

FACILITY MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

September 15, 2016

MINUTES

Committee Attending: Chairman George Hooper, Jeffrey Hull, Diane Allan, Mary DeLai, Jack Holloway, Theresa Manganelli, Valerie Gingrich

Liaisons Attending: Kendra Amaral, Ginny Bonish

Others Attending: Members of the Board of Selectmen: Judy Greg Bendel, Kevin Caira , Michael McCoy, Mike Champoux; Peggy Kane, Paul Ruggerio, Terry McDermott, Marianne Gallezzo, Steve Berghaus, Ann Berghous, Robert Hayes

Consultants Attending: Steve Cecil, The Cecil Group, Will Gatchell, Harriman

1. Review Minutes

Minutes were presented and accepted.

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

2. Project Development

Stakeholder Feedback

Valerie and Kendra presented feedback from stakeholder groups:

- Planning Board and Conservation Commission approached it more as taking in the information.
- Elderly Services was not supportive of a combined Senior/Rec center. They were concerned about being limited in their use and activities in the space. They were also concerned about a difference in energy levels. They want senior housing now, and liked the idea of a senior center adjacent to senior housing.
- The Recreation Commission felt they didn't need their own space, that a building wouldn't fit all that they do. They like having an office at Town Hall for the foot traffic.
- Finance Committee was concerned about timing and making sure the Town is realistic about what is realistic to accomplish in 20 years. Encouraged the committee to look at using closed/repurposed schools for municipal uses.
- Board of Selectmen wanted to see a Town Hall/School Admin at St. Dorothy's. Don't want to see development at the Swain. Want the Whitefield left as is. The Selectmen were supportive of the various needs for town hall and school admin, senior housing and the schools. They were concerned about the idea of decommissioning buildings we have invested significantly in.
- No one really wanted to be at the Whitefield. Generally people liked the Library in the area it is in and felt it was one of the more attractive buildings. Generally everyone understood why the plan was needed and why it was beneficial.

Project Update

Cecil Group is working on the baseline for Town and School. Meaning if we want to stay in the buildings for the next 20 years, what do we need to do to make them well functioning. The Committee is comfortable with the scenario combinations for the School facilities. We can move forward with the detailed investigation of those options and the school and town baseline options.

Municipal Facility Matrix Changes

- The matrix should have an option of Town/School Admin at St. Dorothy's; Should have stand-alone Senior Center (or tied to Senior Housing); Should not have an option of Library at Whitefield.
- At current Town Hall site, we should look at senior housing, it might be challenged to do both Senior Center and senior housing. Need to ensure we are looking at the impact of the loss of fields and how to provide enough for the town's needs based on the potential moves.
- Steve doesn't feel combining senior housing and senior center should necessarily be a driver since it truly only impacts a small amount of the senior population. Theresa likes the idea of keeping the senior center at the Town center, due to its adjacency to the Library. Senior housing will have to be a multiple choice solution. There may be an interaction between the schools and senior housing, where repurposing schools for senior housing.
- There was a lot of talk about the Library being a social space more than a book check-out space. And so, is there a way to incorporate enough space into a library that would meet the needs of teen and kid space for programs and activities. People like the adjacency of the Library and the high school so students can walk over after school and have social programming opportunities.
- Diane notes the plan from 20 years ago was a good plan, it was tweaked by the Town Manager to work well with a combined public safety and a single middle school. The report also identified the need for a combined Town Hall/School Admin and recommended the Swain site. There has always been talk about a Town Center, even from that effort. This Committee has been supportive of the Swain used for a Town Hall. We need to think about what is best for the town and make sure we pick what the best location is. We want to get it right. We should look at what is the best location for each use. We should look at combinations where there are cost savings and function adjacencies.
- The Cecil Group will layout the revised version and get it back out to folks.
- Whitefield is constrained due to lack of sewer. This area is in transition and may be appropriate for rezoning and potential redevelopment. Jeff is not concerned about not looking at the Whitefield as a Town Hall/School Admin building. The Whitefield site will be removed from the matrix.

Public Comment:

Mike Champoux - None of the alterations include looking at the school locations that may be repurposed. Steve has looked at whether the various schools being looked at would be good for a Town Hall, senior center, or library. Right now it doesn't seem the case, but they will be looking at it.

Greg Bendel - do we have a number for the town hall site for senior housing units and does it include the fields? Steve understands the fields are well used and wouldn't want to abandon them. We will look at the senior housing option at the Town Hall site.

Kevin Cairn - not in favor of anything going at Swain, wants to see the Town Hall/School Admin at St. Dorothy's. The 1997 study didn't have the opportunity to look at the St. Dorothy. Suggests the Town

Hall/School Admin go to St. Dorothy, move the Wildwood student body to the Town Hall, then rebuild the Wildwood for 1-5, then move the kids. Mary agrees with looking at shifting space for transitions. Kevin thinks the Swain is a nice open space, it is well used, is a place for people to park.

Criteria Ranking

Steve explained why the ranking will play a role. He will add a criteria for providing flexibility and eliminate cost/benefit; it is redundant. Eliminate the environmental criteria, these are existing sites without any known environmental issues. Likely don't need Mechanical and Electrical category. Simplify/combine site size adequacy and good parking, playground, and fields.

Cost is going to be a driving criteria. Next would be anything that relates to the appropriateness of the space for the educational goals.

Steve distributed Town facility criteria. Expects cost will be a major driving criteria. Need to add a criteria that includes facilitating opportunities for senior housing.

Program

Steve is following up with various entities about program and figuring out how much space is really needed, etc.

3. Public Comment

Judy O'Connell - believes the town's facilities and land are assets. Wants to know if we plan to look the value of the land and the investment over time relative to its value. The plan does have a good workbook of existing parcels and facilities. We will look at what the value of it would be if surplus. The values has to be what its reuse will be, not its current value. Jeff notes that time is an important factor. If the Shawsheen is to be contemplated to be surplus 20 years out, the town would have received 20 years of value. Steve notes there is also an important step in this analysis that will look at what the town would want to invest in the interim on buildings that may have a major change in the future.

Kevin Caira - believes the town does not have too much land. Steve clarified that he means that as the Town does not need to look at purchasing property to accommodate needs.

Steve Berghaus - Asked the status of looking at a fire substation. Jeff noted this is part of the project. We are looking at response time data and need and identifying where we think the need will be based on current data and future development. Mr. Berghaus asked if the Town plans to build a substation in the next five years, and believes it is needed. Steve Cecil notes there are guidelines and criteria that help inform the discussion. There are two questions that need to be answered, if a substation is needed and when it is needed. Mr. Berghaus thinks the senior center and senior housing is good together. Thinks the library building is a solid building and should be looked at for expansion if needed. Steve Cecil noted the building is in good shape, but the question is whether it serves the town in terms of the type of spaces needed. Mr. Berghaus ask to remember the seniors in

town in terms of the cost impact. Jeff acknowledges that this is a challenging balance. There is no doubt that people are stressed by the taxes and yet the facilities are inadequate.

Judy – Asked about the anticipated time line for Town Meeting? Jeff would like to have a plan that can be presented to Town Meeting for a vote. That is contingent upon whether we have the time to make the progress we need to, to fit that schedule. In the absence of being ready with a vetted preferred scenario, the Town Manager intends to make a report at Town meeting instead. Jeff doesn't intend to see a vote on an actual capital investment from the plan in FY18. Town meeting will need to vote on funding any particular project separately over time.

Peggy Kane – Commented that the school committee had already started talking about K-5 before Mary came in with her transition plan. She asked if the Facility Plan will contemplate the order of the facility investment. Jeff - the plan will anticipate an order, to help prioritize and sequence the projects. The plan will be a guideline. Peggy strongly encourages the town work to ensure the plan is followed through on.

4. Next Steps and Meetings

Next step is to fill in the blanks and give the committee a report on how things are shaking out. Cecil Group needs to go through a presentation of what the facts are and start weighting the criteria to find what comes out. Mary asked what the expectation is of this Committee for the decision and whether the information gathered on the options are not identified as the priority. The intention is to have this group narrow into a preferred than bring it around to the public, and various stakeholders to get feedback on. The details will be part of a appendix so we are refer to it and inform the comparison. The plan is meant as a blue print, or a guiding document.

Jeff believes this document has to be our best estimate of what needs to happen. Factors uncontrolled by the town could impact the plan. The plan is a tool and meant to give us something to work with into the future.

The next meeting will be October 20th at 6pm. A second meeting will be added on November 3rd. Committee agrees to hold the next meeting at the High School Media Room if available.

Meeting adjourned 9:39PM.