

## **Minutes of the September 21, 2020 Meeting**

Present: Michael Phillips, Chris Wheelock, Jim Weagle, Jim Gibson, Sam Oakes, Peter Pelletier, Al Rosetto, Shawn Derkin, ???, Nancy Mellow, Jim Tierney, Ben Southworth, Steve Whitman

Building Committee meeting began at 7:00 PM.

Chris Wheelock introduced our guests, here to make a planning proposal: Ben Southworth of Garland Mill (from Lancaster) and Steve Whitman of Resilience Planning (from Plymouth).

Shawn Derkin wanted to discuss asking price for 10 Station Square first. Michael reported that Richard Dupuis had not gotten back with a number following a series of emails about this since the last meeting. The point being that whatever the price, it requires approval by voters at Town Meeting rather than be a solely market-derived number, given that our intent is to tear down this structure in order to consolidate lots. Others wanted a realtor to provide an assessment. The tax assessment is currently \$146000.

Nancy Mellow spoke about needs versus frivolity. Michael responded that looking at the "big picture" meant considering where all aspects of a town campus might best be located, this over a five to ten year timeline.

Chris again introduced our guests and asked them to proceed.

### **Feasibility Study**

Ben explained the process of identifying goals and strategies, both now and over the next ten years. Intent is to meet with all stakeholders. The right plan will have a synergy that will benefit the town for decades to come. Garland Mill designs and implements construction; Steve Whitman provides mapping expertise for looking at flow aspects; Kyle Barker (third leg of the stool) is an architect specializing in municipal design.

The timeline is tight to be able to bring a schematic (visual) proposal to Town Meeting in March, 2020. This will include a ballpark estimate of total cost. Once the concept has approval, actual construction drawings and a firm price can be brought to Town Meeting in March 2021 so as to make an EMS/Police building reality that year. Ben added that "March is almost the day after tomorrow" for getting all this done, including putting aside everyone's preconceived notions.

Phase One (the feasibility study) will cost \$16,540. Shawn expressed concern about this being high. Chris said this committee is essentially in the same place we were three months ago, that these firms will be working to actually get us to the finish line.

Al brought forth a cardboard mock-up of the space desired, representing 12000 square feet total. This includes a modest meeting room which can be used for training purposes by the departments as well. Peter reminded us again that police accreditation will make necessary certain aspects of design. Ben pointed out that a shared vision starts with the committee being in agreement. Nancy urged that speaking to everyone (lowest person on the totem pole) will bring out further ideas the committee has not yet considered.

Ben pointed out that Town Meeting may well shoot down any proposal the first time around. The committee is also charged with creating buzz to get the community on board.

Shawn wants a budget not to exceed a set amount. Steve explained that the phase one estimate includes a week's worth of time for each of the three firms, including staff and professional resources. Ben shared a timeline of steps needing to get this done, starting with a proposed all-day meeting on October 1. Shawn said he feels this entire process is to decide where to put the building, nothing more. Sam Oakes said this proposal has been guided from one perspective. Committee thanked Ben and Steve for their time and went on to discuss the proposal in the context of funding.

### **Project Funding**

We rehashed whether seeking federal grant funding has merit. Nancy pointed out that any such money comes with all sorts of dictums and caveats and loss of local control. JimT pointed out that even getting architectural proposals requires we go through a bid process as we did for the town office renovations. JimW countered he wants federal grants, he insists on federal grants, that's such are in the taxpayer's interest. Sam reminded us that Twin Mountain used private bank funding rather than municipal bonds because interest rates were more favorable. Twin Mountain did not pursue federal grant funding for all the reasons outlined.

Shawn suggest we negotiate the price of this phase one down to \$12000, even \$10000. He calculates this proposal looks to be based on \$150 an hour. JimW says we have plans and that everything will fit on old Eagle Hotel lot; he is adamantly opposed to this proposal. Sam points out that he is not an architect and that his earlier estimation of lot suitability may not be accurate. Sam believes we need a facilitator to make this happen. Al states we need to move forward not backward. Chris says he knows Ben, he's a straight shooter, that his interests are our interests, that if Ben brings in Steve then Steve's a good guy. Michael suggests we accommodate all phases to get to actual construction plans on the \$40000 we now have for this purpose in the Municipal Buildings CRF. Sam asks if we will add an additional \$10000 to this CRF at Town Meeting. Michael answers that such depends on sum totals of other articles in the warrant, including the prospect of two new ambulances.

JimW changes his mind and says let's offer \$13000. The committee votes unanimously to proceed with negotiating this lesser sum. Michael will let Ben and Steve know and we will expect to hear back in a day or two.

**Next Steps**

It requires an official selectboard meeting to proceed with approving this funding. Chris suggests we schedule this for next Monday to allow for proper public notice. The building committee can explore contingency plans at that same time should the Garland Mill team decide not to proceed with the town of Groveton.

JimW will get a price from Richard Dupuis; he knows how to do that.

Chris will no longer be a Groveton resident after October but would like to continue to be involved with this committee. People were glad he plans to continue to participate.

Meeting closed at 8:35 PM.

These minutes submitted by Michael Phillips.

**Next meeting of the Building Committee is scheduled for 6:05 PM, September 28, following a special Selectboard meeting that same evening.**

*Post Script: The Building Committee will need someone else to take minutes from this point going forward. Please consider volunteering.*