

Building Committee Meeting

6/1/2023

3:30

1st Floor Meeting Room

Meeting called by: Jennifer Janelle

Type of meeting: Discussion/Status Update

Attendees: Jennifer Janelle, Dawn Moreau, Tom Harmon, David Stansfield, Brad Christo, Mark Gagnon, and Fred Wildnauer (came in a few minutes late).

Minutes

Agenda item: Port City Presentation & Committee's role

Presenter: Jen/Committee

Discussion:

The Building Committee started the meeting by discussing how active they were in the process of town projects including the Town Hall renovations, Town Garage, Community Center/FD, the library, and the auditorium refurbishment in the 1990's. (Bob Brackett's name was mentioned as being involved in a lot of these projects.) Jen added that we are having the windows looked at and the dates of replacement for these were in 2001, 2003, and 2007.

The committee was formed to look at the existing capital of buildings in the town and keep track of the status and projects due to the constant administrative changes.

The committee expresses how disgruntled they are due to Perry Ellsworth cutting them out of the discussions about building the new Police Station and they want to air out their grievances. They want to know where the committee fits in. Jen replies that they are here to advise the Town Council. The committee states that the public likes to hear from the committee and Fred adds that the community comes to them with questions.

The committee asks, "When will Port City give their presentation?" Jen let's them know that the Town Council will not be having a regular meeting on June 13th due to it being a voting day. They will be having a special meeting to interview for the Planning Board and Board of Assessment Review open positions. At this meeting the Town Manager will be asking the Town Council to schedule a public hearing for 6/28 or 6/29. This meeting will be held on the 3rd floor. After this meeting will come the workshop where the Town Council will give directions on how they would like to proceed. There is not a lot to do for now.

The committee agrees that they are disappointed, and the presentation is misleading. The design is awful, and it is not for the community.

Brad states he is concerned with how the Town Hall discussions are being held. The library was well done. They held interviews, spent time talking and thinking about the course of action, they were able to make recommendations, and felt very comfortable with the process. Once costs were allocated, based upon their interviews and designs, the public hearing was held.

Fred adds that the library was in a different situation as there was a need for a long time.

Jen reiterated that we still don't know what direction the Town Council will want to pursue- new or renovate.

Brad adds that the committee does not need to meet with subcontractors, etc. He feels the process is being accelerated prematurely.

Mark asks if the public hearing will be in June. The hearing should include floor plans, a poster board with the information, and a presentation.

Brad adds that the presentation should be presented as what might happen.

Mark states we need to be very careful how this is all presented. People will jump to conclusions and pick sides. There needs to be well crafted communication with the public. Stating this has been decided and this has not.

Fred adds to not show drawings as pictures are misleading. Say that the Arundel Town Hall building was used to get a price and floor plan layout. These are conceptual drawings and not actual. Do not use 3D drawings or show landscaping, etc. Present the facts on the stairs, windows, etc. Per square foot price estimates are not cut in stone, needs to be said.

Tom adds that the cost of the building to build is different than the cost to the town. We need a definitive contract for this building and what's going to happen to it.

It is discussed that we need to keep the greenspace and the aesthetics of the building to maintain the overall feel of our downtown. We have a unique and special downtown.

It is believed that there is a built-in bias that the town doesn't want to be a landlord. The Town Hall has more space than is needed and can produce rental income. The first floor could house a restaurant. We could sell it to a non-profit.

There should not be one thing to vote on at that meeting. Jen and the Town Council will be placed in a very difficult position. When moving on through the different stages it is important to make sure the citizens are comfortable.

This Port City presentation needs to go. No one wants the Town Hall torn down or any green space lost. There are so many tangibles that you can't put a price on. This location is the anchor to the downtown village.

Brad states there needs to be a conceptual design of intent. The public hearing needs to state the pros and cons and the citizens need to be comfortable with that before moving forward.

Renovating or building new are both shots in the dark at this point. It's a guess as we don't know what we'll find once we start tearing into the building (rot, etc.). We have no details, and we are rushing the town meeting as the figures aren't complete.

Tom asks, "What is the value of the price difference?" How does the character value fit it? What is the value worth? How do you measure this?

Looking at the financials, it's a no brainer that building new is most cost effective.

Mark adds that we need more information and more options. There are two paths with many options and considerations.

Brad adds we need the numbers attached to the paths.

The committee feels the problem is the RFP, as Port City did what the RFP asks for, and a new RFP needs to be formulated.

There needs to be more information before going public.

The committee feels that it would be a good idea to have one member of the Town Council on the Building Committee.

Tom- we are coming to the end of the meeting, and we need to summarize this and figure out what we want to accomplish.

Conclusion:

The committee is here to help educate the public and give information and recommendations to the Town Council.

There needs to be more information gathered with more details.

The public hearing is a mistake, and we are not ready for it.

The committee wants direction from the Town Council. Jen will share the concerns of the committee with the Town Council and see what their wishes are. The committee would like to hold a workshop with the Town Council instead of having the town meeting. The public could attend but would have no input at that time. This could possibly happen in July. The Town Council will be looking to set the date for the public hearing on either June 13th or the 27th.

The Building Committee feels they will act as a screening committee to help mask the hysteria and build a relationship with the Town Council. Again, it is stated that they feel one member of the Town Council should be a liaison and work with the committee. We don't want to get off on the wrong foot and nothing will happen.

Tom asks if the committee can meet and brainstorm options before the workshop.

<i>Action items</i>	<i>Person responsible</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Committee meets to brainstorm	Building Committee	6/13 @ 9 am

Attested by:


Dawn Moreau

