

FACILITY MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
March 16, 2017
MINUTES

Committee Attending: Chairman George Hooper, Jeffrey Hull, Valerie Gingrich, Jack Holloway, and Theresa Manganeli.

Liaisons Attending: Ginny Bonish

Others Attending: Board of Selectmen Members Greg Bendel and Michael Champoux, Dee Casey, Odette Kent, Jay Tighe, Colleen Cunningham, Paul Ruggiero, and Ed Loud.

Consultants Attending: Steve Cecil

George Hooper called the meeting to order. George explained that a majority of the Board of Selectmen and School committee are expected but there will be no deliberations.

1. Review Minutes

Jeff Hull noted a typo at the bottom of the first page.

Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes as amended. Approved by unanimous vote.

2. Project Development

- Review Comparative Evaluation of School Alternatives

Steve Cecil outlined the choices regarding school alternatives and the ranking of the newest alternative (S6) has come back with the best score. He commented that the alternative makes sense geographically and practically with additions to the four best schools and closing the two worst schools. Steve reviewed conceptual buildout schemes for the S6 alternative.

George asked Paul Ruggiero to fill the group in on the recent School Committee meeting where the topic was discussed. Paul noted that the School Committee vote that Alternative S6 was the preferred option for Schools. He added that it was important to keep a balance geographically in town while eliminating a transition.

Jeff asked about how busing would be impacted. Paul explained that the Middle School drives the number of buses, so a change wouldn't necessarily be needed, more study would be necessary. Steve added that during their analysis it appeared that busing would not be impacted.

George explained that the building additions would require upgrades to the existing structures as well. Steve added that the idea would be to improve the existing structures so that the investment would be long term instead of just patching and fixing up.

Jeff asked if the number of classrooms were considered in the graphics presented. Steve said that they did and they will provide the numbers in the report. The buildings would be brought up to code with the additions.

Steve commented that the four schools shown with additions in S6 will not necessarily need to be gutted, but they will need upgrades to meet code.

Jeff asked about the state standards and what would need to be done to meet those standards. Steve stated that they have all of those details and will provide that in the report. He added that when state funding is requested, they want the buildings to come up to speed at that point.

- Consideration of Preferred School Alternatives

George asked the group if they have a preferred scenario. Jack Holloway made a motion for the preferred approach to be S6. Theresa Manganelli seconded. The group discussed that this would simply be a preference and public comment will be sought out regarding the choices. Those comments will inform the committee in voting on the final scenario.

The vote was unanimous.

3. Schedule and Next Steps

Steve explained that they have prepared a report regarding the municipal facilities. They received helpful input from the Town Departments. He stated that the facilities in Town are smaller than other towns and he is not surprised that discussion of expansion of various buildings has been going on for quite some time. Steve explained that they will need to look at the DPW site in more detail since it is more complicated than first thought. They will be doing another look at that site and bringing more detail back to the Committee.

Jeff added that the process has shown that the Public Buildings function may not be appropriate to be relocated to the DPW site. Steve agreed and suggested that the existing Public Buildings structure is working and could be improved at that site, but is not a problem that needs to be solved.

Steve commented that the other idea that has been discussed is the fire substation. He commented that the review of response times has concluded that the times are acceptable, in the middle of times in other towns. Steve suggested that they provide a recommended process about how to decide when the substation would be needed. Something to consider would be additional growth on that side of town. He explained that currently there is no clear requirement for a substation, it's more of a choice of the community.

Jeff commented that he recalls two areas of town where response times were higher, one in the north side of town and the other near Silver Lake on the Shawsheen side. Steve commented that distance doesn't always mean higher response and nothing they saw was a clear message that another facility was definitely necessary. It would be a choice. Steve commented that cost sharing with another town could be looked at.

Jeff noted that the eventual development of the Sciarappa Farm property could necessitate the substation. Steve commented that if a significant development occurs there, the development should contribute toward a new substation through mitigation.

- Public Outreach

Valerie outlined the public outreach efforts including visual displays, WCTV videos, and smaller drop in forums. She outlined the commented from the folks at the senior center agreed with the housing ideas and preferred the St. Dorothy's site. Valerie explained that the seniors were not as excited about housing at the town hall site with the recreational use of that site.

4. Public Comment

Colleen Cunningham commented that taxes are her main concern and she is worried about paying for all of the proposed buildings. She agreed that the elderly should be prioritized. She commented that she couldn't find information on the plan.

Steve commented that this process outlines the future and that could take as long as we want it to.

Jeff added that the information is available and they will help her find the documents. He stated that the goal is to keep spending level and not have spending spikes, but to plan for the future so that we don't get into an emergency situation.

Michael Champoux asked about public feedback so far regarding a new town hall/school admin building at the Swain site. The group explained that they have not gotten an overwhelming message thus far.

Odette Kent asked about process going forward. Jeff explained that the various bodies will consider the plan and it will serve as a guiding document going forward. Each aspect will move forward through the Selectmen and Town Meeting as they come up.

Steve commented that the evaluation information will inform the town expenditures in the future and sequence things.

Jeff added that they included a baseline scenario where we maintain our existing buildings, which has a cost associated with it. He gave an example of Town Hall's heating system and windows.

Odette Kent commented that she prefers alternative M2. She commented that it's the most cohesive and senior housing is long overdue.

Ed Loud asked about a master plan done in the 90s by Lynn Duncan. Jeff clarified that the plan done in the early 2000s was a comprehensive master plan completed for land use and development. Ed Loud commented that he believes a substation is necessary.

Jeff commented on the specifics needed to staff a substation and that there would be operational costs involved with staffing the facility. Ed commented that he believes the town would support those costs and would be in favor of hiring more fire fighters for their safety.

5. Next Meeting – The next meeting will be April 20th at 6PM at Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned 7:20PM.