of Selectmen on September 16th. Greg Sheldon reminded the group that they did not need to solve every problem or come up with every dollar in order to satisfy committee goals.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.