

TOWN OF RYE
TOWN HALL SPACE NEEDS COMMITTEE
Wednesday, October 31, 2012
Rye Town Hall
6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Ned Paul, Vice-Chair Curtis Boivin, Lucy Neiman, Paul Goldman, Peter Kasnet, Mel Low, Peter White, Phil Winslow, Gregg Mikolaities, Paula Merritt, Cynthia Gillespie, Michael Magnant and Selectmen's Rep Jenness.

Purpose: Create an economically sound proposal to resolve the space needs of the Town as an integral part of preservation/renovation of our historic Town Hall building.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Paul called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Work Session

1. Review of rough draft for the Selectmen

Chairman Paul stated that he has put some time into a rough draft, which he has emailed to all the Committee Members for input. He thanked the Members who have submitted their thoughts. He also pointed out there is still opportunity for further input. He opened to the Committee for review of the draft.

Referring to Chairman Paul's draft, Member Winslow stated there are a number of times that there is mention of the Rye Historic Commission. He is the Chair of the Historic District Commission. Any reference to the HDC should be deleted as it was only the Heritage Commission that has spoken at the Space Needs Meetings.

Member Winslow continued that he thinks there should be some definition on the term "public". There may be some confusion as to who is the public.

Vice-Chair Boivin stated he thinks they should bring up the concerns. The concerns that have been brought up are in regards to bulk and cost, which are issues to reduce the square footage. Also, there have been conversations with departments who want to increase square footage. The conclusion to those two things is why the Committee has come to the "plus or minus 10%". Instead of calling out the public, it should be stated what they were stating.

The Committee agreed to use “public attendees at the Committee Meetings”.

Chairman Paul read through the rough draft for the Committee.

Noted additions/changes:

Executive Summary

- Further clarification and expansion on who has provided input as a group;
- Refer to a timeline in regards to second sentence (20 years);
- Last sentence add; “towards needed renovations and obtaining necessary...”
- End off paragraph/last sentence add; “While preserving the historical integrity of the existing Town Hall”;
- Complied with Article 27;
- Bullets on key decisions;
 - 10,500sf;
 - Major factors considered in coming to conclusions;
 - Needs of space
 - Based on site
 - Preservation of the great hall
 - Preservation of the Town Hall/interior
 - Preservation of the historic character with existing Town Hall and any separate building on the same site (preservation of historic character of town center.)
 - Other Town buildings (current location was determined most optimal & cost effective)
- Summary of what the Committee did.
- Explanation to the public that the conclusions in the report are not “set in concrete”; The purpose of the report is to ask for Warrant Article money to further the study.

Note: Member Neiman agreed to take the lead on writing the Final Report.

Regarding the Introduction, Chairman Paul stated that he restated the charge. He also wrote a few sentences on the safety issues of Town Hall and why it is so important that something is done immediately.

Member Neiman stated this is a key factor and should be in the Executive Summary also. This is a key factor that drove the decisions.

Chairman Paul agreed. That is the marketing that needs to be conveyed to the citizens of Rye. This is a serious issue and decisions need to be made to move forward. The Committee has done there due diligence and provided the details in order to move forward on funding these issues, as well as, the future space needs of Rye. It is almost like there are two different things.

Member Goldman pointed out that the safety issue is time critical.

Introduction

- Parts of the rough draft to be included in the Executive Summary;
- Renovation and future space needs done at one time; and
- Add to last sentence/paragraph; “expansion of programs”.

Regarding the Committee Charge and Purpose, Chairman Paul stated this is exactly the charge. He thinks it is important that the public know what the charge was. He reviewed item II, Committee Charge and Purpose.

Committee Charge and Purpose

Committee Recommendation to Charge #1:

- Town Hall building addition change to: 3,500 – 5,500sf;
- Remove paragraph under number 1. Leave: 10,500 plus/minus 10% (only figure to be used throughout);
- Then list the key analysis;
 - Use 16 full-time employees times 633sf (10,128);
 - Add the words “public attendees”; and
 - Strike Rye Historic District Commission.
- New stand alone town hall building: 3,500 – 5,500sf;
- New building would stand next to current town hall building “on the same site”;
- Remove two bullets under number 2; and
- Number 2 to be renamed; “Recommended alternatives to option1”.

Committee Recommendation to Charge #2a:

- Rye Heritage Commission Report on Preservation of Rye Town Hall to be included;
- Add the numbers of meetings that occur and expand this section to include the frequency of usage;
- Add number of boards and committees;
- First sentence to state; “The Committee sees the value of the historic character of both the exterior and interior spaces and believes it is the best interest of Rye to preserve the great hall and the spiral staircases”;
- Rye Historic District Commission to be removed from bullet 2; and
- History of Rye Town Hall included as an exhibit – submitted by the Heritage Commission.

Committee Recommendation to Charge #2b:

- Last sentence “Appendix” should be Section IV.

Committee Recommendation to Charge #2c:

- Use Vice-Chair Boivin’s rewrite; and
- Last sentence “Appendix” should be Section IV.

Committee Recommendation to Charge #2d:

- Article for the Town of Rye Newsletter will be due November 8th;
- A letter to the editor to be sent to the Portsmouth Herald;

- Prepare the presentation for the Deliberative Session; and
- Informational public meetings to be held in the community.

Committee Recommendation to Charge #2e:

- Last sentence to be deleted.

There was discussion on holding a work session to prepare for a Town Hall Space Needs Presentation.

Committee Review of Space Needs Options

Committee Recommendation:

- Remove Rye Historic District Commission.

Pros:

- The Building must be renovated to meet federal law;
- Current safety issues will be corrected;
- Opportunity to update technology on the site;
- Continued benefits of the geothermal upgrade (Pro is to be able to take advantage of improvements and investments that have already been made).

Cons:

- Change the first sentence to; “Over improvement of the site...”

There was discussion on the estimates for cost of square footage.

Financials:

- To be based off Member White’s cost analysis with an additional 20% to the numbers for architectural and other soft costs;
- Actual costs will not be known until project goes out for bid.

Member White asked if there should be a form of consensus regarding some items that were discussed but not completely finalized. Some items were;

- Storage Retention policy – Should the Committee make a recommendation that the Town conduct a Storage Retention Policy Study?

Member Low stated that is beyond the scope of this Committee. He thinks this is already going on within the Town.

Chairman Paul and Selectmen Jenness confirmed that this has already been started.

Member White continued;

- Does this Committee want to make a recommendation regarding funding to do an Environmental Study of the old police station?

The Committee agreed this suggestion should be a part of the report.

Member White continued;

- Does the Committee feel strongly about asking the Board of Selectmen to deploy resources to allow access to the committee room in the lower level of the Public Safety Building?

He continued that a recommendation could be made to the Selectmen that this be studied to find out the costs of making the room Town available. He pointed out this is a Town asset that is being underutilized.

Member Goldman stated it is reasonable to ask the question. However, he would not be surprised if there were reasons given as to why it can't be done because of security reasons.

Vice-Chair Boivin stated it may be possible but it does not change the program requirements of Town Hall space. This is the Committee's lead issue.

Member White stated this is not changing anything. These would be additional items that would be recommended to the Selectmen. He continued:

- Does the Committee want to recommend to the Board of Selectmen and the Town that the Town deploys resources to for Strategic Town Planning?

This will give an overview of what town government is going to look like 10 to 30 years from now, in terms of, technology and services. This is asking the Selectmen and the Town to do some futuristic town planning.

Member Goldman stated this is a good idea. This is way above the scoop of this Committee. However, if this is an "off-shoot" it is a good thing to bring up to be addressed. He continued this is forward thinking and probably the right thing to do. This probably won't impact decisions the Committee has to make but hopefully there will be some cross checking for accountability on everything that was done.

Member Winslow stated he thinks it is beyond the scoop of the Committee. He suggested a section at the bottom of the report that lists some other areas for consideration by the Selectmen resulting from ancillary discussions by the Committee.

The Committee agreed.

2. Public Input

At 8:38 p.m., Chairman Paul opened to the public for comments.

Peter Crawford, 171 Brackett Road, spoke on his report submitted to the Committee regarding the Concerned Citizens position on the Town Hall space needs. He continued the bottom line is they support the range of square footage. They also support hiring an architect to go forward; however, some things need to happen in parallel to get some answers to questions. The old

police station, the record storage and Recreation issues. They do not want to see an architect do something without these issues considered.

Chairman Paul stated that the old police station needs further study, just as, Recreation. Those issues right now are sort of open ended. He asked the Committee how they feel about the old police station.

Vice-Chair Boivin commented they should recommend a study of the old police station.

Member White pointed out that they do not have any information to base a decision.

The Committee agreed.

Member Neiman stated those recommendations should be right up front and not buried. These are additional recommendations that came out of all the Committee's deliberations.

Chairman Paul agreed. The old police station is valuable and wasting away without focus.

There was more discussion and review on the Concerned Citizens Position on Rye Town Hall Space Needs report.

Referring to the Concerned Citizens report, Member Goldman stated the way the last paragraph is written comes across as non-supportive of what the Committee was charged to do in regard to Town Hall space need.

Chairman Paul agreed. He pointed out it is very negative.

Member Neiman stated the Committee did the job they were assigned to do. The paragraph states the Committee did not do their job and that is what the problem is.

Speaking to Mr. Crawford, Chairman Paul stated he would like to see him be a team player with the Committee, not against them. The Committee is working very hard to put together the final report. He pointed out it is important to be "one" because funding is needed to move this project forward to get further analysis. Without support the questions will not be answered. By coming together on Election Day, it will be saying; "let's take the project forward to get further questions answered". All this does is to get a plan in place to look at the job in more detail. He wants people to know that the Committee does agree that further analysis is needed. The Committee has made some good decisions and those will be documented. They also agree that an addition on the building that is too large will be an "eyesore".

Mr. Crawford commented they do have a lot of agreement. The Committee has done a good job with zero money and that is appreciated.

Sam Winebaum, 52 Cable Road, commented he has something that might help with the pros and cons. He suggested under new building versus addition, it should be mentioned that a new building could be built first, so the great hall could be renovated with the employees in a new

building. The impacts of destruction while construction is going on, for an addition, should be considered.

The Committee agreed.

Mr. Winebaum continued that everyone was struggling between the historic versus the new. He commented that could be considered a con; the challenge of historic versus new construction. Also, whatever the choice, new building versus addition, the bottom line is approximately 2.5 million. He pointed out that people are going to focus on the dollars. They will then focus on having a good, safe place for the employees. They will also want to know what they will get out of it as a Town resident. He went on to mention some of the benefits to having two buildings.

Selectmen Jenness stated that it was agreed that figures shouldn't be addressed by the Committee. There is a space needs issue that should be addressed and it should be left at that.

Recreation Director Lee Arthur stated the Recreation Commission has done a lot of work over the past 10 years. There are conceptual plans and cost estimates for a recreation facility. She pointed out that they have also done a Master Plan and two surveys. The Commission has done a lot of research and work. They are looking responsibly at meeting the needs of the community. A statement was submitted by the Recreation Commission to the Space Needs Committee.

Victor Azzi spoke on the Town having a Rye Facilities Master Plan. He also spoke on issues to consider when renovating for space needs, ADA regulations or other safety issues.

The Committee agreed to move forward on the information they have put together from the meetings for the Selectmen's final report.

- **The final Town Hall Space Needs Report will be given to the Selectmen for their review on November 9th. Discussion and review of the report will be held at the next Board of Selectmen's Meeting on November 14, 2012.**

III. Adjournment

Motion by Mel Low to adjourn at 9:24 p.m. Seconded by Phil Winslow. All in favor.

All supporting documents, drafts and meeting minutes may be viewed at the Town Clerk's Office, Rye Public Library or on the Town website. The final Rye Town Hall Space Needs Proposal may also be viewed after the presentation to the Selectmen on October 14, 2012.

Respectfully Submitted;
Dyana F. Ledger