

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

June 16, 2015

TOWN HALL – HELEN NELSON CONFERENCE ROOM

**CORRECTED SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
(Corrections are in Bold)**

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Whit Przech at 6:01 PM.

II. Roll Call – Members present: Alan Bongiovanni, Chairperson (arrived at 6:08 PM); Whit Przech, Vice Chairperson; Sarah Jorgensen-Bucchi; Dave Nagel; Rodney Mortensen; and Alan Nafis. Others present: Members of the public; Chuck Boos, Kaestle Boos Associates; Joe Desautel, Ed Moriarty and Paul Wojtowicz, Downes Construction Company; Dave Langdon, Director of Facilities Management; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.

III. Public Participation – Peter Arburr, 133 Tremont Street. He wishes to bring up a point of order for the Committee’s consideration. At the previous meeting he asked if a study was needed before including two gyms in the plans for the new Town Hall. Mr. Bongiovanni had responded that it was not the Building Committee’s doing to make that determination, that the Committee was charged with meeting the needs of the Town as identified by the Town’s departments. He has reviewed all the minutes from February 3<sup>rd</sup> through May 19<sup>th</sup>, and also the Kaestle Boos Associates’ Space Needs Analysis Report. He read from the minutes of the meeting at which representatives of the Board of Parks and Recreation were present and also (retired) Superintendent Bruce Till. Mr. Till’s comments on two gyms were what he had been told by other Parks and Recreation Superintendents. There is no formal request for two gyms and there is no evidence of an official vote by the Committee for two gyms.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. Members of the public were unable to hear the previous speaker. She asks that members of the Committee speak into the microphones. Is there a time limit established by the Committee for public participation?

IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Mr. Przech made a motion to approve the corrected minutes of the May 19, 2015 meeting as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Nafis. The motion passed by a vote of 5 YES to 0 NO, with 1 abstention (Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi, absent from meeting).

V. Soil Borings Report - Mr. Baron stated that a purchase order had been issued to Dr. Clarence Welti in late May, and that he had taken soil borings last week. The report has not yet been received.

VI. Town Hall Conceptual Design Update - Presented by Mr. Boos. The package that was before the Building Committee (consisting of 15 pages of drawings and a Mechanical, Electrical Plumbing, and Fire Protection narrative) was presented to Downes Construction Company in early June. It shows the Transition Academy relocated to the south and on a lower level, in response to previous public comments. The new location had been reviewed with the Superintendent of Schools, who had found it to be satisfactory.

Mr. Bongiovanni pointed out to Committee members that the drawings provided were for a single gymnasium. Mr. Boos added that this was another option for the Committee to consider. Plans have not been formally adopted by the Committee. A double gym would be at the same location, only it would be larger. Mr. Nagel asked what was located where the Transition Academy had been. Mr. Boos responded that the space on the Upper Level was for the Board of Education and it now had the Town's Information Systems Technology Department as well. Mr. Bongiovanni asked if the Helen Nelson Room could double as a training room. Mr. Boos responded that the training room shown was used a lot for the training done by Human Capital Development. Mr. Nagel asked about the difference in cost between one gym and two. Mr. Boos deferred that question to Downes Construction Company later in the meeting, when the Construction Manager's cost estimate would be the agenda topic. He noted that the drawings are conceptual layouts and that the labels on the rooms identified are placeholders. Each department is expected to be given a chance to go over their space.

Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi conjectured that if there was one gym, in a building designed to meet future needs, the Town could put in another gym eventually and it would still work. Mr. Boos responded that if future expansion were anticipated, the gym would have to be framed differently (steel rather than masonry) and the court orientation would be vertical instead of horizontal. The gym could expand to the south but the second gym couldn't fit on this orientation. When a second gym was added lobby space for the future expansion would also be needed and twice the amount of toilet facilities would be necessary to meet code. Mr. Mortensen felt that discussion of one gym versus two gyms should be held during agenda item VIII on Building Concept and Size. Mr. Bongiovanni felt that the Committee's charge is to give departments what they need. He does not feel that the Committee should be the ones to make that decision. Mr. Mortensen summed up by stating the decision to have two gyms will come from the Town Council. Mr. Bongiovanni agreed, saying that only two scenarios had been presented that met the needs, total demolition with new construction, and new construction with saving some of the existing building structure. This was true not just for the number of gyms, but also for storage.

Mr. Nagel said he was curious to know what the new Parks and Recreation Superintendent thinks. He would like some input from the new Superintendent. Mr. Bongiovanni agreed that the Committee shouldn't make a decision without his input. Mr. Przech stated his belief that the concept presented met the needs of the departments in Town Hall and that he favored two gyms. Mr. Baron was directed to invite incoming Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Bill DeMaio to the Committee's next meeting. Mr. Mortensen concluded the discussion by stating that, if the Committee came up with a plan that meets the Town's requirements, a two gym plan, that was hypothetically a \$30

million project, and if the Town Council says, hypothetically, you only can spend \$29 million, the Building Committee would then need to determine what to cut.

VII. Budget Cost Estimate Update - Presented by Mr. Wojtowicz. He has completed a budget estimate for a one gym building based on the drawings presented earlier by Kaestle Boos Associates, for just under \$31 million. His office overlaid the one and two gym scenarios to develop a budget for the second gym. The one gym building would encompass 94,204 square feet, at a budgeted construction cost of \$30,956,372. If a second gym were added the budget would increase by \$1,220,000. Mr. Moriarty said that this would be roughly \$37.7 million over all for two gyms, with soft costs and relocation, and about \$36.5 million overall for one gym. Mr. Moriarty also told the Committee that a comparison to the previous budget number for full replacement (based solely on square footage of all new construction) shows that this figure is roughly \$700,000 more. \$500,000 of that is due to site issues. He has not provided a detailed take off of the renovation scheme, as the square footage estimate was \$44 million, which would render that scheme prohibitively expensive. Mr. Desautel reminded the Committee of the architect's earlier comments that if there was a possibility to add a second gym later, there would need to be plans to accommodate that now. Those accommodations would change the number. Mr. Przech asked how confident Downes Construction was with the hazardous materials abatement number. Mr. Moriarty responded that they had used the estimate provided by the Town's industrial hygienist, EnviroMed Services. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi asked if the budget number included all materials. She was assured that yes, it does. The Committee is getting a clearer picture of the magnitude of the project.

VIII. Building Concept and Size – Mr. Bongiovanni felt the Committee won't be ready for a referendum in November. Mr. Baron said that the Committee would need to present a finished project and estimate to the Town Council by early-to-mid-July in order for that to occur. Mr. Nafis stated that the project budget was above the number of the last referendum. If the Committee is at \$36, 37, or \$38 million dollars, it doesn't make a lot of difference. He would like the Committee to sit down with the Town Council before presenting a project to them. Mr. Baron was directed to draft a memo to the Town Manager requesting that the Committee meet with the Town Council to discuss the project before coming before the Council formally with a recommendation. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi said she recognizes that she does not agree with other members who want a new building with two gyms and are willing to accept the cost. They want two gyms, but is it feasible? Mr. Mortensen said he agrees with her. The Committee needs direction from the Town Council. Does anyone believe the amount will be materially different from \$37 million? Downes Construction was directed to revise their budget to include two gyms. Mr. Nagel said he also felt that the Committee needed direction, and he agreed with Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi that the Committee's efforts will come to naught if the Committee is not in the right ballpark. Mr. Nafis said that all Committee members were concerned with the costs of the project. Different members have different ideas as to what they want. The Committee should get direction. It got the needs from the professionals that work here. The Committee will have to tell them what they will get. The Project Architect and the Construction Manager were directed to develop a complete package of plans and numbers for a two gym scheme.

**IX. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee** – Mr. Bongiovanni spoke to the report forwarded by Mr. Steven Silvia after the last meeting. What Mr. Silvia spoke about in person was a \$17 million project with X, Y, and Z that the Committee could analyze. That is not what was in the five page report. It talked about a couple of four to five million dollar projects building swing space between the existing Town Hall and the library in a fashion similar to strip mall construction. It wasn't all encompassing as he had spoken about, although it was well thought out. Mr. Bongiovanni appreciates his efforts. It is not a complete study of how the Town of Newington can spend \$8.9 million and get a new Town Hall that basically uses a former factory and accomplish all that. Mr. Bongiovanni did look at it carefully. What was provided, although very thoughtful and creative, it was not, in his opinion, what will help solve the problem of the Town of Newington. The Committee determined that it would not meet again until after it had met with the Town Council. Mr. Baron was directed to post the package received from the architect and construction manager on the Town's website for the public to view.

**X. Public Participation** – Dana Havens, 113 Stoddard Avenue. She is disappointed to hear that it is not the Committee's job to determine needs. People don't want to spend the kind of money the Committee is talking about. The Committee is just not listening to the public.

Scott Kruskowski, 76 Miami Avenue. He doesn't think that people will vote for even \$30 million. There needs to be a means that is in the middle so that the Committee doesn't spend so much. He is also disappointed that there are no green alternatives that are being considered.

Gail Budrejko, 30 Isabelle Terrace. The Committee has to be demanding and insistent on what it needs. The bottom line is, how much does the Committee have to spend? The town has a desire to build a building to meet the needs. The Town Council will care about the cost. What is the not to exceed figure? She doesn't understand what the hesitancy is.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. She would like to see a time line as to what the intent is. What does the Town Council see as a reasonable cost for this project? \$35 to \$38 million is way over the \$30 million that was rejected. She would like the departments to sit at the table and agree that the plans meet their needs. The discussion tonight was very confusing. She hopes the library committee won't duplicate this. It is time to go to the Town Council and get clarification.

**XI. Response to Public Participation** –Mr. Bongiovanni noted that all the Committee members live in town, pay taxes, and understand that the cost of the project will affect everyone. Nobody wants to spend more money than is necessary. The Committee was given a charge by the Town Council to meet the needs of the occupants of Town Hall; Parks and Recreation, Town Hall general government and the Board of Education. Those are the three major occupants. They are the experts in what they need. The Town Council is not telling them what they need. As Mr. Nafis said several times, they are professionals. We have to rely on their expertise. Committee members have experience in many of these areas, a lot of familiarity with Town Hall. That helps provide a little bit

of a check and balance on some of the space needs. The Committee has professionals, our architects, and that is what they do for a living. When they look into these, they know whether it is a reasonable request or not. What the Committee is presenting to this Town Council is what addresses their needs. He is not going to speak as to why the Town Council set this up without a budget. They said tell us your needs, what is it going to cost to get the best solution to address those needs, and that is what the Committee has been spending all these months working on. If members of the public are not happy that the Committee doesn't set the program, there is nothing he can do for them. That is not how this is going to work. The Committee can't tell the different departments what their needs are. It can't tell the Town Manager that some of his departments should be housed somewhere else. This is the way it was given to the Committee. Most of this is already housed in the building today, if not all of the programs, in a much larger space. The Committee has a plan that has a significant cost to it but will address the needs. That was the Committee's charge. The Town Council is going to tell the Committee. The Committee is going to give the Town Council what the Committee believes is the Committee's best solution to address those needs and give the Town Council the dollar amount. They are all aware that a thirty million dollar referendum failed. What the Committee presents to the Town Council is going to meet the needs. If it is more than the Town Council wants to spend or it is more than the public can spend then they say "no". The Town Council or public votes it down or votes it up. We as a Committee, we don't have all the latitude he thinks some people would like the Committee to have because the Committee doesn't say you can or can not have this. The Committee has a charge. He thinks the Committee is doing the best the Committee can to live to that charge.

Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi added that the Committee has gone to the Town Council, a few Committee members went to the joint walk through at the library. The Committee has been asking for amounts. The Town Council won't give us one. Her whole point of putting this out there is to force the Town Council to give the Committee a number to work with, because the Committee is just sitting here reviewing all these drawings, wasting people's time, to give the Town Council this, which meets everyone's needs, and the Town Council is going to come back and tell the Committee. The Committee can't read the Town Councilors' minds, it can't decide for them at all if the public needs to look at this. There are going to be a lot of people talking about this when the Town Council puts this project out there. This is what we have so far. The Committee can sit here and debate all it wants about the price or what each person wants. The Committee needs to force the issue.

Mr. Nafis added, he thinks at this point in time that the Committee's charge was to come up with something that meets the needs. The Committee's real business comes when the Town Council says you can't spend that much money and the Committee has to figure out how to cut that back. Then it will not be what they need, or think they need, but what they can work with. That is when the Committee's real work comes in, in cutting this down. He understands that this was our charge, to meet our needs, get a price, then come back and if it is too much money, finding a way to get it down.

Mr. Przech said that the cost is high, but the size of the building is very large. It is just under 100,000 square feet. The current building is 10% larger, so the Committee has reduced the overall size of the building. The construction costs are what they are. The

project has been delayed for well over a decade and every year there are construction escalation costs of 4% to 6%. If the referendum is two years out the cost will increase by 8%. The longer the Committee waits to act the more it is going to cost. He doesn't think that the Committee has wasted its time or the architect's time. The Committee started off with a very broad concept and the Committee has narrowed it down to agree with the latest information. It is very workable, with less square footage overall. As far as the building being green, the Committee hasn't gotten to that stage yet. He thinks the project will be more energy efficient regardless. Right now, it is not in the plans. When the time comes, he encourages citizens to get out and vote.

**XII.** Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jeff Baron*

Jeff Baron  
Director of Administrative Services