

Town Hall Blue Ribbon Committee  
Minutes

Thursday, July 30, 2015  
DPW Conference Room, 275 Old Lancaster Road

Vice Chairman Howard Gold called meeting to order the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

In attendance were Vice Chairman, Howard Gold; Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi; Chris Morely; Sally Hild, Frank Riepe; and Joe Sziabowski. Staff in attendance were: Planner Jody Kablack and Combined Facilities Director Jim Kelly. Absent were Mike Melnick, Christine Hogan, and Bill Johnson.

Representatives of the Fairbank Community Center Task Force, Park & Recreation Commission, and Sudbury Senior Center were present to explain the issues with the existing Fairbank building. Originally the debate about the Fairbanks Center circulated around whether the building should have a new roof or whether the building itself needed replacing. Repairs to the building have moved beyond the Town's 12-year master plan. Roof patches are failing. The locker rooms are approximately twenty-eight years old, and while the roof over the pool is not yet leaking that roof is also twenty-eight years old. Fire systems are also twenty-eight years old. Both the Senior Center and Park & Recreation want to expand their programs. Building conditions are not ideal to support expansion. Mr. Kelly said that staff at Park & Rec and the School Department have to put tarps over their desks when they leave at night in case of rain and roof leaks. The School Department administration offices share the facility with children in the Terrific Twos Park & Rec classes and with the summer camps. Therefore, it is loud in the hallways and the staff is sharing bathrooms with the children.

There was discussion about how designing around the existing pool is perhaps limiting design options. Also discussed was the fact that there may not be other town-owned property where a community center could go. There may be privately owned sites. This issue has not been fully explored.

Mr. Gold asked whether any of the plans proposed by the Fairbanks Community Center Task Force take into consideration where the School Department would be going. They do not. Bob May said that the building gets approximately 70,000-80,000 visits per year so if the building were disrupted due to roof failure then Senior and Park & Rec services would be disrupted as well. Displacement costs would be daunting. Dick Williamson said that money may be needed to get conceptual designs next.

The Fairbanks Community Center Task Force will need to give a presentation to the Selectmen next and to see if they can get any funding. One to two million dollars may be needed. The Task Force may need to wait until Town Meeting for funding. It might be 2019 before construction could begin.

Turning to the Town Hall, Mr. Kelly said that if the Town Hall Blue Ribbon Committee wants to preserve the Town Hall just for meeting space and wanted to leave the Flynn Building staff at the Flynn, then the schools would have no place to go. Ms. Ciaffi reminded the committee about the possibility of building an addition to the Nixon School for the School Department. Mr. Morely questioned whether that plan would reduce future additional classroom space should student numbers increase. Mr. Kelly replied that there is currently one location for a planned addition at Nixon, but there may be other spaces on the property for additional expansion.

Mr. Gold asked what would happen at Fairbanks if the School Department moved out right now. Mr. Kelly said space, amounting to perhaps ten classrooms, would be used immediately.

Mr. Gold said that relocating the schools is essential to planning and it is apparent that the Town can't simply do nothing any longer. The Town Hall Committee's mission is to recommend a location for the School Department.

The Town Hall Committee then debated renovating Town Hall for office space, and whether or not to move the Flynn Building departments to Town Hall and the School Department to the Flynn Building. Some committee members felt that concept would not work because it would be forcing the Town Hall to become a building for a purpose that it was not built for. Others felt that some offices could go into Town Hall along with an addition. The Committee then discussed an addition for offices at Town Hall.

Option 8 appeared to be the most reasonable option. Tearing down the building and building a new one was no longer in consideration because that concept would not allow large-sized meeting rooms for voting and board meetings, and there would be no ability to get preservation funding.

There was some discussion then about preservation versus new construction and just what constitutes old.

It was decided that options #6 and #7 were off the table for consideration.

Ms. Kablack said that she would work on a flow chart for the next meeting that would have the School Department located outside of the Town Center. A scenario would be included for keeping the Town Hall essentially as is with exhibition space for the Historical Society, and the Loring Parsonage plans considered.

Mr. Kelly said that some amount of money for the Nixon study and designer would be required.

Mr. Gold asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the last meeting. There being no changes, a motion was made, seconded, and the minutes were approved.

The next meeting of the Town Hall Blue Ribbon Committee was scheduled for Monday, August 17th, 2015 at the DPW Building.

Upon a motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.