

Boxborough Building Committee

The Boxborough Building Committee (BBC) was formed in 2016, chartered with seven voting members and jointly chaired by members from the Boxborough Select Board (BSB) and the Finance Committee (FinCom). The BBC is charged with evaluating needs for Police, Fire and the Department of Public Works (DPW) and recommending a comprehensive plan to address the facilities needs of all three departments. This year, the committee continued to work with the Town Planner to evaluate a number of siting options with the primary focus on fire station requirements.

Several potential sites were identified, and first level engineering feasibility assessments were performed on three locations. An evaluation of undeveloped land at 975 Mass Ave, including a construction cost estimation, was completed in time to present an article for possible site acquisition at the December 4 Special Town Meeting (STM). However, the BBC voted to pass over the article due to the high cost of site preparation, largely due to the presence of significant ledge.

Shortly after the conclusion of the December STM, the committee became aware that the Kaizen building at 873 Mass Ave was being sold. It appeared that it would be very well-suited for a DPW facility, having ample garage and office space with twice the inside floor area of the old DPW barn with additional covered outside space for equipment storage. It did not meet the requirements for a new fire station but, though unexpected was an opportunity to be seized for the DPW. The BBC recommended unanimously purchase of the Kaizen property for a new DPW facility. The Select Board concurred and called a Special Town Meeting for February 26, 2018, to purchase the property for \$1.25 M plus approximately \$50K for closing costs and minor ADA compliance upgrades. Town Meeting voted unanimously to approve the purchase and authorize borrowing. At the May 2018 annual town meeting voters approved an additional \$102K for reconfiguration of the office, breakroom and kitchen spaces, and an additional high-bay door.

The committee continued to evaluate other sites that may be suitable for a fire station, and concluded that we should further investigate the options for a fire station site at 1320 Mass Avenue. This former Cisco property had been acquired by Lincoln Properties. During the prior year, the BBC had tasked the town's engineering firm to carry out a paper feasibility study on this site. A number of issues were identified but the BBC felt it would be worth further investigation. These BBC discussions regarding 1320 Mass Ave were conducted in executive sessions. In June, as authorized by the committee, the chair approached Lincoln Properties to begin exploring options for a fire station at 1320 Mass Ave and related areas of mutual benefit. The response was very positive, leading quickly to open and public discussions between Lincoln Properties, the Planning Board and the Economic Development Committee, as well as the BBC. These discussions addressed Lincoln's plans for their entire holdings in Boxborough as well as the town's interest in a fire station.

As of late December 2018, the Planning Board expects to bring articles to the May 2019 annual town meeting proposing certain changes to zoning for the Office Park district. The BBC expects the town will be able to enter into a development agreement that will make available a site for a fire station or public safety facility.