

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions for the Proposed Public Safety Building, Williamsburg, MA

Q18. Can we leave the HEJ Building alone, and build a Public Safety building next to it?

A. The committee and design team explored this option. The project would be spared the expense of having to demolish the HEJ building; however, the added cost of building within the floodplain and high water table on the other half of the site would offset any real savings. Ultimately the committee feels the HEJ should not be left unaddressed. The Town continues to pay 10's of thousands a year to just keep the building maintained as is, while the taxpayers are not benefiting from it.

In addition, if there were to be a new building adjacent to the HEJ of any kind, the required wetlands mitigation would largely eliminate usable green or park space on the property. Due to Conservation Commission and state Department of Environmental Protection regulations, building within the floodplain zone requires the replication of wetlands. Much of the existing grass area along the back of the site would end up being replicated wetlands area, not actively usable by the public.

By building a new public safety building where the HEJ is now, many opportunities open up to reinvent the park space both at the corner and adjacent to it for the community's use and engagement.