

Mallory Cook

From: Aaron Dionne <aarondionne27@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 7:39 PM
To: councilors; Melissa Costella
Subject: Dionne, Aaron 6/28 Public Hearing Comments

I live at 83 Hooper Sands Rd, South Berwick.

I strongly encourage the town to consider acquiring a second opinion on the cost to renovate vs build new.

The previous study seemed extremely skewed and the costs involved seemed inflated in favor of a new build.

In addition, a town hall that is only open to residents 3 days per week does not warrant the construction of an extremely large building.

The current town hall has ample space for the services provided and the employees it houses.

The first floor could easily be renovated to support the offices that are currently located on the second floor, all while keeping the (somewhat) day to day functions operational.

OR consider an addition on to the community safety building and relocate the town hall there.

Furthermore, the number of services that can be processed remotely are growing every year. Why plan to expand an office that will likely be phased out over time?

I believe tax payer money should not be utilized to fund the construction of a new building when there are more economical options.

In addition to all this information. The town should be make a SIGNIFICANTLY better effort the broadcast meetings over zoom. I'm a parent of young children and the option to attend meetings at their scheduled times does not exist.

I am VERY frustrated that there was mention of zoom in prior communication/notice of the meeting but no actually link or stream provided. It's restrictive and inconsiderate.

Aaron Dionne

Mallory Cook

From: AJ <ajbenni@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 2:48 PM
To: councilors
Subject: Bennington, Amy - 6/28 Public Hearing Comments

Hi,

Our family is wondering why there isn't a third option for town hall; move into an existing, vacant space. It seems like there's empty space in the downtown area, but that could just be perception, not reality. Has the council done an overall assessment of all town properties to see if there is availability?

Thank you,
Amy Bennington
13 William Road

To: South Berwick Town Council
From: Betsy Ware, resident of 262 Witchtrot Road
Date: June 28, 2023
Subject: Town Hall

I am unable to attend tonight's hearing on the sale of existing town hall and the proposed new town hall to be built in open space in the Shoetown area. **I would like to go on record as being opposed to the sale of town hall and/or the construction of a new town hall for the following reasons:**

- The existing town hall is in the perfect location for a town hall- in the center of town;
- Town hall is likely the best constructed building in town hall. It was built by the Catholic Church, who did not construct shabby buildings;
- The building seems to be deemed old and antiquated by some and in need of repairs. Since the town acquired the building in the 1970s, little regular maintenance has been completed on the building. If regular maintenance were budgeted for the building and completed, it wouldn't need a lot of work;
- There have been complaints about the interior workability of the building. No one has indicated that there has been any effort to address the workability of spaces and ergonomics of the spaces and work areas;
- With all the deferred maintenance, a work plan for improvements could be generated and improvements could be made slowly and within budget without having to bring the building fully up to code. New windows and an insulated roof would be the top priorities in my book, with making the spaces more functional and comfortable for employees;
- With the police department moving out to a new space, the existing town hall has been deemed "too big" by some insiders. The building can be reprogrammed to accommodate maker's space, incubator space, etc. The lower floor is ideal for office and other uses for new fledgling businesses;
- The town really couldn't afford the new police station so, in retrospect, there should have been an addition to the existing town hall for new police station features, verse a totally new police station;
- Any proposed location for a new town hall would compromise the integrity of an existing neighborhood and would increase traffic, diminish open space, and compromise the quality of life for those residents living in the neighborhood;
- Having viewed the financials for old and new town halls, I don't believe the numbers and believe a new building would not be as good as the refurbished existing town hall in the best location for the use;
- Given the lack of maintenance on any of the town's buildings, why would a new town hall be built, only to have it fall into disrepair, as there will be no maintenance budgets;

I have much more to say but, suffice to say, the existing town hall is a fine building, could be reprogrammed for more uses and should be our town hall for years to come. While the public may not be apprised of all the facts and details, I have heard that the former town manager wanted to sell the building and already had "deals in the works." I am hoping that this hearsay is inaccurate and would hope that the Town Council would look at all the facts in an open and transparent manner.

Having worked in municipal government for several decades, I am familiar with circumstances such as the town hall issue and continue to believe that the existing town hall is in the right location and that the deferred maintenance can be corrected over time.

Mallory Cook

From: Curtis Anderson <powermain@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 22, 2023 6:02 PM
To: Mallory Cook; John James; Jeff Minihan; Jessica Cyr; Melissa Costella; Tim Pellerin; //tpellerin@sbmaine.us; Jennifer Janelle; Denise Clavette; tbellmen@sbmaine.us
Subject: Fwd: The Fate of Town Hall

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Curtis Anderson** <powermain@gmail.com>
Date: Thursday, June 22, 2023
Subject: The Fate of Town Hall
To: "councilors@sbmaine.us" <councilors@sbmaine.us>
Cc: "shoetown@googlegroups.com" <shoetown@googlegroups.com>

Dear Councilmembers:

Future generations will deplore the choice to sacrifice our dignified Town Hall and the absolutley vital green space around it, if you make the mistake of selling this irreplaceble asset. It's value as the centerpiece of town layout and the symbol of our small town meeting democracy can't be reproduced. Giving up that space will only diminish the appeal of South Berwick to visitors and residents. Residents will loose green space at the heart of town and, if you make the mistake of building new in Shoetown Park, more green space will be lost and an oppotunity to enhance that neighborhood with green and recreational assets that will add value to property and the quality of life, will be diminished.

Throughout this process a third option has been conspicuously absent. The binary proposal for either sale or new construction seems shortsighted. If you cannot save the building, and many of us believe you can and should, please at least save the green space by building new there, where Town Hall is now. By your own estimates this option would save millions over renovation. But it would cost a lot less than losing the green space at the heart of town. Sincerely,
Curt Anderson

Mallory Cook

From: Dan Baldwin <dbaldwin101@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 4:32 PM
To: councilors
Subject: Town Hall
Attachments: 20220605_141007.jpg; THIS ONE_230628_123146_44.jpg; THIS ONE_230628_123146_45.jpg

In 2016 an attempt was made to build the police station at the proposed location for the new town hall. The town chose to preserve the rare downtown green space as well as the playground. It took 2 years, countless meetings and workshops, who knows how much money spent on appraisals and plans for the town to finally break ground at a different location. We don't need to do that again. All the reasons for not building on the playground and in the field still exist. Congested residential area, bad intersections, narrow streets, increased traffic, increased light and noise pollution, loss of green space, loss of playground, and the Fire department objection.

Our town hall is centrally located, quintessential New England look, has more room than we know what to do with, and a great centerpiece for our community. The problem is that it hasn't been maintained properly. I don't know why that happened but it makes me very reluctant to want to build a new town hall for millions. If we haven't maintained the one we've had since 1975 it's a pretty hard sell that the new town hall will be adequately cared for given the 48 years our current one hadn't been.

Lastly, there has been a little confusion as to what kind of structure is being proposed. The initial concept in June 2022 was a small footprint directly on the current playground. (See first attachment) A new playground was to be built next to that. I assume where the tennis court is now. But the most recent mock up available to the public appears to take up all of the playground and the tennis court and a portion of the green space with no new playground at all. (See second and third attachments) Given that these are both very different concepts a little clarification as to what is being suggested would be helpful. Either way the location isn't what the town wants, just like in 2016.

Obviously my household will be voting against the new town hall in favor of the old. Please, let's not waste any more money and any more time trying to develop land that the town has already decided it does not want developed. Save the current town hall.

Dan Baldwin

Mallory Cook

From: Dan Boyle <supperbucket@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 8:54 PM
To: councilors
Subject: Historic District Commission,6/28 public hearing comments

To the South Berwick Town Council;

I am writing on behalf of the South Berwick Historic District Commission to provide comments on the topic of the future of the town hall building. The question that has been presented to the council and its citizens can be distilled down to two options: preservation versus replacement. Although the initially presented options to the building committee show that a new town hall would be cheaper than preservation, there are many aspects that are not included in these figures. It is difficult to put an exact price on preservation, there are many benefits. Historic preservation has been proven over the years to be advantageous to the local economy, it makes use of an existing building that is perfectly situated in town for the function it provides, and it serves as an anchor in a well established downtown area. With regard to town hall, quite simply, the building is already there. Agreed, it needs work but all of the issues that have been presented are not impossible to fix. In many cases, the issues are a result of deferred maintenance rather than poor initial construction or design flaws. In addition to already having a building that is currently functioning as a town hall, the extra space could be used for other tenants. The building has ample parking and associated green spaces surrounding it, utilities are in place and it is in close proximity to the downtown business area. These are examples of items that are difficult to put a price tag on, but they are definitely an asset to the existing building.

Preservation projects have well documented in the past that they provide a greater economic impact than new construction. More jobs are created through preservation projects and in many cases those jobs are more likely to use local craftspeople than large scale new construction. South Berwick has a large population of skilled preservation professionals who have dedicated their careers to these type of projects. One valuable resource for planning a preservation project is a book titled "The Economics of Historic Preservation; A community leaders guide" by Donovan Rypkema. I can provide a copy to the town council.

Finally, we need to only walk through the down town area to see successful preservation and adaptive reuse projects that are performing exceptionally well. We have restaurants in historic buildings, law offices, doctors offices, boutique shops and salons, real estate offices and a library that have all made use of existing structures to provide a place for gathering that are qualitatively more comfortable to be in than a newly constructed building.

Please feel free to reach out to the committee if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you as this project moves forward.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Boyle, Chair South Berwick Historic District Commission

Mallory Cook

From: Debbie Arenberg <darenberg32@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2023 8:35 AM
To: shoetown@googlegroups.com
Cc: councilors
Subject: Re: New Town hall....NO

Good Morning Town Councilors,

I am writing to express my support of renovating/using the existing building and location. Open green spaces in town should not be used for new building.

Thank you, Debbie Arenberg

On Wed, Jun 28, 2023 at 4:31 PM 'Karen Bergeron' via Shoetown Neighborhood <shoetown@googlegroups.com> wrote:
Dear South Berwick Councilors,

I am writing to you as a newly arrived member of the South Berwick population. My family and I live on Spring Street and have come to love the open green space for our grandchildren, as well as the safety of a quiet neighborhood.

I believe that renovating our existing town hall would be a wise investment. It would keep the character and history of such a beautiful down town.

Please take into consideration the need for green spaces for our South Berwick families and keep the traditional buildings in the center of our town.

Thank you,

Karen Bergeron
Lin Bergeron
Rhonda Bilodeau

On Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 09:24:02 AM EDT, Curtis Anderson <powermain@gmail.com> wrote:

Nice Norma! Thanks for sharing.
Curt

On Wed, Jun 28, 2023, 9:00 AM Norma Keim <mainekeims@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear SBCouncilors,

I agree 100 percent with Erika Hockenull's recent emailed letter to you about honoring the recent survey for the comprehensive plan. The thought of building a new town hall on the shoe town green space is contrary to the wishes of the SB taxpayers. We need to PRESERVE OUR VILLAGE GREEN SPACES! Have you considered land out on 236 as a location, on town property adjacent to the new Police Station? It seems large enough to accommodate a narrow, perhaps two-story building. Some parking may be available, but there are also two parking areas at the Police Station, the front parking lot sparsely used, whenever I've gone by it. Take a look at it!

Norma Keim, 40-year resident on Witchtrot Road, devoted to maintaining existing green spaces in our town

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Erika Bernier-Hockenull** <otisemir@comcast.net>

Date: Fri, Jun 23, 2023 at 8:29 PM
Subject: Fwd: New Town hall....NO
To: <shoetown@googlegroups.com>

Begin forwarded message:

From: Erika Bernier-Hockenhull <otisemir@comcast.net>
Date: June 23, 2023 at 7:57:34 PM EDT
To: councilors@sbmaine.us
Subject: New Town hall....NO

When you sent the questionnaire last year to the residents we were hopeful and excited that the town council may be appreciating and focusing on expanding the green, environmental, and recreational aspects the town could offer. Now there is discussion of building a new town hall and we are frankly disturbed. Because...

What a waste! From the building, the character, the history, the land, the loss of a well utilized and family friendly playground, loss of green space....all seemingly unnecessary and excessive and not what we want as residents and taxpayers

Other reasons NOT to build new near Cummings mill:

Quotes of building and moving did not seem to include site prep, road expansion or widening, or moving the playground

Traffic is already bad in that area which apparently will not be addressed despite the town (taxpayers) paying for the traffic study

No space for voting or town hall meetings, and no parking for voting or town hall meetings. There are many events at the community and senior center that fill the parking areas

Not centrally located

Projects for repair can be spread out...like owning a home...we do a project or two at a time. It seems ridiculous to think that we would have to come up with 10000\$ overnight to fix it all overnight

Fire department employees have stated in the past that they did not want the police station there (no one bothered to ask them) because of the potential impact on their flow in emergencies...eg not being able to exit as safely, effectively or quickly, and could impact their regular training events

We are concerned about the town's priorities, and the four voters in our household will not vote to support building a new town hall.

Respectfully,
Erika Hockenhull
Jim Hockenhull
Mira Hockenhull
Eli Hockenhull

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To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to shoetown+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To view this discussion on the web visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/shoetown/4732D7F6-A9DF-490B-9B74-27EBB49FBDD1%40comcast.net>.

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Mallory Cook

From: Dylan Guptill <thecheat89@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 2:46 PM
To: councilors
Subject: Guptill, Dylan - 6/28 Public Hearing Comments

32 Tibbetts Street
South Berwick, ME 03908

June 27, 2023

South Berwick Municipal Officers
Town Hall
180 Main Street
South Berwick, ME 03908

Dear South Berwick Municipal Officers:

I have lived in South Berwick since I was four years old and I love the history of the town.

If the town hall is going to be renovated or demolished, I vote on renovation. Our community has done a splendid job of keeping old buildings and turning them into new, useful places and I'd much prefer the building that houses town hall to remain intact. I wonder if it's possible to relocate town hall in the same manner as the police station.

Sincerely,
Dylan Guptill

Mallory Cook

From: Bob and Karen Eger <bkeger@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, June 26, 2023 6:16 PM
To: Mallory Cook; John James; Jeff Minihan; Jessica Cyr; Melissa Costella
Subject: Eger, Karen - - 6/28 Public Hearing Comment

Dear Town Councilors,
These are my priorities for a new town hall:

A downtown location*
Net zero operation
Architecturally fitting town style (not barn theme)
Incorporates a large place to gather that can be used by public as the library no longer can serve that purpose**

*Downtown is the Monument to Rollinsford lines at both bridges and including Berwick Academy area.

**The old auditorium was used for performances and not just municipal functions in the past

I have no attachment to the old St. Michael's school building and the current site is great. Tear down the present building and build new on the spot?

Karen Eger
56 Warren Pond Road

Mallory Cook

From: Gabriel Irvine-McDermott <gabriel.irvinemcdermott@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 12:44 PM
To: councilors
Subject: Irvine-McDermott, Gabriel - 6/28 Public Hearing Comments

To South Berwick Town Councillors,

Please strongly consider renovating the existing town hall at its current location and finding creative ways to use the space not needed for town offices.

Renovating these historic buildings in priceless central locations is the trend all across New England with the old shoe shop right in town and the mill in Rollinsford being two perfect examples in our own backyard. If developers have the business savvy to invest in them, we should certainly be capable of as much as a town.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Gabriel Irvine-McDermott
75 Main St, South Berwick, ME

Mallory Cook

From: Erika Bernier-Hockenhull <otisemir@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, June 23, 2023 8:26 PM
To: Mallory Cook
Subject: Fwd: New Town hall....NO

Begin forwarded message:

From: Erika Bernier-Hockenhull <otisemir@comcast.net>
Date: June 23, 2023 at 7:57:34 PM EDT
To: councilors@sbmaine.us
Subject: New Town hall....NO

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We are concerned about the town's priorities, and the four voters in our household will not vote to support building a new town hall.

Respectfully,

Erika Hockenhull
Jim Hockenhull
Mira Hockenhull
Eli Hockenhull

12 goodwin place
South berwick

Mallory Cook

From: bigjimc64 <bigjimc64@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 4:18 PM
To: councilors
Subject: Save the town hall

We should keep and repair the current Town Hall. Repairs should be prioritized and performed over time. There should already be funds in the town budget for municipal building maintenance. The utilization of the building should be evaluated for optimization. The heating system is currently being repaired at significant cost, and as I understand it that was one of the major problems with the building. In addition the town hall bears significant historical value to the town.

James J. Cleary
1 Back Acres Ln,
South Berwick, ME 03908

Mallory Cook

From: Kathy Gunst <kathygunst@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 5:04 PM
To: councilors
Subject: Town hall

I strongly believe that Town Hall should remain where it is. Being in a centrally located downtown location is crucial.

Thanks

Kathy Gunst
126 Old Fields Road
South Berwick, Maine 03908

Sent from my iPhone

Mallory Cook

From: Melanie Merz <melaniemertz12@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 2:28 PM
To: John James; Mallory Cook; Jeff Minihan; Jessica Cyr; Melissa Costella
Subject: Town Hall Discussion

To our dedicated town councilors,

Thanks in advance for continued discussion about the future of the town hall. My family is traveling this week, so I am unable to attend the meeting tonight to share in person, and therefore I am sending along one single point of view as you consider the future of the town hall structure.

I'm personally not sentimental for the existing structure, but I think having competing bids and or design concepts to re-work the existing building into a more economically viable solution for the long term is a valuable exercise.

If there is someone or some group of people creative enough to conceptualize using the same building into the future, then that's great. However, perseverating over how to do this for as long as we've been discussing the traffic light would not work. Perhaps we can have a contest, everyone has until the end of 2023 to propose a plan to use the building in a way that makes sense financially to keep it, otherwise let's sell it and find a new place for town hall that makes sense.

In short, let's not allow nostalgia to keep us from making the right fiscal decision, but it's hard to know what the right fiscal decision is without competing bids for renovations.

Thank you,
Melanie Merz

Mallory Cook

From: NANCY CROWLEY <rnrcrowley@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 5:51 PM
To: Mallory Cook; John James; Jeff Minihan; Jessica Cyr; mcostello@sbmaine.us
Subject: Town Hall - Renovate or Build New

Good Evening,

I am writing to express my opinion on the future of the town hall building.

I think if it is less expensive to build a new building, that is the way to go. I worked in the current town hall building for nearly five years and witnessed the problems the building has. I don't know why problems were not addressed in the past, but from reading about the issues and the associated costs, I think it is wise to keep the finances in mind when deciding the future of the building.

Thank you,

Nancy Crowley
11 William Road
South Berwick, ME

Mallory Cook

From: Nicole Holton <nicoleholton090515@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 11:40 AM
To: councilors
Subject: Town Hall

Good afternoon,
I will be unable to attend tonight's meeting but wanted to send in my input.

Save the town hall.

The public hearing on 5/23 was very helpful and a wealth of information. That being said, so much of it was fluff. Ergonomic desks and a lack of an aesthetically pleasing front door are trivial points.

"Spooky corridors" give an old building character. Desks don't need to be "friendly". Having handicap parking and an elevator make the building "ada" friendly enough. If an employee was hired with special needs this should be handled on a case by case basis.

Let's keep our old building, full of character. This is a small town, not everything needs to be up to date, modern and "to code" especially when so many of the codes would be expensive but minute differences (for example, an extra foot in a handicap stall). Also, are we really considering hiring someone to evaluate our furniture and storage? Could this not be done by town employees during down time?

That being said, if a major renovation is absolutely necessary, why do we not have more than one estimate? Hopefully if this is the route we go, multiple bids would be requested and evaluated.

Please keep this old building. Restore it slowly as we can afford it. Take up less space in the building if that helps with energy issues. Treat our town like a small business, not a (tax payer funded) bottomless pocket book. Like so many others, I voted for the first time in this building, attended public events and utilized it for essential services. Don't let our little town lose more of it's character by selling it to the highest bidder.

Thank you,
Nicole Holton
86 Belle Marsh Rd.

Mallory Cook

From: Pam Williams <dulongwill@gwi.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 8:30 AM
To: councilors
Cc: shoetown@googlegroups.com
Subject: Keeping the town hall

Dear Council members,

I agree adamantly with Curt Anderson's letter, supporting the renovation of the old town hall and preserving the shoe town green space, for reasons sighted by Curt.

Pamela duLong Williams
315 Main Street
South Berwick, Maine 03908
[Email: dulongwill@gwi.net](mailto:dulongwill@gwi.net)
Cell: 603-205-1727
www.pameladulongwilliams.com

Mallory Cook

From: Richard Crowley <rnrccrowley@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 30, 2023 8:58 AM
To: Mallory Cook; John James; Jeff Minihan; Jessica Cyr; Melissa Costella
Subject: Town Hall

Good Morning Councilors,

First, I want to thank you for the time that you put in to running the Town of South Berwick, it is appreciated.

Second, I would like to say that I attended the Public comment session on 6/28/23 on the Town Hall and I liked the presentation at the beginning of the session and thought it was very informative.

I learned things not only from your presentation, but also from the public comments from other citizens who attend the meeting. Some of the reasoning for keeping the existing town hall and feelings that people had for the town hall were not apparent to me before the meeting. If cost were not a consideration and the renovated town hall would be completely acceptable functionally, I would vote for fixing up the existing town hall.

However, it is my understanding that it would cost considerably more to renovate the existing town hall than to build a new town hall and the renovated town may still have some restrictions due to the structure of the existing building.

A few of things that I did not hear during the public comments, are:

1. That the sale of the existing town hall could be put towards the building of the new town hall, further decreasing the cost of building new.
2. If, the cost of renovating the existing town hall is indeed much more expensive than building new, renovating is going to put additional tax burden on citizens when the tax burdens are already high enough.
3. I worked at the Shipyard for 34 years. The Shipyard has many old buildings and I worked in one for many years that had been renovated from a different use just prior to me moving into it. Although a lot of money was spent renovating and qualified architects were hired to designed the building, the renovated building had some serious problems. First a mold problem developed with the new HVAC system that was so bad it effected one worker's health so much that he had to leave the Shipyard and to this day suffers serious health effects. Second, the HVAC system that was installed was undersized, poorly designed and the equipment was outdated, so after many attempts to fix and long periods of inadequate heating and cooling, the unit had to be replaced at some cost. Third, the fire suppression system was run in the attic of the building during the renovation. When insulation was added to try and deal with the inadequate heating system, the fire suppression system had to be re-run in the office space (at additional cost) because the attic became too cold (pipes would freeze). Not all renovations go bad, but some due.
4. Would it be possible to place some sort of restrictions on the sale of the existing town hall so that it's facade and grounds would remain the same and keep feeling that the existing building provides.
5. One thing that I have never understood is why the town's school's facilities are not utilized more. After all, the citizens of South Berwick pay for the schools. To me, the gym at Central School provides a perfect venue for large town gatherings that usually do not take place during school hours and it has great packing and easy access (no stairs to the third floor).

So, with the current understanding that it is much cheaper to build new than to renovate, I would vote to build a new town hall.

Sincerely,

Dick Crowley
11 William Road
South Berwick, Maine