

Approved May 24, 2017

Mendon Police Station Building Committee Meeting
Former Taft Public Library
Mendon, MA 01756
Wednesday, April 12, 2017
7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Tim Aicardi.

Building Committee Members Present:

Tim Aicardi, Don Morin, Eric Peterson, Moritz Schmid and Linda Thompson; Mike Ammendolia arrived at 7:12pm.

Others Present:

Mark Reil, Rich Schofield, Mendon Board of Selectmen
Kim Newman, Town Administrator
David Kurczy, Mendon Police Chief
Michelle Sanford, Upton & Mendon Town Crier

NOTE: Kim and Dave left the meeting at 7:45pm to join the Historical Commission's meeting at the Town Hall.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 6, 2017

MOTION: A motion was made by Moritz Schmid, seconded by Eric Peterson to accept the meeting minutes from April 6, 2017.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTED: Unanimous.

III. Align on Pros and Cons for Morrison Drive and Town Hall Campus Locations

Don summarized the updated cost estimate from Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. for the Fire Station renovation and construction project. The summary is as follows:

- Site Development Cost: \$646,600
- Fire Station Renovation Cost: \$865,500
- New Building Cost: \$3,109,900
- Upper Level Fit-out Costs: \$364,600

Don then asked how much of the site development and renovation costs would be eligible for CPA funds. Kim Newman stated that the site development costs would be eligible as the entire site is in the town's historic district. She added that the fire station renovation is also eligible. Chief Kurczy mentioned that the fire station is already on the state's historic register and that the Historical Commission is meeting tonight to vote to approve the building as historical. Dave added that if the project

were to move forward the Historical Commission would like to have a member of their committee join the Building Committee. The Building Committee did not see this as an issue and would welcome the input.

Given that the site work and fire station renovation are eligible for CPA funds, Moitz added them together and these two items total approximately \$1.5 million. It isn't clear that the town would be able to offset the entire amount of this cost with CPA funds, but Kim stated that the BOS could probably target at least \$1.0 million. Eric Peterson added that he would prefer to see the CPA funds used for this type of project in lieu of purchasing additional land for the town as this would provide a lot more value for the tax payer in the long run.

Next the committee began to list the pros and cons of each building.

The pros for the fire station renovation are as follows:

- It repurposes an existing building.
- It is larger than Morrison Drive (9200 sq. fee vs. 6700 square feet) and allows for ample expansion space for the future (areas on second floor above existing fire station and above sally port).
- It is in a preferred location in downtown Mendon, enhancing the ability for community policing and community involvement.
- Offers a larger training/conference room for use by any town department in the center of town.
- Site work and renovation work are eligible for CPA funds.
- Second floor fit-out could be delayed and performed by BVT to reduce impact to the taxpayer.

The pros for Morrison Drive are as follows:

- It is overall less expensive than the fire station renovation project.
- It is not geographically far from the center of Mendon.
- It is close to the existing Fire Station to create a Public Safety campus.
- It is near other town buildings such as the Senior Center and Highway Department.

The cons for the fire station renovation are as follows:

- It is overall more expensive than Morrison Drive.
- It requires an easement from the abutter for a police only exit.
- It removes potential office space for Town Hall employee use.
- It could raise political issues using former fire station for police use.
- It could raise political concerns by not using Morrison Drive for its original intended purpose.
- It leaves Morrison Drive as an unfinished building that will need to be addressed.

The cons for Morrison Drive are as follows:

- Building is already too small for the current needs of the department.
- It offers no immediate expansion capability.
- Existing building needs modifications: sally port too low, front door not ADA compliant, other potential code updates need investigating.
- Building is obscure...far off the road and in the woods.
- No street lights exist on Morrison Drive; would need to plan for this.
- No means of second egress exists. Would need to approach abutters for access.

Kim Newman and Dave Kurczy left the meeting at 7:45pm during the pros and cons discussion to join the Historical Commission's meeting at the Town Hall.

Mark Reil and Rich Schofield asked the building committee for a recommendation as that is what they insisted the Committee was chartered to do from the start. After a brief discussion the Committee accepted this. Each Committee member gave his/her opinion on which option they thought was the better and why. Moritz stated that having the police station on the town hall campus allows for much more of a community involved department and therefore it is the better of the two choices. Eric expressed how he came onto the Committee convinced that Morrison Drive was the only answer since he was very actively involved in building it, but after spending the past seven months looking at all options he's convinced that repurposing the former fire station is the better choice. Mike Ammendolia felt that the property on Morrison Drive was the better way to go as that property was purchased for the purpose of making it a public safety complex and we shouldn't go back on that original plan now. Linda stated that she came onto the Committee with an open mind and little knowledge of the history with either building, and she felt that through the efforts of the Committee she believes the former fire station offers so much more than Morrison Drive for the long term needs of the town. Don stated that he also feels the former fire station is the better option, but only if the cost can be brought more in line with the Morrison Drive property through the use of CPA funds and/or BVT volunteer work. He didn't feel comfortable asking for a \$5 million debt exclusion unless it could be offset with CPA funds.

After hearing all the discussion, a motion was requested by the vice-chair, Tim Aicardi.

MOTION: A motion was made by Don Morin, seconded by Eric Peterson for the Police Station Building Committee to recommend to the Mendon Board of Selectmen that they renovate the former fire station on the Town Hall campus for use as a new police station at an estimated cost of \$4.99 million provided that at least one million dollars (and preferably more) of non-taxpayer impacted sources can be used to bring the cost more in-line with that of the Morrison Drive property.

DISCUSSION: Rich Schofield explained that at the end of June, \$0.41 per \$1000 of property valuation will drop off the town's books with the completion of the Miscoe Hill and Nipmuc long-term bonds. On top of that, if the Town refinances all of its existing debt to match that of the longest term of the existing debt of nine years,

another three cents can be saved per \$1000 for a total of \$0.44 per \$1000. If the Town bonds for a new police station at the cost of \$5 million, the impact on the tax payer would be about \$0.25 per \$1000. If the Board of Selectmen were to offset this with \$1.4 million of non-taxpayer impacted sources, the impact to the taxpayer would be about \$0.19 per \$1000, resulting in a \$0.25 per \$1000 overall decrease for the taxpayer starting July 1st. The next big drop-off in taxes will occur in 2030 when the Town can plan for its next big capital expenditure. Eric suggested that these tax impacts should be shown in actual dollars per year based on typical home values and Rich said he would put a table together to show this. At this time Tim asked for a vote.

VOTED: Approved by 5-1 majority. Mike Ammendolia cast the lone nay vote.

IV. Discuss Communication Plans for Funding Request

Given that there is little time between now and the Annual Town Meeting, communication planning needs to begin. Mark Reil suggested that that BOS hold an open house to invite taxpayers to come in and talk with them about the need for a new police station. Don stated that Chief Kurczy was planning to also have an open house or two to invite taxpayers in to tour the existing facilities. Rich Schofield asked the Committee what it felt was the biggest obstacle facing the project. Tim felt that we were at the tipping point and that the existing station was just in too poor condition and inadequate for today's needs. He added that taxpayers were prepared to support it. This coupled with the improving economy made it the right time to act. Mike stated that the demographics in town had changed and that residents were more likely to approve spending for a new police station than those who voted against the projects in the past. Don stated that given the Town's tax situation with payments for Miscoe Hill and Nipmuc falling off the books there was no better time to act but now. Multiple members felt that the former fire station offered better facilities for the entire town to use and Mike added that it was a good time for taxpayers to support their public service officials given what is happening in the world today.

V. Develop Presentation/Narrative for BOS Meeting on April 17th (or 24th)

The BOS has decided to meet on April 19th at 6:30pm ahead of the Finance Committee Budget Hearing at 7:00pm. They requested that the Police Station Building Committee attend the meeting to present their recommendation to the BOS with the Finance Committee present. Rich Schofield will contact the CPC to request that they also attend.

ACTION: Rich Schofield to contact the CPC and request that they attend the BOS meeting on April 19th to listen to the Police Station Building Committee presentation.

Rich asked who could put together a presentation to take to the BOS meeting. Don agreed to do this and Linda offered to help. Rich stated that he would also help and Don added that Chief Kurczy would also be willing to add his perspective to the

presentation. Don agreed to send a first draft out to the others to try to put something together in time for the 19th.

VI. Items Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours Prior to Meeting

None

VII. Next Meeting Date, Time and Agenda

The Committee agreed to attend the BOS meeting on Wednesday, April 19th at 6:30pm to present its recommendation to the BOS.

VIII. Adjournment

MOTION: A motion was made by Moritz Schmid, seconded by Linda Thompson to adjourn the meeting.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTED: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Minutes by Don Morin