

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

January 6, 2015

Town Hall – Helen Nelson Conference Room

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairperson Bongiovanni.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Alan Bongiovanni, Chairperson; Jim Marocchini; Dave Nagel; Sarah Jorgensen; Rodney Mortensen; and Whit Przech. Others present: Members of the public; Mayor Stephen Woods; Dave Langdon, Director of Facilities Management; Chuck Boos, Kaestle Boos Associates; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Public Participation – Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. She was looking for the minutes of the last meeting on the Town’s website and continues to have difficulty finding information on the site. She was hoping that perhaps the agenda could be listed on the selected list of meetings on the site that shows all other meetings. She asked if someone could explain the difference between Regular meetings and Special meetings.
- IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Mr. Mortensen made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2014 meeting. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Marocchini. Discussion: Ms. Jorgensen noted that there was confusion about votes at the previous meeting. She requested that a roll call vote be taken for future votes. The motion passed by a vote of 5 YES to 0 NO, with Mr. Nagel abstaining due to his absence at the previous meeting.
- V. Update on Previously Discussed Items – Hazardous Materials Survey: The survey from approximately 2007 was distributed earlier. Cost estimates in the report are no longer valid. The report is for the Lower and Main levels only. The Board of Education is being contacted to obtain the information on the Upper Level so a comprehensive list can be presented to the construction manager for estimating purposes. Staff was directed to identify the areas in the report that had already been addressed through abatement since the time of the report.

Structural Issues: In addition to the gymnasium wall there are other walls that need to be tested for structural integrity. The architect provided a quote from Connecticut Mason Contractors to perform the masonry work necessary to conduct these tests behind the outside layer of brick, in accordance with the recommendations in the Kaestle Boos Associates Existing Conditions Report. Mr. Boos informed the Committee that these tests would concentrate on areas where the brick was spalled. Spalling and cracking indicate movement, which in turn indicates that something is going on. He intends to test steel lintels also, but does not intend to open up every wall on the exterior of the building. Kaestle Boos Associates' structural engineer will be present during testing and will make a report at no extra charge to the Town. This money is for the mason to take down sections of the wall and replace them. Kaestle Boos has used Connecticut Mason Contractors in the past. \$3,400 would be the cost. Ms. Jorgensen noted that at previous meetings it had been stated that the wall in the gym was not structurally sound. Mr. Boos said that it appears to be moving. The roof trusses are in good shape. The curtain walls in the gym area appear to be moving. There are issues in areas other than the gym. Mr. Mortensen made a motion that the Committee engage Connecticut Mason Contractors for the amount of \$3,400 to assist with structural testing of the Town Hall. A second to the motion was provided by Ms. Jorgensen. Discussion: Mr. Mortensen said he thinks this is a good idea, the Committee should start probing now, and hopefully they will not find a lot of issues but can determine what the issues are for a reasonable amount of money. Ms. Jorgensen agreed and also supported this action. Mr. Boos stated that the testing would be done when temperatures were above freezing. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES to 0 NO.

Space Needs Analysis: Mr. Boos has had a meeting with the Town Manager to discuss the project, including space needs. Mr. Boos will meet with department heads as needed. The majority of the requests are in line with what he would normally expect. Previously the Board of Education was looking to move people into the Town Hall. This raises an element of policy. Is that something that the Committee wants to entertain? For Parks and Recreation, their previous program was for an independent building. The new program has to fit within the Town Hall. That old program is not supported by this site. There are policy issues with this also. The Building Committee should be involved to guide the process. A lot of concept design has to be decided upon. There should be a conversation about where the main entrance will be. To his mind, this is important. He is intrigued with adjusting Garfield Street. If that was done the people in the park could see a nice image. The entrance could also be on the east side of the building, where it was placed in the last major renovation. Now Cedar Street is a highway. The entrance off Cedar Street has been cut off. The current location is a less likely spot for the Main Entrance, but not impossible. He is talking about an image, what people will think when they say "this is where I go into the Town Hall." There are other basic concepts to be considered, such as capturing space in the courtyard

for circulation. When you enter a building it should be obvious where you want to go. These are all important points to be discussed before office location. You need to know how the building will function. He can provide concept diagrams. The Committee can work from these. The Committee needs to get the basics down first.

Mr. Bongiovanni: He agrees with Mr. Boos' train of thought. He and other Committee members will be meeting with the Library Board and the Town Council next Tuesday. He wants to see what that holds. The Committee can ask questions as to what the Board of Education and Parks & Recreation should have. Mr. Mortensen: On the entrance, people don't know where to go. The Committee needs to address that. It probably doesn't have enough space to meet all the extra space requested. This site is it. He doesn't know how the Committee could add extra space. Ms. Jorgensen: What is the Committee's priority? Mayor Woods: This is a difficult challenge. The space is a small area. There will have to be sacrifices. Regarding the Board of Education, recapturing the corridors gave them the space they needed. They were looking to bring back people that had been farmed out to the schools due to lack of space. Some of the administrative spaces in the schools are not good. Mr. Boos: Fortunately the interior corridor space was nice and wide. It is good space. Capturing that would be a marvelous way to accommodate programs without spending a lot of money. Board of Education circulation could be through the courtyard. Some walls are bearing walls and can not be removed, but you can work with them. Mayor Woods: In the last design the Board of Education was looking for more storage space and a meeting room. Mr. Mortensen: After the Town Council meets with the Library Board and discusses what it would take to accommodate both the library and the Town, will the Building Committee get some idea from the Town Council where they stand with each other? Mayor Woods: That would take some time. More discussion would have to take place at a later meeting. The Town Council will have to prioritize, as it has in the past. Mr. Bongiovanni: He will be pushing for concepts from the library. He is hoping they can tell the Committee so that the Committee can master plan. Mayor Woods: The library wants to be brought to the table and to talk. Parking is a big issue. The library needs space for any future expansion. Ms. Jorgensen: Could space be freed up by moving the bus garage? Mayor Woods: He doesn't see that land ever being redeveloped. There are wetlands. The Bus Garage will be discussed in the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Nagel: The bus garage space could also be used for parking. Mr. Bongiovanni: There would not be space enough for a building.

Mr. Mortensen: On straightening out Garfield Street, is it off the table? Can the Building Committee look at that? Mayor Woods: He may not be the one to ask. He thought it was a good idea originally. It would take a small amount of the park. Mr. Bongiovanni: You could adjust the alignment of the road to improve safety. Mayor Woods: It would help to solve a lot of the puzzle. Ms.

Jorgensen: We've already gone down that road. We want a plan that people will agree with. How do you prevent a few feet from becoming more feet later on. Taking away part of the park will result in opposition. Mr. Marocchini: It should be left as an option. Mr. Bongiovanni: We want a successful project. Mr. Nagel: This would be a very sore point. He doesn't think the Committee should pursue this. Mr. Mortensen: The last time, he didn't want to see a building in the park. This committee has said it wants to look at everything. He knows it was a hot issue. This will affect what will happen. The Committee's charge is to look at options for the Town.

Returning to Mr. Boos' earlier comments, Mr. Bongiovanni stated he was open to a subcommittee for meeting and communicating with the Boards of Education and Parks & Recreation. Ms. Jorgensen felt that one or more subcommittees would add confusion. Mr. Bongiovanni felt that the Building Committee needed to start a dialogue with both groups. The Committee will invite each body to speak with the Committee as a whole. Mr. Baron was directed to ask one of them to talk about their needs, whichever group is acceptable, to invite them to the next meeting and put them on the agenda.

- VI. Discuss Project Parameters – Mr. Bongiovanni felt the space needs of the departments should be identified. Ms. Jorgensen felt a dollar amount should be identified, that the Committee needs to work within a budget to keep the project within a certain limit. It needs some budget parameters. Mr. Bongiovanni felt it was premature to set a budget. Ms. Jorgensen asked if the project would be paid for through bonding? Mayor Woods said it would be. Phasing could also be considered. He felt that at this time the Committee needs to determine the square footage and how many programs can be accommodated. Ms. Jorgensen reiterated that cost will also be an issue. Mr. Nagel stated that, by charter, if the project was over a certain dollar amount the Town was required to bond and to have a referendum. Mr. Bongiovanni asked if the Town Hall needed an auditorium. Mayor Woods felt the Committee should look hard at that. Mr. Bongiovanni asked how often the auditorium had been used over the last five years. Mr. Boos felt this could be looked at again. Mr. Bongiovanni felt that circulation within the building was important. Mr. Boos noted that the mechanical plant is the heart of the building. The Committee will want something other than the current steam system. The rest of the building that has not been renovated previously would have to be converted to a hot water system. This is normally done with a new boiler plant. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that it may be necessary to temporarily vacate part of the building in order to renovate that space. Mr. Boos noted that the Committee could level the floor of the auditorium to create swing space. Mr. Bongiovanni felt that one parameter should be to try to preserve what has already been spent on the Lower Level.
- VII. Schedule Future Meetings – The Committee agreed by consensus to meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 6:00 PM. The time could be

changed to accommodate Town Council budget meetings or other special considerations. Mr. Baron explained that Regular Meetings are those whose dates are identified to the Town Clerk well in advance, normally at the start of the year. Their agendas can be modified during the course of the meeting. If the Committee decided not to hold a regular meeting, it would have to be cancelled. Most Building Committees hold Special Meetings on an as needed basis, dictated by the work of the Committee. An agenda for Special Meetings can not be modified during the meeting. The Committee agreed by consensus to continue to hold Special Meetings. The next Committee meeting will be on January 20th at 6:00 PM. Chairperson Bongiovanni will be unable to attend. Mr. Mortensen made a motion to nominate Whit Przech as the Vice Chair of the Committee. A second to the motion was provided by Mr. Marocchini. The motion passed by a vote of 6 YES to 0 NO.

VIII. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – None.

IX. Public Participation – Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace. On the tour of Town Hall she saw a number of cardboard boxes. Storage areas are not accessed on a regular basis. Does the Town access off site storage or digitize its records? These are other things to consider. On parking, there is a green space area by the Senior Housing. She doesn't see anyone using it, it could be used for parking. It is not an excessive distance from the Town Hall.

Mady Kenny, 52 Crestview Drive. Is the library field trip next week open to the public and will it be advertised? It had been stated previously that the Town Hall was to house all programs. Does that include all Parks and Recreation programs, some of which have been farmed out? On the auditorium, what has changed? On the previous design significant renovations to the auditorium weren't considered because of the expense. Rodney is right about the Town Hall maps, things are not labeled the same. Nomenclature and labeling should be consistent.

Steve Silvia, 45 Basswood Street. He would like to plant a seed about parameters. The current building design employs 1970 architectural norms: walls, an office, 275 square feet with a credenza. He asks that the Town create building standards. There is an opportunity to get 80 more people with using open building concepts, by tearing down walls. He recognizes the need for some offices to have privacy. Open construction is more efficient. There is the potential for another 40,000 square feet on the east side, running the whole length of the building. On parking at the Senior Center, there is already a paved lot to use.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. There was a budget for the project three years ago, \$8 million for Parks and Recreation and \$3 million for Town Hall. How can you plan for what you are going to do without a budget? There is a second meeting of the CIP Committee next week. How and when will you find out

what money you have to work with? After hearing discussions on the bus garage, she would like to have a better understanding of how the Capital Improvement Plan process works. On Garfield Street, there is still money in the CIP for site line improvements. The Committee needs to know what is in the Capital Improvement Plan that pertains to the project. On the green space by the Senior Housing off Wells Drive, when plans came up previously just as many people came out complaining about taking it away. She requested clarification to her understanding that each Committee meeting will be a Special Meeting and that public participation will be limited to speaking on matters that are on the agenda. She would like to see a timeline for the project, some kind of plan for how this will flow. On renovating the auditorium, she hopes the Committee will take into account the needs of the employees regarding safety and dust control.

Robert Larson, 817 Main Street. The budget is the elephant in the room. Kaestle Boos needs to know what they have to work with. The Committee needs to establish a budget to have meaningful meetings.

John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive. He also thinks the Committee needs space standards. This building is not to the current standards of government or business. He has recently looked at other municipal websites. The City of Bristol has a very good flow chart showing how departments relate to one another, which would be helpful for the Committee in determining which departments need to be near one another and in its assessment of the Town's needs. He wished the Committee luck.

Dominic Pane, 638 Church Street. The 2020 Plan included a strategic guide for the Town Hall entrance, parking, and an outline for the Town Hall and Library. The Committee should look at that. The Committee should monitor the wall that is bowing to determine if the walls are moving. Were all the roof leaks at Town Hall stopped before winter? The Town shouldn't let water continue to leak into the structure.

Roy Zartarian, 25 Stuart Street. To follow up on Rodney's comments on people getting lost in the Town Hall, the Committee does need to look at how people come into the building and pedestrian traffic flow. The Building and Engineering office, from a customer service point of view, is awful. The public in the main part of the building has to go outside, often in bad weather, to get to those offices. He is also making a pitch for the Committee to consider solar energy. The previous Building Committee had a belief that solar arrays were not cost feasible. He finds that difficult to believe. He encourages the Committee to use clean energy.

- X. Response to Public Participation –On those still having problems with the Town website, the Chair encouraged them to contact the Town's webmaster, Paul Boutot, directly. On offsite storage, record retention space will be a part

of the needs analysis. Some storage may move offsite. Mayor Woods stated that other options are being used. The Board of Education is using Transition Academy students to digitize documents. There are still confidentiality considerations. Records need to be saved in a secure area. On the library tour, those interested should contact the Library Director, Lisa Masten, to arrange for a tour. He has been on a tour, space is tight, and it will not accommodate large groups. "All programs" referred to all programs that are currently in the Town Hall. On the auditorium, it is seldom used and there are other facilities in Town that are not far away. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that he had not previously been aware of a need for additional auditorium space for the library. The Town's needs might be handled with more multi-purpose space. On the open planning concept, that may be appropriate in some scale. The Committee certainly can look at the City of Bristol's flow chart. The remote parking location that was discussed is used at certain times of the year. Regarding the budget and the Capital Improvement Plan timeline, once the Committee gets to the square footage that it feels will be required, it will need a figure it can work with. Mayor Woods added that at this point the Committee does need to look at itself as an exploratory committee. The Town Council will need to tell the Committee what it has to work with. Mr. Langdon stated that the roofs at Town Hall have been repaired to the point that they can be fixed as of this time. He will be better able to gauge any additional work after a good snow storm. The leaks one can see have been repaired. Quite a few changes have been made. He is now using a professional roofing consultant. There is a lot more involved than just repairing flashing. Solar energy is also a great idea. The price has come way down. Mayor Woods observed that the Board of Education has it at two of the schools.

XI. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Baron

Jeff Baron
Director of Administrative Services