

Fairbank Community Center Task Force Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 20, 2017

7:30 PM – DPW Conference Room

In attendance: Patricia Brown – Selectman, Task Force Chair, Jim Kelly – Facilities Director, Jack Ryan - COA, John Beeler – COA, Sam Merra – At Large, Jim Marotta- Park and Recreation Commission, Jose Garcia-Meitin- Finance Committee, Christopher Morely – At Large, Kayla McNamara – Park and Recreation Director, Michael Ensley - Park and Recreation Commission.

Absent:, Lisa Kouchakdjian-School Committee, , Bryan Semple (Finance Committee). Debra Galloway-Senior Center, Richard Tinsley- School Committee.

Also attending: Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues (Town Manager), Bob May and Joseph Bausk

Pat Brown opened the meeting at 7:32 pm.

1. Designate the Person Taking Minutes (Jose Garcia-Meitin will take minutes)

2. Discussion of Proposal from Town Staff (Town Manager Melissa Murphy-Rodrigues)

Melissa reviewed the Fairbank Community Center Internal Working Group’s proposal and report for the future of the Fairbank Center. She submitted the proposal and a PowerPoint presentation which covered the report. The Internal Working Group had two objectives. The first was for Town staff to work on a recommendation and an estimate of operating costs. The second was to work with Jim Marotta on an RFP. They had worked on this task for the past eleven weeks.

Melissa said that the Internal Working Group met weekly. They reviewed the current building, toured it, discussed the current needs and determined future needs of the building. They also reviewed how the Town is currently funding the facility and how it will be funded in the future.

The recommendation was to renovate the facility with an appropriate size addition to include a pool viewing area, new locker rooms, and a gymnasium. It may be necessary to rebuild sections of the building rather than renovate based upon further study by an architect. The current analysis indicates the pool can be renovated. Two conclusions were 1) as new programs are added, increased programming revenues would offset programming costs but would not be cover the increased operating costs of an expanded facility and 2) that the problem was not just a lack of total space, but also a lack of “smart space”—space may be available, but it’s cut up by walls that make it hard to use.

Melissa then reviewed a schematic of a possible floorplan for the redesigned facility and presented the report at length. She pointed out that the proposal would add 19,000 square feet of space for Park & Recreation and the Senior Center, of which 6,000 would come from the re-use of the current school wing used by SPS Administration, 3,000 would come from re-use of the existing locker rooms and 10,000 from a new addition. Staff recommends that the project be phased, with phase 1 being the pool repairs and building a new addition to accommodate a pool viewing area, new lockers rooms and a gymnasium. The gymnasium would then be used for temporary space for offices and programs as renovations occur in other parts of the building. Sudbury has a use agreement with Wayland which allows us to use their pool while we renovate ours.

Chris Morely imagined that the SPS space would be new construction. He thought that it wasn't worth the money to renovate SPS space. Jim Kelley said, referring to page 2 of the presentation, that there may be a need for some new construction in that space. The BH&A study said that it would be more likely that we would need to rebuild. Jack Ryan supported this idea. Jim Marotta said you do not want the cost to renovate to cost more than the cost of building new, and that phased construction means having electricians, plumbers and so on come again for each phase.

Chris Morely suggested that someone should determine whether any new construction/additions will interfere with Park & Rec's exterior activities (volleyball etc).

Jim Marotta had a question on page 3 as it relates to funding. The way something is funded is different than how it generates revenue. Melissa said that many towns charge a fee which pays for maintenance. She further said that the revenues (user fees) are directed at what they are used for; pool fees are deposited into the Pool Enterprise Fund to cover the costs of running the pool, and many programs are funded through revolving accounts.

Jim said that none of the activities at the Fairbank are going to make money, that increased fees for usage just creates increased expense for users, potentially driving them not to come. The funding for the building will need to come from something outside the enterprise funds. Pat Brown re-iterated this point.

Jack Ryan thought that the original task force never believed that there would be incremental revenue to pay for capital or maintenance. He thought that any incremental revenue from fees would simply be used to offset the cost of adding senior and recreation programs.

Jim Marotta said that the real concern is the operating deficit. For one thing, the town must cover the ongoing costs necessary to operate the new and larger proposed space. Melissa believes the incremental cost may be less than the increase in space suggests, given that the existing systems are dated and inefficient and the space lacks insulation. Melissa thought, referring to the Town proposal, that there would be an additional \$225,000 for increased janitorial staff (3 custodians). Jim Kelley said that having committed maintenance in a facility makes a big difference. Melissa said these buildings are open 15 hours each day. This creates a challenge for cleaning and general maintenance of the facility.

John Beeler spoke to the phasing of the renovation. He said that if this takes two to three years to complete then the Town will need to see how this affects the programs being offered. He asked about what can be done to keep things moving. He was wondering if we would need trailers for classrooms. Melissa said this is something that the Town will need to ask of an architect. John also thought that perhaps we give things (services) away, that we should see if we can ask for more money from users by way of fees.

Jack Ryan spoke to the proposals next steps, which were listed on page 10 of proposal. He asked: 1. What is the plan to move forward? And 2. Who would take the lead in this? Melissa said the most important thing to do now is to get buy-in on some plan. We need to determine if we need to still do the RFP. If so, then we should do this immediately. Jack said that COA has already voted to support the next steps on page 10 of the proposal. Melissa said we need for Park & Rec and the Council on Aging (COA) to agree that all their issues are addressed. We need to make sure that we have their feedback.

To this point, Jim Marotta said that we need to quantify the net change in the operating budget and the capital costs required, detailing the costs both for new building and for renovation. He thinks that we still need a third party to quantify these costs in order to get this plan approved at Town Meeting.

Melissa thinks that we first need to agree to a vision. Jack Ryan reiterated that the Council on Aging has already taken the position that staff has presented a good concept. Michael Ensley said that Park & Rec is trying to be responsible, that they are not comfortable with the financial projections. They need a third party to address and assess these matters. Mike expressed a frustration with the process.

Sam Merra suggested that we go around the room to see if the Task Force supports this proposal. A tally of this follows: Jack supports, Jose supports (not speaking for FinCom), Chris supports and said that he had always suggested this. Mike added that this was option 0 but that it was never part of the plan. Jim Marotta says there is some redundancy with regard to the RFP – he supports the direction but not all the points, and there might be a better/different plan. Jim Marotta therefore supports so long as we dual track with the RFP, Sam supports, John supports with caveat that the RFP may or may not be useful. Mike Ensley thought that we are forcing an option without knowing the optimal plan, so he does not support the proposal. Mike Ensley stated that we have ignored the vote, from several meetings ago, to conduct the RFP.

Pat says she has a concern with going back to Permanent Building Committee so that they can find an architect. She said that this project has been going on for many years and the public does not know what to think. The RFP would discover what the Town would support and she would like to have an answer for this. She said that she needs to report back to the BOS on Tuesday, April 25th. She will present the proposal to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) but she needs to hear from the Fairbank Task Force on the COA vote on dissolving the Task Force.

Melissa said she will present the proposal to other Town groups in the meantime. Pat responded that the Task Force will then discuss the feedback from these groups. Melissa stated the RFP is ready to go out; she needs dates and boilerplate. The “dual track” is to move forward with both

the proposal by town staff and with the RFP. Chris Morely said that another part of this dual track is to move SPS Administration. He thinks we should start the SPS process. Jack Ryan offered that everything with SPS is stalled. Jim Kelley said that this is true, that SPS has no impetus to move forward. However, he said that he is working on the process and it is in motion.

Pat attempted to clarify next steps. Mike stated that we should not be presenting a new plan to the town without a cohesive strategy hopefully laid out by the consultant as a result of the RFP.

Melissa stressed that the operating costs for the new building would be completely separate from the programming costs and revenues for the new facility. The operating costs, including any increases, must be supported directly by the tax levy. She stated we have to be transparent with the taxpayers that there will be a need for new operating funds from the tax levy that will never be funded by revenue from Park & Rec or other programming. Operating expenses incurred by the new facility must be funded from the tax levy.

3. Discussion of Revised RFP Proposal (Town Manager Melissa Rodrigues)

The discussion continued as it relates to the revenue-expense gap of \$225,000. Melissa stated that the \$225,000 is coming out of the tax levy, that it can't come from the fees that contribute to the Enterprise funds.

Jack Ryan said that the Town should get things moving. He proposed to move forward with the RFP and to ask the PBC for a design review of the Proposal. Jack thinks the Task Force has failed and that we should move forward with the PBC to begin design work on the Proposal.

Chris Morely suggests we move forward with the RFP. He thought that this could be a four-month process. We should wait for this RFP response. Sam Merra suggested that we also move forward with the Proposal presented today.

The Task Force decided to move forward with the RFP process with an estimated expense of \$50,000. The Task Force had already voted to approve this action in the past.

4. Discussion of COA Vote to Recommend the BOS Dissolve the Task Force

There was no discussion.

5. Points to Convey to the BOS on Tuesday April 25

Pat Brown said that she would report on the following four items to the BOS meeting on April 25th.

1. The Task Force discussion of the Proposal.
2. The COA vote to dissolve the Task Force.
3. The idea of moving the SPS process along.

4. The decision to move the RFP process forward in a dual track with the Proposal presented today.

6. What do we need to agree on to make a recommendation? One Design. Business Plan.

There was no discussion.

7. Approve Feb 2, 2017 Meeting Minutes.

Voted to approve Feb 2, 2017 meeting minutes, 7 in favor, 1 abstention (Chris Morely).

8. Propose Future Meeting Schedules and Agenda Items

The next meeting will be to review responses from the RFP. Following the suggestion that the Task Force create a subcommittee to participate in the RFP process, reviewing proposals and interviewing designers, we discussed forming a subcommittee..

Jim Marotta, John Beeler and Mike Ensley volunteered to serve. Subsequently Jack Ryan also volunteered. In the end no vote was taken and no subcommittee formed.

Mike Ensley moved to end the meeting at 9:07 PM. Chris Morely seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jose Garcia-Meitin

April 20, 2017

Documents presented at this meeting and posted as “Supporting Materials” with the minutes:

- 1) Working Document 4-20-17.pdf – the Town Manager’s letter of April 10, 2017 to the task force outlining the Internal Working Group’s recommendation for the future of the Fairbank Community Center. This is the first page of the working group Report below in 2).
- 2) Fairbank Internal Working Group Report Presentation, 4-20-17.pdf – The Power Point presentation of the Working Group’s recommendation for the future of the Fairbank Center. <https://sudbury.ma.us/boardofselectmen/2017/04/25/fairbank-community-center-internal-working-group-report/>

- 3) Fairbank Internal Working Group Report Floor Plan, 4-20-17.pdf – The Floor Plan of the Working Group’s recommendation for the future of the Fairbank Center.