

Topsfield Town Hall Building Committee

February 25, 2015

Chairman Jackson called the meeting to order at 9:15 AM at the Town Library. Committee members present were Boyd Jackson, Elizabeth Mulholland, Gregor Smith and ex-officio members Kellie Hebert, Martha Morrison. Community Development Coordinator Roberta Knight was also present.

Visitors: Selectman Dick Gandt.

Model Outline: Chairman Jackson initiated a discussion relative to the schematic design as step 1 in the implementation process relative to funding and warrant language. Town Administrator Kellie Hebert distributed the List of Warrant Articles which has funding established for the design at \$100K from Free Cash. The language would be based on the draft warrant article discussed at the February 4th meeting.

Window Restoration Project and Emergency Repairs: At this time, Town Administrator Kellie Hebert referred back to the List of Warrant Articles and the Exterior Envelope Study Report that references repair and restoration budgets for the various envelope projects for Town Hall. Ms. Hebert recommended that the Town Hall Window Restoration Project be retitled to the Town Hall Exterior Envelope Repairs to include not only the window restoration, but also, the front façade flashing project, the repairs to the three unstable windows and the demolition of the side portico. These projects are eligible for borrowing. Ms. Hebert suggested that the smaller projects could be started prior to Town Meeting using already appropriated facilities funds and then reclassified when approved by Town Meeting as a borrowing article. The budget would be \$235,000 for the proposed warrant article based on the consultant's estimates.

The Committee discussed what other facility projects were in line to use the facility funds which included asbestos tile removal and flooring replacements for the Fire and Police Stations.

Selectman Morrison noted that she was not in favor of this approach due to the "perception" factor and that it was not a transparent approach. Ms. Morrison further noted that people would want to know how the funds would be used.

Member Gregor Smith noted that given the fact that it was almost March 1st, these projects would not be ready for construction prior to Town Meeting. The weather would also be a factor.

MPPF Funding: Ms. Knight informed the Board that she had discuss the status of the MPPF program with consultant Richard Smith and he had informed her that there has been no information on whether there would be funding for the grant project in the FY16 State Budget.

Long Term Planning: The Committee then focused on long term planning for the restoration and possible expansion of Town Hall. The members agreed that proposing an addition would be a very expensive project in terms of costs that would take an extensive marketing program to convince many residents that this is the best functional approach to meet the general government needs for the next twenty years. As such, the Committee would need to explore all alternatives and be able to justify why an expansion to the Town Hall is the best approach to meet future needs.

Chairman Jackson distributed a copy of the 2001 Meyer & Meyer space program plan which focused on a first floor space design, basement storage, and the restoration of the auditorium with use of the balcony area for meeting space. However, it did not address program space for the departments which are currently using the auditorium as offices: Inspectional Services, Board of Health and Conservation Commission. Program space for the COA was also not addressed. The members did note assumptions used in this study were different than those currently in place.

The Committee members then discussed the structural system of Town Hall which would need a major examination and most likely would be very costly. An elevator would need to be included to meet ADA accessibility requirements. Costs would need to be evaluated for both alternatives: (1) the expansion of the building with an addition and restoration of the auditorium, or (2) building a space program within the existing Town Hall footprint and conversion of the second floor and balcony to office and meeting space.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta M. Knight
Community Development Coordinator