

MEETING MINUTES

Project: Boxborough Public Safety Space Needs Assessment
Meeting Date: December 17, 2014
Meeting Number: 01 – Kick-off / Visioning
Meeting Location: Boxborough Town Hall
Report By: Amy J. Dunlap
Job No: 21411

Attending:

- Adam L. Duchesneau (ALD), Town Planner
- Amy Dunlap (AJD), HKT Architects, adunlap@hktarchitects.com
- Nancy Fillmore (NF), Planning Board
- Les Fox (LF), Board of Selectmen
- Charlene Golden (CG), Conservation Committee (Alternate)
- James Gorman (JG), Board of Selectmen
- David Lindberg (DL), Building Inspector
- Maria Neyland (MN), Citizen
- Warren O'Brien (WO), Sergeant, Boxborough Police (Alternate)
- Deborah Robinson (DR), Citizen
- Warren Ryder (WR), Police Chief
- Jeff Scott (JS), Finance Committee
- Janet M. Slemenda (JMS), HKT Architects, jslemenda@hktarchitects.com
- Hoff Stuart (HS), Conservation Committee
- Randolph White (RW), Fire Chief

Item:

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- 1.01 WR opened the meeting explaining the history of the project to date. Members of the committee took turns introducing themselves.
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- 1.02 JMS introduced the design team and gave a brief description of the team's experience
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- 1.03 JMS facilitated the Visioning Session portion of the meeting. The Visioning Session included an overview of the session process, questions, a review of responses and open discussion. The following items 1.04 through 1.08 document the questions asked and the responses attendees wrote on individual post-it notes. Responses have been recorded as they were written with the exception that abbreviated words have been written out for the readers' understanding.
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- 1.04 Question 1: What do you see as the best outcome for this study?
- One combined building for Police, Fire & Ambulance
 - A combined Police – Fire Facility
 - State of the Art Public Safety Building
 - New Joint Public Safety Building
 - Public Safety Building
 - A vision that the committee agrees upon and put forth to the Town
 - Clear statement of the problems and need
 - A clear understanding of the needs both current and in the future
 - Well defined concept- meeting basic site and operational constraints
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- Agreement among all interested parties on basic site, allowable uses and bounds
 - New Fire Station, renovate and add onto Police
 - Within financial means of City of Boxborough
 - Set of options with costs and timeline that solve problem
 - A building containing space for the Community Events, Meetings, etc.
 - Community Room
 - Public access to building
 - New single complex on different site
 - Parking and circulation at the site are maximized
 - A Plan B – if forced to acquire additional land to proceed
 - A structure that the community can be proud of
 - Present many options; should not be a foregone conclusion
 - Space needs of Police and Fire are met
 - Meets Police Department needs
 - Meets Fire Department needs
 - Safety for all
 - Efficient building
 - Better space use
 - Structure(s) that fit into surrounding area (scale)
 - Green Energy
 - Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost through detailed design & construction

1.05 Question 2: What do you see as the biggest challenge(s) for this study?

- Cost of project
 - Funding and town support
 - Funding project
 - Tax payer support
 - Cost/Affordability
 - Money
 - Cost
 - Keeping the cost reasonable
 - Cost
 - The ability to 'sell' the project to the community
 - Coming to a persuasive presentation for the Town Meeting
 - Convincing arguments of need
 - The extreme limitations of the building site
 - Agreement on site usage issues, e.g. compliance with Wetlands Protection Act
 - Site restrictions
 - Site access and restrictions
 - Land and wetland constraints
 - Wetlands
 - Wetlands impact
 - The issues around the current site
 - Site issues
 - The wetlands on the site
 - Varied elevations
 - Meeting wetlands setbacks
 - Unified design if old buildings remain
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- Working in a work zone
 - Arriving at a building meeting operational requirements at acceptable cost
 - Finding the best solution that is agreed upon
 - Accommodation of both vehicular circulation space and physical storage space
 - Meeting expectations
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1.06 Question 3: How does the current layout of the site impact the two functions on the site?

- Parking is limited
- Parking problems
- Less than ideal egress for police vehicles
- Area is not flat
- The differences in land elevation
- Grading between buildings
- Grade and elevations forces separate buildings today
- Flow of fire apparatus is not smooth and efficient
- Seems to dictate location of apparatus bays
- Size is limited
- Space constraints could cause delays in response
- Limits parking and vehicle maneuvering space
- Building size is limited
- Coordination between Police and Fire is hampered by separate facilities
- Makes expansions to the rear difficult
- No room to grow or add additional capability even in current model
- Prisoner, victim/witness cross traffic
- Potential sharing of common space not feasible
- Works against a concept of unified public safety
- Access to Route III could be a challenge
- Zoning issues
- The adjacent wetlands
- Both are too close to wetlands
- 100' Buffer
- Traffic congestion with the school across the street
- Both have to be cautious of the school
- No good public space to enhance public interaction with either Police or Fire
- Parking for public and visitors

1.07 Question 4: What are one or two critical details that we need to know about this project?

- What does the Fire Department really need
 - What does the Police Department really need
 - Codes, Apparatus, Equipment constantly changes. The building needs to be flexible
 - Must fit the needs of today and future uses
 - It provides for the future growth of the Police/Fire Departments
 - Projected site of Police Department and Fire Department over next 20 years
 - Outcome should not be a foregone conclusion
 - Keep an eye on cost considerations
 - Cannot cost a lot
 - Concern over increase in taxes
 - Don't need something fancy
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- Must be able to fit needed equipment for BOTH
 - Should include Community Room to engage wider population
 - How the parking space is used for overflow parking for school events
 - There is not enough on-site parking currently
 - Site layout is extremely impacted by adjacent wetlands and buffer
 - Is wetland use feasible if compensatory land can be identified
 - Safe distance for vehicles
 - Can't we do nothing
 - Urgency and timeline – equipment needs and drivers
 - Storage
 - Facilities are outdated
 - No reasonably plausible alternative; site exists to either relocate or split functions
 - It will be a centerpiece of the Town's infrastructure
 - What if we don't move forward with project
 - Community may not understand the needs – “But we are a small town”
 - It is a necessary project to provide top notch service to the Town
 - Town demographic is split between many-generational residents and relatively new residents - very different perspectives on utility and cost

1.08 Open discussion questions included:

- Other constraints - perhaps intangible in nature?
- Other Town efforts underway that may affect or influence the study?
- Other information about the Town that we should know?

A discussion of the open question topics raised numerous additional items of interest:

- Is there data on what other similar Towns have done (before and after statistics)? How do they make their decisions?
 - What if we do nothing? What is the cost of maintaining operations in the current buildings?
 - Decision process
 - Development on site?
 - Temporary Conditions – How do the departments continue to work in a work zone given the size of the site?
 - Aging populations – Has adequate money been put aside to cover the pensions of aging Town employees?
 - Master Plan Process – Ongoing
 - Maintain the rural character of Boxborough
 - Engaged Community
 - Aging population could benefit from a recreation/meeting/Community Room
 - Aging Population – Fixed Income
 - Debt service low and interest rates are low now (money is cheap)
 - Develop arguments to counter skeptics
 - Show the Town what will happen if we don't do anything – cost of maintaining operations – cost of building in the future
 - A veterinary dental clinic will be built on the adjacent parcel sometime in the next year
 - 250 unit housing development will bring 700 residents in the next several years. The intent is to break ground in May or June 2015. Some believe the
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development could impact schools. School department has studied and does not believe infrastructure will be impacted. School population growth is flat.

- DPW will need to be addressed in the future years and will also face a wetlands issue.
- What is benefit to citizens?
 - A meeting room like Littleton?
 - A community meeting room exists in the library now. Does the Town need more? How will this one be different?
 - This community room's primary function will be as training and EOC for the departments. It will be available to the community when not in use by the Police or Fire Departments.

1.09 JMS and AJD briefly reviewed the programming process and work completed to date. HKT has met with Chief Ryder and Chief White as well as members of their departments to discuss programming needs. HKT toured the existing facilities as well to determine space needs. Data collected is compared with industry best practices to determine a working space program. Draft programming documents have been completed and are being refined based on feedback from the departments.

1.10 JMS explained the next step will be to test the building program on the site, developing conceptual site layouts. AJD reviewed the conceptual site layouts developed for the interview to show the range of potential options that will be explored.

Next Meeting to be held: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 7:00PM

Please contact HKT Architects if these minutes do not accurately reflect discussions.

Cc: All attendees