

Williamsburg Board of Selectmen
Town Offices
141 Main Street
Haydenville, Massachusetts 01039

10 December 2015

Dear Selectmen;

This report is being made to you as the Building Repurposing Committee feels it has completed its work at looking at five town owned buildings and identifying possible reuse of them. We want to first thank you for trusting this role to us. We have worked hard in an open process and came to our decisions in a participatory fashion. We must say that we knew going in that each building would present its own complexities and they did. What we didn't know, was how much each individual decision of a building would impact the decisions on all other buildings. On top of all that was the work being done by the safety complex committee which was an added layer of complexity. We believe we have worked through all of that.

An interim report was submitted to you on November 11th, and that report is the basis for this one.

- There is no town reuse for the **Williamsburg Fire Station** and therefore at the proper time, it should be declared surplus.
- The **Town Hall Building in Williamsburg** does not lend itself to any reuse by the town due to several factors, among them cost of renovation and inadequate parking. For those same reasons, it seems unlikely that it would be attractive for redevelopment by anyone in the private sector. As there is a lack of parking in the downtown, the only possible town use would be for parking and that would require the building to be torn down or moved to a different site.
- The **Haydenville Fire Station and Police Station** was carefully looked at and discussed. It has two or three possible town reuse functions;
 - Renovated or torn down and rebuilt into a council on aging building
 - Renovated or torn down and rebuilt as the police station.
 - Used as a fire department out station for the fire department, lessening the proposed size of the new safety complex.

It should be noted here that the committee did not feel it was in their charge to do cost analysis for these options but have some ideas to the cost and given that feel the options are worth consideration.

- **The James School** is clearly the most versatile building in town lending itself to various reuses. The committee had architects and housing experts walk through this building, as well as through the town office building in Haydenville, This building lends itself extremely well as either market rate or subsidized/elderly housing. If a safety complex is located adjacent to the building, chances of it being converted into market rate housing would be greatly diminished. The reuse of this building into housing would generate tax revenues for the town, more so if used as market rate units.

Any large structure built near this building greatly reduces the possibility of such reuse. Any use of even a portion of the building by the town virtually eliminates any possible outside or private reuse of that building.

We feel either placing a building next to the James School or using part of the building, eliminates outside or private use and limits the building's only reuse as town offices. We believe

this is not the right decision. We feel this way because reusing the building for town offices has increased costs and moves all town functions into Williamsburg Center (unless some town function is kept at the current Haydenville fire department – police station as outlined above). We feel politically moving all functions into Williamsburg will be difficult to explain and also that such a move would leave a vacant building in Haydenville, one with limited reuse, explained more next.

- The **Town Office Building in Haydenville** functions adequately as town offices and has done so for some time. It can continue in that mode without upfront costs although we recommend that yearly improvements to it be made. This building can continue to function as town offices with no upfront costs, while moving into the James School would result in costs around \$ 3 million **(1)**

That cost, on top of the new safety complex cost, may not be acceptable to the town. If the decision is made to move the town offices into the James School, and option for the town office building in Haydenville, is to tear that building down which may then open the site up for the safety complex or some other private development. From those walking through the building, there are serious concerns about the ability to economically convert this building into housing or other reuse. Its reuse options are extremely limited, especially those that would produce revenues for the town.

In conclusion, the committee feels;

The Williamsburg Fire Station should become surplus at the appropriate time

The Town Hall Building in Williamsburg should become surplus unless the board determines the site as parking and if no private interest in relocating the building, it be torn down.

The Haydenville Fire Department and Police Station be considered for one of three possible town uses and if deemed inadequate be declared surplus.

It should be noted here that none of the above buildings, if declared surplus and turned over to a private developer will generate much in terms of dollars in the resale or future tax revenues.

The Town Office Building in Haydenville should remain as the town offices. Any reuse of that building would be difficult and generate limited funds for the town.

The James School, the most valuable of these five buildings, should be declared surplus and put out for a request for proposals which can contain various conditions of its reuse. Great care should be taken in the construction of any building near it as that greatly reduces the possibility of reuse. Preferably, no building would be built there. This building can generate revenues for the town going forward, although due to its challenges, not a large amount is expected in its sale.

We do not feel the town should maintain ownership of any of these buildings for non-town use. We also realize that the only way to determine a reuse or a sale price of these building will be by putting them forward for proposals.

Finally, we thank you for this opportunity to serve. We do stand ready to continue any work you feel this committee can perform and are available to answer any questions you might have. As we said in the beginning, we realize this is a complex issue. We appreciate the work of the safety complex committee and we appreciate and respect your role in the decision making process.

Jeff Ciuffreda, for the Williamsburg Building Repurposing Committee. Members

Gordon Allen

Barbara Bricker

Paul Dunphy

Michael LaMothe

John Pohanka

Eileen Stewart

Fran Tilley

- (1)** This estimated cost is from the report the town paid for to evaluate the physical condition of the Town Office building in Haydenville and the Helen E. James School. The figure can be found on page 1 of exhibit 4 of that report in the column titled “Minimal Renovation and Reconfigurations”. Report was performed by SBS Strategic Building Solutions, now Colliers International and submitted July 19, 2015. It should be noted that no analysis of hazardous materials was done in this report.