

Owners Project Manager Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, April 18, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.
Williamsburg Town Offices
141 Main Street, Haydenville, MA 01039
Board of Selectmen's Office

Present: Jim Ayres (Co-Chair), Mitch Cichy (Co-Chair), Jean O'Neil, Brenda Lessard, Jason Connell, Paul Wetzell, Denise Wickland, Walter Kim Boas, and Dan Bonham
Others: Rob Todisco (P3), William Sayre, and Charlene Nardi

Jim gave a summary of the last meeting to members about the round robin process. He noted that there was a general consensus around the following:

- Current facilities are unacceptable
- There aren't any physical sites in play other than town owned sites and Helen E. James site is the only real option when everything is taken into account. There were hopes that other sites would come into play (no responses to the RFP for private sites) and the town offices and highway garage sites have many issues.
- The scale and scope must be sellable to the town and something that everyone (the Committee and stakeholders - departments) can get behind. It was noted that the current size at 10,000 square feet, is cost prohibitive and most likely wouldn't pass town meeting.

One member noted that he felt tearing down the Helen E. James school should be seriously looked at. The community needs to be asked if they are committed or not to investing in this building otherwise, it should be torn down. It was noted that tearing down the James will be difficult to sell to the community

Members who weren't at the last meeting shared that they were generally on the same page; all agreed that the James site is the only real option and that the town needs to make a decision about the James building. If the James building is torn down it opens the lot so that the town can best utilize the property.

Members worry that town folks may decide that they don't want to tear down the James, they won't want to invest in it, but do understand we need a public safety complex, and that will leave us with a limited path forward.

Rob Todisco asked if just building a public safety complex next to the James and taking the question of the James building future out of the mix is an option. It was stated that it would be hard to sell a project that doesn't have a plan for the James building and the town loses the option of better siting the Public safety complex on the property.

Chiefs raised concerns that if the facility design is scaled back too much then it won't have what is needed to operate; it is a lot of taxpayer funds to build something that isn't adequate.

There was acknowledgement of what has already been cut, but there may be room for a bit more. Members again stated that the project needed to be something that everyone can really fight for and unfortunately cost is the big factor.

Concern that community doesn't really have a good understanding of what is needed to reuse the James building. Renovating old buildings is generally more costly, you are constrained by current design (trying to make a building designed for a school program of the early 1900's work for a totally different use – offices), and you lose the vision of getting what is best for the town government departments (emergency and town offices).

Questioned whether the Town Office site is really ruled out as an option. The reasons it is felt that it isn't a feasible option: Increased response time (not central located for volunteers to get to the station and then back out in a timely manner, especially if incident is on the other side of town), insurance rates increase if first response station is more than five miles away (Florence FD covers Haydenville), lot is not large enough, and the nearby stream and water under the parking lot add challenges. Noted that residents generally seem okay with tearing down the Town Offices. Questioned whether these noted challenges / issues are enough to make the town office lot not viable. Has it been looked at thoroughly enough? Either way it doesn't change the fact that we still have to deal with the James building because Town Government operations has to go somewhere.

Need to list pros and cons for each lot so that the Committee can stop going over them and be clear when we present to community.

Can P3 put together graphics and detail the pros and cons for presentation to the community?

Need to get information out to the community because there is already a lot of misinformation. It is important to put out what the Committee knows and what was learned from Westhampton's experience. The Community needs to hear what work has been done and be asked for feedback.

What are the costs of maintaining the Town Offices & HEJ? Need a cost benefit analysis. Discussed what it means if both the existing Town Offices and Helen E. James building were torn down to do a combined town departments and emergency services facility. Is there a long-term savings with the town being able to invest in one site and one building?

The Committee doesn't want to lose focus on making sure emergency services get what is needed.

Meeting with fire department and police department personnel will be different than the public. It is important that the project is reasonable and something that everyone can get behind and advocate for.

Committee wants to hear from emergency services personnel. It is expected that some members may have strong opinions and it is important to get their feedback and hear what they have to

say. Both Chiefs want their staff to be up to speed and hear directly from the OPM Steering Committee members. Acknowledged that there is understandable frustration by emergency services personnel about the multiple committees and years that have gone by with no visible action; therefore, Committee needs to explain why it has taken so long to get where the Committee is and why that time was well spent.

What do we need to do to get ready to have the conversations? Articulate clearly that the Committee want the fire and police departments to have a new building, that it is needed, but the project / plan has to be something that the that the community will support otherwise the time invested is wasted. Options are contingent on cost. What is the goal of building a new facility? In other words, are we building it to be just new or is it going to provide what is needed? It was stated that a new building will be better than what the departments are working out of now, but it may not have everything people want. It will address safety and security issues, and be designed for the functions of the departments, but to a scale that is affordable. Increased requirements make our current buildings less and less acceptable so maintaining the current conditions is not an option.

Members stated it is time to start moving forward.

The Committee has never had a budget that it felt was sellable to the town and reasonable for the design and then backed into it. It may be beneficial to have that number that would be acceptable to the community and see what that buys. The original 2.5 million budget is not large enough and 7 million is too large, so what is the right number? It was stated that the number is closer to the 3 to 3.5 million.

Suggested that the capital plan be used as to analyze cost scenarios and use the Department of Revenue's suggested standard of 10% debt as a guide to determine what is affordable. Capital Plan has everything on it, its numbers are conservative – it is only a rough measure.

Need to tell people why the Helen E. James building is connected to this project. That the issue is that the Committee is actual looking at a larger presentation and facility master plan – the future of a successful vote on an emergency services facility depends on it.

Want to float the idea of tearing down the James because it gives the town a choice. Need to bring the people / community up to the same place the members have gotten throughout the process; by taking voters through the process and options looked at, they will better understand the site location choice and how the future of the James building affects the public safety complex project.

Need to be clear that the Committee supports the need for a new facility, members are prepared to fight for it, but it needs to be a project that is of a scope and scale that is viable and a cost that is affordable. We need to find efficiencies, may have to share space. Design the combined facility so that it could be added on to for town government operations and extra bays.

Presentation:

- History of all other committee work and OPM Steering Committee work
- What we need and what it gives to our town employees and community (safety, security)
- protection of town's assets

Detail options and constraints. Site selection: What we looked at, what we ruled out, what is possible, and why HEJ is critical.

It is a master plan dynamic.

Looked for private property, looked at town owned landed, constraints: trucks can't get down South Street, trucks don't fit in buildings, pros for each site. What is it that should be shared with the department personnel from the Chiefs perspective? Want to hear that there is a site picked out and that the committee is behind it. Project is on Helen E James or Helen E. James dependent. Hasn't been said definitely; need to pull the trigger. Committee has done due diligence, need to state what was looked at, where we are, and why.

Cost is the bottom line: Political: Town process of passing the project at town meeting (two-thirds vote required to pass) and then at the ballot (majority vote required to pass). Therefore, it needs to be lean in order to be sellable to community.

Why does it cost so much to build with public money? Prevailing wage, state procurement regulations and process (engineering design, OPM).

P3 projector screen – can we have live scenario that changes as we add or remove stuff. Whittle down. What scenario? Want to make sure what is chosen is already lean, don't want department personnel to go through process only to be told that is not feasible. Start with 2 double deep and one single bay scenario.

Needs: ask the departments what they require, get everyone on the same page (committee members and department personnel), everyone committed to what is chosen as a project.

Need to have a timeline for the process forward.

Bookends – 2.5 million to 7 million

Venn Diagram: Committee, Department and Community need to be in agreement on project to be successful.

Value of Visuals: provides a visual vision, but need to be careful because folks fixate on them and if it isn't the real design, folks can't let the original visual go.

On a motion by Kim Boas and seconded by Jean O'Neil, the Minutes of April 4, 2019 were voted as amended. (Passed by Majority, Brenda Lessard abstained)

Next meeting is May 2, 2019, 6:00 p.m. at the Anne T. Dunphy School