

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

May 19, 2015

Senior and Disabled Center - Conference Room A & B

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Alan Bongiovanni at 7:03 PM.

II. Roll Call – Members present: Alan Bongiovanni, Chairperson; Whit Przech; Jim Marocchini, Dave Nagel; Rodney Mortensen; and Alan Nafis. Others present: Members of the public; Chuck Boos and Nelson Bastos, Kaestle Boos Associates; Ed Moriarty and Tracy Brennan, Downes Construction Company; Dave Langdon, Director of Facilities Management; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.

III. Public Participation – Peter Arbur, 133 Tremont Street. He read in the paper that two gyms were needed after the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation appeared before the Committee. As part of their due diligence, has the Committee done a study to see if there is a need for two gyms? If so, is the report available to the public? He saw the Hartford Courant article after the Committee received the structural report. It said that some Building Committee members favored tearing down the building. He spoke earlier about due diligence. By doing it, the Committee is going in the right direction. He hopes the Building Committee will continue to do so. Failure to do so by the previous Committee led to the flushing of \$170,000. Site improvements will be a big nut. It would be a good idea to know what site improvements would cost. It was mentioned previously about Town forces performing site improvements. This could lead to coordination problems.

John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill Avenue. He is an exterior building restoration contractor. He is disturbed when he hears talk about tearing down the Town Hall. If the Committee chooses to do that, it should not be because it considers the building to be old and tired. It is as solid as the day it was built. If the Committee is leaning that way, it should come up with a better reason. He does not feel that the hazardous materials abatement number was that unreasonable. The building appears to be driven by a basketball court agenda. It is difficult to renovate a building for modern mechanicals. He doesn't know why two gyms are needed.

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive. She found the visual of the outline of the current Town Hall helpful. She was not certain what the area calculations in the architect's presentation referred to.

Dana Havens, 113 Stoddard Avenue. It has come to her attention that statements have been made that residents only came out at the last referendum to save the park. She

walked neighborhoods and spoke to other residents for two months. Many residents stated that they were concerned about the price tag for that project.

IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Mr. Mortensen made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2015 meeting as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Marocchini. The motion passed by a vote of 5 YES to 0 NO, with 1 abstention (Mr. Nafis, absent from meeting).

V. Update on Site Relocation Investigation - Mr. Langdon stated that those properties that are available now are at \$2.50 to \$5.75 a square foot. That is just to lease space and does not include utilities or costs for preparation for the Town's use. These properties might or might not be available a year and a half from now. He would like to have Downes Construction and Kaestle Boos Associates look at some of these areas to start their planning. He is anticipating to lease one building. Sizes range from 180,000 square feet down to 45,000 square feet. A lease would be over \$200,000 a year. Mr. Mortensen noted that Mr. Langdon had mentioned the possibility of trailers at the previous meeting. Mr. Langdon replied that the Committee could also do that. That would be the cheapest option, although he felt a building would still need to be leased for the Transition Academy.

VI. Town Hall Conceptual Design Update - Presented by Mr. Boos. He has continued to refine the plans presented at earlier meetings. He found space for the Central Connecticut Health District after he was notified that they had not reached a decision on whether to leave. The front and full renderings show that the Community Center mass no longer dominates the Town Hall. It is tucked into the building. He showed the site plan. He has discussed the Main Level Floor Plan with the Town Manager, who thought that everything on it worked. On review of the Upper Level Floor Plan, it was mentioned that the general government and Board of Education Information Technology offices were grouped together. These levels are generally in conformance with their programs. The Lower Level Floor Plan was discussed. The areas in white on this drawing represent space that is at a lower elevation, as shown on the drawing for the Gymnasium Level. The Lower Level storage area for Human Services is equal to all of the administrative area storage area, and is a reason why Human Services has been placed on the Lower Level. The orange area represents space that is nine feet lower in elevation. Space was reduced by moving the main corridor over. It is ½ of a flight up to grade from this area.

Mr. Mortensen asked about the light blue area on the site plan. This represents the police department where no work is planned, although potential improvements had been mentioned at a department head meeting. Mr. Przech asked what the square footage of each floor was. Each floor is approximately 25,000 square feet. Mr. Nagel asked what the difference was from the current building to this proposal. There is 109,000 square feet in the existing building. With two gyms the concept presented has just under 100,000 square feet (99,624). This concept functions efficiently, with over 90% efficiency as compared with 80% efficiency for the current building. The East Elevation drawing was presented, along with a section drawing of the building at the front entrance. Mr. Boos hopes to present a section drawing through the whole building at the next meeting. The upper parking lot will be raised one to two feet. The new building would be filling in the ditch

that exists at present next to the upper parking lot. Mr. Nagel asked about the Veteran's Memorial in front of the current Town Hall. It will be appropriately relocated. Mr. Bongiovanni asked if the plan was simply more refined since the last meeting. Mr. Boos responded that he couldn't reduce the size without affecting programs.

VII. Site Relocation and Building Costs - Presented by Mr. Moriarty. He presented a conceptual budget for the entirely new building scheme. These are based on the square footage costs for the type of construction each area will require. There will be a more detailed budget coming in a couple of weeks. These figures are based on square foot pricing. It estimates the costs of the separate wing with a gym at \$5,335,000 (at \$250 per square foot) and the rest of the area below the Town Hall at \$2,176,440 (at \$280 per square foot), for a Community Center total of \$7,511,440. The Town Hall general government and Board of Education space, on three levels, is estimated at another \$19,747,000 (at \$280 per square foot). The combined construction cost totals \$27,258,440. Other items are then added, for sitework (an allowance of \$1,500,000), hazardous materials abatement (\$1,580,000), demolition (\$1,100,000), soft/non-construction costs (\$3,500,000), and temporary Town Hall costs (\$2,000,000). The Total Project Cost was estimated to be \$36,938,440. Mr. Moriarty stated that the cost he has least confidence in is the allowance for relocation, rental and build out costs for the temporary Town Hall location. He will also do a comparison with the addition and renovation concept, which he anticipates will be about \$7,000,000 more, because the Town would be renovating an additional 27,000 square feet at \$280 per square foot. There is a degree of accuracy in the square footage numbers. Mr. Moriarty felt he could be off by \$10, plus or minus, which could throw his estimate off by up to a million dollars, but no more than that. His quantity take off budget will have better numbers. Town operations couldn't stay in the building whether renovating or constructing a totally new building. Renovating would call for tearing down walls and ceilings. Occupants won't want to be in the building when this is going on. Mr. Boos mentioned that the part of the building being saved under the renovation concept is only half of the new area. The issue is stabilizing the part of the building that is being saved. Mr. Moriarty felt the renovation concept would be renovating about 40,000 square feet and have about 80,000 square feet of new construction. The infill construction of the current courtyard would be very expensive.

Mr. Mortensen reminded the Committee that the hazardous materials report didn't estimate abatement of what was hidden. Mr. Moriarty responded that he used EnviroMed's number and did not include any allowances for additional abatement. The Town might save money if it did the abatement all in one shot, but not a drastic amount. Mr. Przech asked Mr. Moriarty for an assessment of the existing building. The building needs a lot of work. Mr. Przech asked if the Town could stay in the building and re-use it. Mr. Moriarty replied that, under the previous referendum plan, yes, departments could move around Town Hall and take advantage of the available swing space. With these concepts being considered now, the Committee doesn't have that. Mr. Boos was asked the same question by Mr. Przech. He responded that there was the physical condition and also how efficient the space was that was being saved. The current building has bearing walls for twelve foot corridors. As to the physical condition, the Committee members saw the report from Mr. Chipko. There was extensive deterioration. Trying to salvage

what is left is inefficient. It is also expensive and with little redeeming quality. Mr. Boos shared his experience with the West Hartford Town Hall project. Mr. Moriarty will provide a conceptual budget for the new construction with partial renovation concept to Mr. Baron by May 28<sup>th</sup> for distribution to the Committee. He will also have a quantity take off budget completed by June 15<sup>th</sup>.

VIII. Building Concept and Size – Mr. Bongiovanni felt the Committee should not make decisions without having the estimates from Downes Construction. Mr. Moriarty noted that soft costs are those that are not construction related. They are for items such as design, financing, etc. These are what Mr. Baron had prepared for the previous referendum. Mr. Nagel asked if they were indeed soft, in that they would change based on the method of construction. Mr. Baron stated they would not. The allowance for furniture might be adjusted, but in general the soft costs would remain the same whether this was a new building or a new construction with partial renovation building. Mr. Marocchini felt that while it would be lovely to find a magic spot to move elsewhere, the Committee still needed to shrink the project another 10,000 square feet. He would love to see the Rocky Hill Town Hall, just to see how things work. He wants to see something modern with his own eyes. \$36-\$37 million most likely wouldn't work. It boils down to money. It might be worth it to look at another facility. Mr. Nagel felt this (waiting for the Downes Construction budget estimates) was an opportunity to have a little give and take with the library Building Committee. Mr. Bongiovanni felt the estimate was a significant number. He would like to refine the building to some degree. The Committee does need to plan for the future also. He would also like to see that number come down. Maybe get Town Hall operations to 40,000 square feet and the Board of Education to 25,000 square feet or a little less. Mr. Boos reminded the Committee that an appropriate amount of storage was needed.

Mr. Marocchini asked Mr. Boos if there was a formula for per person square footage. Mr. Boos responded that the formula was quite small for business. The Town Hall functions differently. Mr. Nafis noted that the public must also feel comfortable coming into the building. Mr. Bongiovanni recognized the need for vaults and other specially designed spaces. Mr. Mortensen agreed that the estimate figure is a lot of money. He has been in several Town Halls. There are differences between Rocky Hill and Newington's operations. Some departments are housed elsewhere in Rocky Hill. If the program request is accurate, and he has to believe it is to within a couple of thousand square feet, this is what the Town needs. He asked the Committee to think of the number of employees and what the Town does. People are always looking at next year's budget. If you are looking at other Town Halls you need to know the functions of the departments that are in the building you are looking at. He would much rather have a new efficient Town Hall, reducing the current Town Hall by about 30,000 square feet. Most of the meetings held in Town Hall are private. He is not happy about the price. Mr. Nafis stated that while he was not present for the needs assessments, but he felt that departments were not looking to build empires. The employees are professionals and will deal with what they get. The Committee could squeeze offices a little, but it would not make a significant difference.

Mr. Bongiovanni noted that the duration of the project is also important. A new building would reduce escalation costs. He is leaning towards a new building. Mr. Nagel

stated that the Committee needs to show the public that it is looking at all options. They need to know where the Committee has come from, so that the public can then accept it. Mr. Bongiovanni said that there would be no voting at this meeting. The Committee would wait for more reliable numbers. He feels the option the Committee has been looking at most recently is the better solution for the Town, but that is only his opinion. The Committee are not the determiners of the program. If the numbers are too high, the Town Council will tell the Committee. He wants the most efficient, cost effective use of the facility. Mr. Przech said that the Town Hall in Windsor, where he is facilities manager, is 40,000 square feet. He is also leaning towards a new building. Mr. Mortensen felt the Committee wanted as small a building as it can get. If the Committee wanted to cut square footage off the building, what would Kaestle Boos Associates do? It would have to look at percentage reductions, which have already been done once. It would look at Parks and Recreation, at the number of gyms. The Committee will lose modular efficiency if it continues to cut in this manner.

VII. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – The Committee agreed to hold their next meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. Mr. Baron distributed the geotechnical engineering cost proposal for \$7,500 from Dr. Clarence Welti to the Committee. This is to take soil test borings around the foundation of the building to determine the suitability of the soil, the location of groundwater and other factors that might affect design considerations. Mr. Langdon informed the Committee that Dr. Welti also did testing for the police station and can use that information as well. The Committee agreed by consensus to accept the proposal and directed staff to proceed with the testing. Mr. Przech asked Mr. Moriarty if the costs estimated by Downes Construction were for 2016. Mr. Moriarty responded that they were.

VIII. Public Participation – Mary Udice, 26 Dalewood Road. She has a child in the Transition Academy. The plans show the new location of the Academy to be on the Upper Level. At the present time it is at ground level. A number of students require walkers, crutches and wheelchairs. They will have access to an elevator but an elevator is a lot of work for them. She is concerned about the location for the Transition Academy.

Steve Silvia, 45 Basswood Street. He has been working in consultation with Sig Sigma, an architectural, engineering and construction management firm. They have identified the location that meets every single program need discussed to date in the Town of Newington. It can be acquired for 4.6 million dollars. It can be renovated for another 6 million and fully equipped with brand new open space furniture for up to 600 people, not to exceed 6.5 million. Basically, half the cost of the facility proposed today. He also did an analysis based on his rant at the last meeting about the east and west lots. A comfortable facility in either lot could be done for about 3 million more, or around 20 million. Basically, he is proposing that a highly efficient building be constructed in either the east or west parking lot. The construction manager believes that is a viable solution, taking a look at the site plans that have been available, provided by the Town Engineer. To that effect the Committee can build on either the east or the west lot a proposed building, up to 125,000 square feet, for less than 17.3 million. That will then free up the facility you are currently residing in to be at your disposal, whatever you decide is most appropriate. There are many situations you can do with that building site after you abate

it and address the structural issues. He just wants to make that available to the Committee as points of information. This approach is an approach. It is him. He still believes that it is a disservice to the Board and to the Town in trying to tear down a functional building that still has value to someone else, if not as a Town Hall. He is willing to share further information and reports that he has from Sig Sigma; that is the name of the company he is working with, in consultation, and is happy to share if the Committee has any interest.

Peter Arburrr, 133 Tremont Street. On the previous project, the Building Committee focused on not increasing taxes. Very little is going for bonding currently. With this project, over time the amount of money for direct pay projects in the CIP will fall. The Committee needs to keep this in mind, the relation between capital projects and bonding. The grand list has lost .5% in the last eight years. There is very little land for new development. The voters will hold the Committee responsible to try to live within 30 million dollars. He also encouraged the Committee to look at the snow removal plan. It looks tight.

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive. She would like to see the single gym concept. She would like clarification on public participation, on whether or not comments from the audience for clarification are possible. She has concerns about where the Transition Academy will be placed. She is concerned about students getting in and out. Will the videotape of the meeting that is being made tonight be on NCTV or on facebook?

Michael J. Fox, 1901 Main Street. He echoes the earlier comments about the Transition Academy. Based on experience with his granddaughter, he doesn't believe those students will be able to use the elevator in the event of a fire. The current building is functional, but there are grades of function. Any renovation would be cosmetic. If the Committee can build a new building on that site or with a smaller footprint, that would be ideal.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. She thinks about what would have happened if the referendum had passed, when other issues with the Town Hall hadn't come to light. She thanked the Committee for the study and what they are doing. She wishes the Committee had a budget. A lot of things are going around town. She would like a formal update from the Building Committee published in the Town Crier or Rare Reminder.

IX. Response to Public Participation –Mr. Bongiovanni responded to Mr. Arburrr's question on the two gyms. That is not the Building Committee's doing. Parks and Recreation declared that as their needs. The Committee is charged with meeting the departments' needs. The Committee can't tell departments what their needs are. The amount to bond will be determined by the Town Council. Mr. Boos responded on the location of the Transition Academy. The building will be fully accessible and up to code. The Superintendent had said that he would be pleased to have them at that location. Ms. Udice countered with the observation that Dr. Collins does not have children with special needs. Mr. Bongiovanni said he would be happy to receive and review the reports from Mr. Silvia. He requested that Mr. Silvia provide them to Mr. Baron for distribution to the entire Committee. In response to Mr. Bachand's comments about tearing down the building, there are many aspects to the building. The current building is not conducive to proper planning or proper space planning. The Committee will weigh saving some of the

building. The Committee will be working to reduce the cost of the project. Their charge is to create a facility that meets the needs of the Town departments.

X. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jeff Baron*

Jeff Baron  
Director of Administrative Services