

FACILITY MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
July 21, 2016
MINUTES

Committee Attending: Chairman George Hooper, Jeffrey Hull, Diane Allan, Mary DeLai, Jack Holloway, Theresa Manganelli, Paul Melaragni, Joseph Parrella, Jr.

Liaisons Attending: Kendra Amaral, Ginny Bonish

Others Attending: Steve Berghaus, A. Berghous, Jay Tighe, Terry McDermott, Town Curator

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

1. Review Minutes

- Amendment on page 2, last paragraph, insert “from the school” regarding bussing requirements.

Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes with amendment. Approved by unanimous vote.

2. Project Development

Debrief of Public Forum

- Discussion about Board of Selectmen reaction to the Swain fill-in scenario. Jeff's impression, without speaking for them, was concern about the size of the lot, and the impact it would have on events such as 4th of July, and a general lack of interest in the Town Center approach.
- Post cards and online feedback have been both for and against the Town Center concept.
- The Committee was disappointed by turnout at the Public Forum. They want to ensure we make further efforts to engage parents and other groups. Public may not understand that their input is desired and important.
- The Jeff will be looking for votes from this committee, and endorsement from the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and Planning Board for the final plan. He will ultimately bring this to Town Meeting for acceptance of the plan. The public will need to approve funding for each individual project at an appropriate Town Meeting after.
- Diane thought Judy made a good point to the Board of Selectmen about the fact that this will inform the capital investment planning and help the town determine whether and how much to invest in existing buildings, based on the long term plan. Also recommends we break the information down and options down to the voter level so they can understand.
- Some feedback was that the options were not clear or detailed enough for people to react to, perhaps it was option overload.
- Senior housing is also piece that needs to be incorporated. Jeff stated that the Town is not interested in developing or operating the housing. Town Meeting approved this project with the mandate to facilitate senior housing opportunity. It has been a consistent theme in the public feedback as well.
- We need to highlight the fact that the Town will incorporate into the plan the potential sale or lease of town land to offset or defray the costs of implementing the plan. The Town is looking at ways to use zoning to make Wilmington more developer friendly for the types of projects wanted such as senior housing.

- Steve had the impression that there were certain options that were "favorite horses" for some, and that perhaps we need to ensure we have the alternatives right.

Review Driving Criteria (Handout)

- To help ensure we are looking at the right scenarios and we are picking the right option, we need to ensure the criteria are appropriate.
- The criteria seem to capture the right things, but the question of priority will vary for everyone.
- Introduced the Senior Housing as a driving criteria. We may be confusing the matter by calling it senior housing, rather it could be about offering downsizing, and a mix of options. We should be looking at parcels we own in town to try and create a pathway for 55 and over housing opportunities.
- To create opportunities the Town can use zoning, which the town has mechanisms for. The Town can also get into the market by offering parcels at lower than market rate to induce development the town wants. Joe is supportive of the idea of selling town land at a discount to help development of senior housing. The Town has more land than it has facility needs. There are both positive and potential negatives of more development.
- Committee agreed a criteria of "Facilitating opportunities for senior housing" should be added. Steve will meet with Valerie to talk through the senior housing and finding a way to incorporate senior housing into the criteria.
- We should talk to the local developers about what they see as the opportunities and challenges of various housing options.

Alternatives Study Methodology

- 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.
- Steve recommended that the town use the summer to check in with stakeholders on the municipal scenarios to ensure they are the right ones to advance to the next stage. The Committee agrees.
- Baseline means that the program in the building will remain the same. Baseline is about making the building work for its current use. Steve will be defining what the baseline is so there is an apple-to-apples comparison.

Review schedule and work plan

- The Town will use August to review the municipal options and criteria with various stakeholder groups and gather feedback.
- The Committee will review school options at their September meeting, and municipal options in October. This will be followed by a check back in with the boards.
- Committee agreed to cancel the August meeting to allow time on both sides to get work done.
- Jeff asked about the Fire substation and noted that the Public Buildings and Public Works should be included in all options. Relative to the Fire substation, the team will be looking at that now. There are three potential scenarios either 1) we are fine as is 2) we are fine until a tipping point of development or 3) we are not fine relative to response times.
- Understanding the timing is important for how we line up the "potatoes". This helps the town plan for the financial impacts, and to evaluate unanticipated opportunities and the consequences of pursuing them relative to other needs. The timing also identifies when grants should be pursued.

- Paul requested a simple drawing of the Swain School as a handout for the next meeting. It will help the Committee understand the capacity for the site.

3. Project Development

- Steve Berthoud - Thanked the Committee for their work and for recognizing the need for a facility master plan. Swain school site is excellent for Town Hall. Thinks bringing the senior center to Glen Road is a good idea, the substation should be top of the list. Asked if we can water the lawn in front of the high school, it looks terrible. Does not want the Town to build a new library, rather we should add on to the one we have now. Also noted the Cemetery Building roof is in tough shape and should be maintained; it is a historic building.
- Jay Tighe – Asked if the school has a priority list. Hasn't the town done a better job than others maintaining the buildings? Questioned if the School Department prioritize the school consolidation over replacement of the Roman House. Is there documentation regarding the priority of minimizing transitions?
 - Mary agreed the town has done a great job of maintaining its schools, ensuring they are safe and effective learning environments. The finishes are outdated and there is little flexibility. The school's priority is to consolidate grades and reduce the transitions. She would definitely prioritize students over staff needs. The Roman House has some challenges including ADA accessibility, office space, no septic, water or sewer, but this can be livable for a little while and is solvable if the Town Hall is pursued.
- Terry McDermott - missed last meeting, but wondered if people will be shocked to hear the town is talking about building a town hall or building on the Swain. She thinks it is a good idea. Historic Commission wants to ensure that the Roman House is preserved, not necessarily as the School Admin Building, but that it be preserved.
 - The Committee agreed to continue outreach to the public about the plan. Jeff noted that people have a bit of a misunderstanding of how the high school has impacted their property taxes. We need to make sure people are aware of what we are talking about and what the timing will be. Also, it is important to note that we are looking to present a slate of good options for the town, not to tell them what the choice is after the fact.

4. Next Meetings – The next meeting will be September 15. The August meeting is canceled. Committee agrees to hold the next meeting at the High School Media Room.

Meeting adjourned 8:50PM.