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TOWN OF WILMINGTON, MA



Senior Center & Town Hall/School Admin.

Joint Building Committee Meeting

September 15, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Chair George Hooper called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m. and roll call was taken.

Members Present: Diane Allan, Vice Chair, Paul Melaragni, Theresa Manganelli, Finance Comm., Jack Holloway, Terri Marciello, Senior Center Director, Selectman Gregory Bendel, Jesse Fennelly, School Comm., Selectman Kevin Caira, John Doherty, Finance Comm. Paul Ruggiero, School Dept.

Guests: Daniell Pallotta, OPM; Marco Crescentini, Dietz & Co.; Philip O'Brien, Johnson & Roberts Architects; Dave Robertson, State Rep.; various residents of Wilmington

There were no previous minutes for review/acceptance.

The Dietz & Company Architects Site Selection Matrix and Dietz & Company Site Map were handed out to all in attendance.

Opening Comments

Dan Pallotta opened with a short discussion about the site selection Matrix and scoring criteria that was used for the Matrix. George Hooper asked if there were any general questions regarding the Matrix before delving into the specifics of the results. Diane Allan suggested that another criteria that could be added to the Matrix was adequate outdoor space for activities such as walking trails, pavilions, courts, etc. Dan felt that this was covered under section "G" as outdoor space was taken into consideration along with indoor building space. Diane also asked for an explanation as to the "Y" multiplier and Dan explained that some areas are more concerning than some other criteria therefore; they were scored higher.

Being no further discussion a motion was made to accept the Matrix by John Doherty and was seconded by Paul Melaragni. All voted unanimously to accept the Matrix.

Matrix Scoring – Senior Center

Marco Crescentini of Dietz & Co. detailed the scores that were attributed to each Objective Criteria and Subjective Criteria for each of the four sites that are under consideration.

During the scoring review Selectman Bendel asked about item "I" for the Town Hall site being scored significantly lower for the Senior Center and Town Hall than the Town Green site. Marco explained that it scored lower due to mixed use being a disadvantage, specifically due to parking limitations.

Selectman Kevin Caira raised a question on whether it was taken into account to possibly remove town fields at each site to have more buildable area. Marco explained that they had conducted their site surveys with the assumption that the town fields would remain because there is buildable area outside the fields. They also felt that it would be a detriment to the Town to remove the athletic fields and courts because they are well maintained. Chair George Hooper asked how the scores would change if the fields were eliminated specifically from the Town Hall site. Marco responded that the Objective Criteria would remain the same but possibly some Subjective Criteria would change. He also pointed out that there are some permanent buildings such as the Pop Warner field house that would be greatly affected if the fields were removed. The Chair suggested that they move on with the rest of the scoring and come back to the Town Hall site with an assumption that the fields would be removed. Dan pointed out that this would be a considerable change in to direction to remove the fields. Paul Melaragni suggested a compromise to assign a separate score where fields would be removed. This was accepted by the Committee.

Matrix Scoring – Town Hall/School Administration Building

Philip O'Brien of Johnson & Roberts began with his scoring on the Matrix. Selectman's Bendel and Caira asked for clarification on sections "M" and "P" as to why the scores were so different between the Senior Center and the Town Hall/School Admin at the Town Green Site. This is due to building use needs and parking. Philip explained that the slope is cause for serious concern with the Senior Center. It is not plausible to expect seniors to traverse the slope if parking is placed down below, whereas it is more feasible for administrative staff to manage the slope as well as it would allow for a possible two-story building above to house Town Hall and School Administration. There is not sufficient space above to provide enough parking for either use. Philip completed his scores for each site.

The conversation returned to scoring changes for the Town Hall site if the fields were removed. Marco and Philip did a quick rescore of certain subjective criteria. The adjusted scores did not change the outcome of the overall determination on which sites are recommended for each building.

Discussion on Matrix Totals

Dan from OPM indicates the rescored Site #2 will be referred to as Site 2A.

Due to the low scores of the Whitefield School Site Chair Hooper indicates that it does not qualify for consideration for either projects.

A motion was made to remove the Whitefield School Site from consideration for both projects by John Doherty and was seconded by Theresa Manganelli. The Committee voted unanimously to remove Whitefield School Site from consideration.

Site 4, St. Dorothy's site, seems to be ideal for the Senior Center. Diane Allan expressed that the Master Building Committee reviewed this site initially and they felt that it had good space for sidewalks and walking trails as well as there being no impact on any Town fields. She asked if there'd been consideration to connecting the roads as a through-way. OPM explained that it's possible but there are still surveys and geo-tech work that is needed before that can be fully determined.

Selectman Bendel asked how parking would be affected if a multi-story building was built rather than a single story building at Site 4, the St. Dorothy site. Marco responded that it would fit nicely. Dan mentioned that on another of their similar projects they built a two-story Senior Center which allowed for a community center on the 2nd level that is used for various town needs and could be something to consider here. This resulted in some conversation about whether the mixed use is a viable consideration. John Doherty asked if adjacent house lots would be affected and Dietz did not believe so. Referencing the site map, Paul Melaragni asked about the non-buildable area. Dan explained that it's not wide enough for a building but may possibly be used for something else or possibly just left natural.

Selectman Caira asked whether a two-story building could be designed for community use and OPM and Dietz felt that this was very possible. Terri Marciello expressed concerns about having a multi-use building because she feels that they would definitely use extra space for both day and nighttime programming for the seniors and wouldn't want any conflicts in the availability of use.

Theresa Manganelli raised a concern with Site 4 being a wooded lot and is the cost of the removal of all trees, etc. included in their study and the response was that it was, in fact, included in all considerations.

Diane Allan expressed that in visiting other senior centers in the area it became clear that there is a changing climate within the senior population and that we should prepare our new senior center for a higher volume of seniors and increased needs and desires. Other towns they visited expressed difficulties with having to share spaces with the community. Therefore; she feels it's very important that the Senior Center building be only for the seniors and not a mixed use building with the community.

Selectman Bendel asked whether there was any consideration given to the possibility of St. Dorothy's Church not being there some day and Dietz responded that no, this was not ever a consideration.

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to accept totals. Selectman Caira expressed continued concern on whether the removal of fields should be considered more closely before the totals were accepted. Discussion ensued on whether it would be prudent to remove fields at the sites in question. Jeff Hull brought up cost concerns about removing any of the fields particularly since the town made a significant expense putting in new pickle ball courts very recently. Dan pointed out that the use of the fields at Town Hall would be lost for up to two years during construction if the Senior Center is built there. Theresa asked whether it was important for the seniors to have the fields nearby for viewing the sports and Terri said that she could not respond adequately to that as it has not been discussed prior to this. She said the seniors first concern is the availability of outdoor space for their use and secondly and perhaps just as important, having sufficient parking for the senior center.

Diane Allan expressed faith in the architects professionalism and ability to assess the properties and have a very good understanding of the issues that are important to the Town and feels that they have made educated determinations on all scores that have been given. Selectman Caira agrees he just wants to be sure that all avenues have been explored in the determination of site selections. The Chair acknowledged the concerns and given that the changes in scores for Site 2 did not significantly change the outcome then it's not something that should prevent a vote at this time.

Several members of the community who were in the audience made comments in support of the recommendations that have been presented, particularly in building the Senior Center at the St. Dorothy's Site. One resident brought up the need for more senior housing and whether that's been considered in this process. The Chair indicated that it was not part of this project. There were other comments recommending that Town athletic fields not be disturbed or removed. The Chair thanked the residents for their comments/ concerns.

The Chair asked for a motion to accept the Matrix. Paul Melaragni made the following motion:

The Town Hall/School Administration and Senior Center Joint Building Committee accept the Matrix created tonight and recommends that the site for the Senior Center be St. Dorothy's, ranked #1, followed by the #2 and #3 sites as ranked by the Matrix, and that the Town Green Site would be Site #1 for the Town Hall/School Administration building as ranked by the Matrix followed by Sites #2 and #3 as ranked by the Matrix. The Motion was seconded by Diane Allan.

Discussion:

Selectman Bendel asked whether the Committee is making the recommendation to the Town Manager or to the Board of Selectman to bring this to the Town Meeting as two articles for the spring Town Meeting so he could make his fellow Board members aware of the upcoming articles. Dan indicated that one or both articles may not be ready for the spring meeting because there is still much to be done as far as designs, costs, etc. Jeff responded that the motion is the recommendation of the site selection for him to deliver it to the Board and that if the Board is in agreement then it would move to more detailed articles that may be voted on at later meetings.

The Motion was revised as the following:

The Town Hall/School Administration and Senior Center Joint Building Committee accept the Matrix created tonight and recommends to the Town Manager that the site for the Senior Center be St. Dorothy's, ranked #1, followed by the #2 and #3 sites as ranked by the Matrix and that the Town Green Site would be #1 for the Town Hall/School Administration building as ranked by the Matrix followed by sites #2 and #3 as ranked by the Matrix.

All voted unanimously to accept the motion as amended.

A motion to adjourn was made by John Doherty and seconded by Theresa Manganeli. Unanimous vote to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Rebecca Sanderson
Secretary