

Minutes of the July 20, 2020 Meeting

Present: Michael Phillips, Chris Wheelock, Jim Weagle, Jim Gibson, Sam Oakes, Peter Pelletier, Robin Irving, Al Rosetto, Shawn Durkin

Building Committee meeting began at 7:00 PM.

One correction to previous minutes: Twin Mountain spent approximately 5 million on their town complex, not 15 million.

Chris Wheelock outlined the three thrusts of our work coming out of last meeting:

- imminent need for construction of garage facilities
- locating ambulance offices downstairs at 10 Station Square
- meeting room prospects for selectboard in town office building

Chris reported that the front room in the town offices should be able to accommodate some 90% of board meetings. The multi-purpose room can accommodate up to 20 people, according to the fire chief. Supervisors of the Checklist are willing to move upstairs. The issue is handicap accessibility if a particular meeting exceeds permitted capacity. We will keep things 'as is' for now through the November election so as to keep the current space at 10 Station Square available for voting.

Police Needs

Peter Pelletier spoke to need for indoor parking for the police department. Valuable contents would be better protected when cruisers are not being used. Suspect vehicles with evidence would be better protected overnight while a search warrant is being obtained. People held in handcuffs would be less likely to slip and fall if cruiser brought inside to a dry location.

Peter addressed dispatch needs as well. Current situation through DOT at a tipping point. Argument favors Lancaster as best location for dispatch as its more centrally located and already has made a significant radio investment. JimW pointed out a commission is in place for area towns affected to work together to address this need. Significant expenditure is involved. Robin expects an argument could be made for job retention here, with up to \$250K in NRBC monies available if that's the case.

New Hampshire chiefs are proposing all town police departments be nationally accredited. Standardized building codes will be part of this. Al Rosetto pointed out that rough plan sketches based on police and ambulance requirements were assembled last year but these do not necessarily embrace these codes.

Ten Station Square

Chris pointed out that the Town of Northumberland has made an equal investment in this building as have the landlords. Richard and Tracy Dupuis paid

\$36K for this property in 2009. The Town invested \$49K to make the interior work as town office space through 2014. The meeting room was made useable within this expenditure. Renovating the front space for police needs and upstairs for ambulance incurred additional expenses within those respective budgets. The landlords were responsible for exterior improvements and maintenance. It will be a hard sell to the townspeople to purchase this property for XXX dollars without recognition of this amount of municipal investment to date. Current thinking by the committee is to retain police and ambulance facilities at 10 Station Square on an interim basis while new EMS facilities can be constructed.

Lot Lines

Lot 267 (10 Station Square) sits in the middle of town properties. Lot 268 (the old Eagle Hotel) encompasses 0.42 acres and thus is perfectly suitable for constructing a complete EMS facility as things now stand. Lot 266.1 works best as parking, given the right of the way to the derelict train station. Property boundaries on the backside of this lot are limited with respect to constructing a freestanding garage. Additionally, southern access alongside the railroad tracks is blocked by Lot 273 (owned by the railroad) as far as long term accessibility goes. Lots 271 and 272 are deemed solely as parking for the town offices given two other structures privately owned on Lots 269 and 270.

NOTE: All this can clearly be seen on the tax maps if you zoom in appropriately at <https://www.axisgis.com/NorthumberlandNH/>

Construction Flow

Michael spoke to a big picture view of the situation. The full extent of options only opens up if 10 Station Square can be merged into a larger town property along with Lot 268 and 266.1. This works hand-in-hand with using the existing building for an interim period of years. Michael has been speaking with Ben Southworth (Garland Mill Timber Frames) and Steve Whitman (Resilience Planning) about the location of a town hall/ meeting space/ banquet facility. Their suggestion to create a town commons with trees and lawn area to surround such a hall only comes about if the three lots can be merged. This would also lend viability to any private effort to revitalize the train station as a pub/restaurant.

This is a step beyond the imminent need for EMS facilities but worth considering at this stage in the planning. If EMS facilities can be adjoined to the current town offices, this greater prospect opens up. Debate ensued whether a second story would be both functional and economical as part of EMS facilities, a point needing clarification by a qualified architect.

Next Steps

We need an asking price on 10 Station Square. Chris offered to speak to the Richard and Tracy Dupuis prior to our next meeting.

Are we building onto the current town offices? Several voices agreed "one roof" would be best for the functioning of the Town overall while others stated concerns about getting involved with a lift of some sort to a second story. The big question is will everything needed (not just desired) fit into an integrated building on the remaining square footage behind the town offices.

Robin spoke to funding prospects. Infrastructure grants are opening up now that the Covid situation seems to be settling. Still, these are funds directed towards equipment and training not capital improvements. Only the USDA will support the latter and that comes with numerous conditions. Suggested Selectboard also needs to consider the water/sewer project on the Hill. How does that 8 million bond request stand alongside a significant funding request for EMS facilities? The Town also needs to pay off its current loan for approximately \$110K to USDA for the town office renovations so as to have "permission" to continue construction at 19 Main Street.

Meeting closed at 8:00 PM.

These minutes submitted by Michael Phillips.

Next meeting of the Building Committee was scheduled for 7 PM, August 17, following the regular Selectboard meeting that same evening.