

OPM Steering Committee

October 29, 2020 at 6 p.m. via Zoom

OPM Steering Committee Present: Jim Ayres, Dan Bonham, Brenda Lessard, Jean O’Neil, Paul Wetzel, Denise Wickland

Absent: Kim Boas, Jason Connell,

Others: Kevin Chrobak (architect – Juster Pope Frazier), William Sayre (Select Board), David Mathers (Selectboard), Charlene Nardi (Town Administrator)

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Kevin Chrobak presented the three scenarios and the costs associated with each which include the FFE and soft costs. The architect and OPM will drilled down a little further on some of the projected FFE and soft cost projections to get more precise estimates.

New Public Safety Complex (PSC) building and stabilize and mothball the James *(do bare minimum that must be done to James, but do not use it for the emergency response departments):* Total cost \$6.65 million, which includes \$4.55 million for construction of the new PSC and the stabilization of the James at an estimated cost of \$2.1 million. This would mean building a new PSC on the southeast corner of the site and committing under a separate contract to upgrade the James before mothballing it. The absolute needs are things such as the roof, doors, windows, and elevator. This scenario will also require 1 to 1 ¼ acre of wetlands / storm water management mitigation which poses some additional cost and significant challenges. The costs for that mitigation aren’t known yet.

New PSC remove James building: Total cost \$5.09 million which includes \$4.34 million the cost of constructing new PSC building (reflects the reduction of site work if sited where the James building is now) and \$750,000 the cost of removing the James building (hazardous material removal and demolition). Removal of the James allows siting of the new building where HEJ building sits now which is the highest point of the site. This siting is good for flood mitigation, reduces significant earth work and associated costs, reduces the required wetland and stormwater mitigation work and associated costs (net zero), reduces the need for significant additional parking, allows the options for terminus of the Mill River Greenway on the site and a park area / open space. This option offers the community the most options at the lowest cost acknowledging that the community has to either invest or realize that the HEJ building has reached its useful life.

Combination - Utilize the ground floor of the James and build bay for vehicles: Total \$7.53 million which includes \$2.3 stabilizing the James and putting offices in ground floor for police and fire, \$5.42 million for construction for public safety spaces including the seismic upgrades in the James required to meet the thresholds if used for emergency response personnel. The costs in this option can change significantly because once you start a renovation you run the risk of

unknown situations especially in a 106-year-old building. Concerns with this option, it is a lot of money and yet the program is awkward and doesn't fit the building. Logistically the program doesn't work well in the building.

Committee members shared initial thoughts.

- Moving the building more out of the area of 100-foot riparian zone sited on the current James building location makes the entry and exit of trucks to the building too challenging. Recommend that the corner of building is no less than 85 feet from Main Street and 80 feet from South Street.
- Like the 2nd option (removal of James) as it allows us to best address PSC program and the concerns brought up by community members – open space and Mill River Greenway.
- Siting the new building where the James building sits now is the highest point on the site which is good for flooding concerns, reduces the site work required and wetland mitigation.
- If a new building is placed where James sits now, does it look the same as we have been talking? Does it have the same footprint? Short answer is yes. White clapboards, fits the center, could add “add alternates” to make more ornate if town wanted
- It was noted that the building shouldn't be main fixture / focus on the site, down play the building– so a fit for the center but not as ornate – make the public area or garden be the focus of the site
- Corner park – sugar maples with perennials which match the center designed by Nick Dines

Strategy / Schedule:

- November 2020 Finalize costs and three scenarios
- December 2020 – February 2021 - Advocate to community the work done
- February 2021 - Special Town Meeting
- Early March 2021 - All day debt-exclusion vote
- March 2021 – September 2021 – Finalize Design
- October 2021 – go out to bid
- November 2021 – award bid
- Spring 2022 – construction

Questions / Challenges:

- Does the Committee go out and present the three scenarios with costs and get feedback from the community? Or, do they present all the work done, detailing the scenarios with the costs and at the same time make a recommendation on one of the scenarios?

Thoughts on each are

- Want to hear what the community has to say, let them come to where the committee is – let them sit with the information for a bit, then go back out with a recommendation. (inform, take feedback, ask for buy-in)

- Alternatively, we have been at this a long time, it has been argued that it is time to choose one of the scenarios and move forward
- How do we engage the community?
 - Outside – drive through stations at the school
 - Pamphlet – handout and conversations at the Transfer station
 - Videos
 - Facebook, newsletter
 - Zoom meetings
 - Indoor - concerns regarding rise in COVID-19 cases in the state
- Who do we engage?
 - Firefighters and Police officers first
 - Seniors
 - Families
 - General

Members answered the questions - if you had to advance one scenario today, which one would you choose, why, and how confident are you that it is the right scenario? Everyone stated option 2 – removing the James building and building on that area on the site - made sense to some degree, but it was shared with varying levels of confidence. Reasons in support of that option / comments:

- Least Cost with the most value
- Highest ground for flooding concerns
- Best options for program for emergency response
- Most opportunities for other site features or future building on the lot
- Other options don't work financially or get us what we ultimately need – a 50-year building that works the most effectively and efficiently for fire and police.
- Removing James is the right thing although some folks feel bad – like to preserve but it doesn't make sense financially or get what we are after.
- Even the least expensive option is going to be a sell to the community – cost is a huge factor for our community.

Questions to answer for Community / Presentation focus:

- Focus on reduction of the building footprint – reducing costs - Committee heard the residents say that it has to be workable but affordable for the town
- Why don't we sell or rent the building?
- Costs of keeping the James
- The road map for how we got here.

Committee will split in to smaller groups to answer the two questions to build our presentation:

1. How do we make the case? Pros / Cons and data points
2. Road Map for engaging Community / process & tools (how, when, who)

Charlene will send out an email asking for members to volunteer to work on one of those questions.

Moved (PW, JO) and voted to unanimously approve the minutes from October 22, 2020

Next meeting is 11/12/2020 at 6 p.m. Jim Ayres, Rob Todisco, Kevin Chrobak will meet with Conservation Commission at 7 p.m. that same night.

Moved (PW, BL) to adjourn at 7:23 p.m.