

**The Fire Station Building Committee
A Sub-Committee of the Board of Selectmen**

DRAFT Minutes of Meeting of September 11, 2006

A meeting of the **Fire Station Building Committee** was held on Monday, September 11, 2006, in room #16 at the Center School, Woodbridge, Connecticut.

Members Present: Chairman Joe Calistro, Vice Chairman Dwight Rowland, Paul Antinozzi, Louisa Cunningham, Chief Andrew Esposito, David King, Michael Luther, and Jim Urbano

Members Absent: Peter Hershman

Also Present: Don Smith, Donald W. Smith Consulting Engineer; David Stein, Silver/Petrucci, Jim Sabshin, BOS; Sean Rowland (Ass't Fire Chief), Chris Parietti (Captain), Andy Moser (Sergeant), George Dingwall, Dave Watts and Chris Rish, Woodbridge Volunteer Fire Association; Marilyn Moss, Independent Reporter; and Dr. William Silberberg, Woodbridge resident

Call to Order:

Chairman Calistro called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m.

Minutes:

Motion made (Rowland—Urbano) to accept the minutes from the August 31, 2006 meeting as presented.

Discussion followed:

- Mr. Calistro wanted his comments regarding the motion to instruct Mr. Stein and Mr. Smith to reduce the size of the building so there is no encroachment of the buffer on the right to be included in the minutes. He had stated the motion was out of order. Ms. Cunningham then requested it be noted on the record that Mr. Rowland and others on the committee did not agree the motion was out of order.
- Mr. Urbano stated the motion to instruct Mr. Stein and Mr. Smith to reduce the size of the building so there is no encroachment of the buffer on the right was not properly worded to reflect the intent which was to maintain the 100' buffer to the right: *Urbano: the motion was to direct the engineer and architect to respect the buffer that we all as a committee agreed upon and voted upon and included as part of the program.* Mr. Calistro disagreed. Ms. Bogush read the motion as recorded twice prior to the vote on 8/31/006 and again as typed on 9/11/06. *Calistro: the motion was out of order because the size and location had already been approved, presented to the BOS, approved by the BOS so what you did was revisit something that had already been approved.* *Urbano: That's incorrect we are talking about the encroachment into the buffer that's what the issue was and the motion related to the encroachment and after significant discussion we...when you thought it was an instruction to reduce the building in fact we clarified that it wasn't that, that it was a motion to instruct the engineer and architect to respect the program as defined by this committee that's what it was.* *Rowland: Which was then to reduce the size of the building... (Speaking at once, unclear)* *Rowland: fit it on the site.* *Urbano: do what you can to fit it on the site, that was the instruction.* *Calistro: It was implicit in what you were saying.* *Urbano: We're not talking implicit, we're talking what's explicit and that was the explicit request.* *Calistro: Well you are dealing with a bunch of intelligent people here...you don't have to write everything... (Calistro and Rowland talking at once, unclear)* *Calistro: Any other comments?*
- Mr. Luther requested Mr. Antinozzi's statement – which Mr. Luther said he and others supported -- be included. *Luther: Paul noted that the directions to the engineers were to come back in observance of the 100' to the east and that they had not done what had been asked of them because they were 4' encroaching. It was part of the discussion as well.*

- Mr. Rowland requested it be noted Mr. Smith's presented sketch showed only 38 parking spaces, not the 50-55 required to meet the current needs of the fire department program. There had been discussion about having firefighters cross the street and the danger in that.

Motion (Luther—Rowland) to table the 8/31/06 minutes so corrections to the minutes as presented can be made; motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

Prior to entertaining public comments, Mr. Calistro gave his regarding the meeting held on 8/31/06 – that negative comments have been made and members should be supporting the decisions made by the committee, that the charge from the BOS does not say specifically that a 100' buffer must be observed, and that all of the facts are not known at the start of a project and it is in the detail phase when problems are discovered. Mr. Calistro added the problem here, as presented by Mr. Smith, was meeting all the requirements meant going into the buffer zone a few feet. Mr. Calistro stated that last meeting was a waste of time and the committee can't keep revisiting what was already decided upon.

Mr. Antinozzi responded it was unfair to characterize the comments and observations made last meeting as negative and a committee is a consensus group that reflects the community. He stated when the engineer came back and showed that 3' encroachment it was poor judgment and flew in the face of something that had been clearly identified as a critical element. Mr. Antinozzi clarified the motion was to try to adjust the building to bring back the 3'. He added the intent of the discussion regarding perception of the project and use of the old firehouse was a positive one in terms of revisiting issues that were potential conflicts at referendum. Mr. Antinozzi concluded the observations were in no way intended to suggest that a firehouse is not needed or what the fire people want should not be built, rather it was clearly intended to be positively geared to making the project more inclusive of the community.

Mr. Calistro accused members of the committee who were 'nit-picky' about the 3 or 4' of being obstructionist and causing the project to take one step forward and two steps back. Discussion continued regarding the revisiting of the issues that had taken place and the charge – honoring it, needing BOS input to change it, and that the BOS addressed at a meeting that the existing firehouse should not be used for any fire purposes and/or operations. Ms. Cunningham spoke regarding disagreement in the spirit of sincerity for the project's success at referendum and the worthwhile process of obtaining constructive comments even those that stem from someone's doubt. She added there has been no effort to go against the charge – there was consideration of fulfilling the requirement for 20,000 sq ft. using a combination of locations.

Mr. Calistro said Mr. Smith was not able to go forth to inland/wetlands as a result of the last meeting because there was no agreement. Ms. Cunningham & Mr. Urbano agreed it was clearly stated at the last meeting that he should go forward. According to Mr. Calistro, he has not progressed because he left the meeting very confused about it. Mr. Rowland noted it had to be worked out if there would be 38 or 50 parking spaces before going to inland/wetlands. Mr. Urbano concluded it was parking which held up going to inland/wetlands. Chief Esposito gave the history of TP&Z's requirement for adequate parking. It was said the parking/driving lane was too close to the wetlands and it was unclear if inland/wetlands would approve it. Mr. Calistro said it is important to square off the building and put in 50 parking spaces.

Mr. Luther reminded the committee of Mr. Antinozzi's idea to go to inland/wetlands with only the shell of the building represented and there was no reason Mr. Smith should not have gone forward. He added that he supports Ms. Cunningham's comments about passing referendum given the history of the BOF not supporting the last firehouse project. He stated he could not support a project that requires a bond and does not include some funds for at least the restoration to some future use by the town of the existing firehouse. There are 4 committee members that feel these issues need to keep coming up at meetings to ensure the project will pass referendum. Mr. Calistro responded by saying Mr. Luther is talking about something already decided and it is not part of this project. Mr. Rowland gave the history of the BOS decision that the existing is not part of this

project – it had been included in the charge, but the committee sent a memo recommending a separate committee. In response to Mr. Calistro accusing members of revisiting decisions already made, Mr. Urbano noted the decision to uphold the buffer was already made, but now it is proposed the project encroach on it. Mr. Calistro explained now that more details are known it is apparent that a good plan has not been presented to solve the space issue. Mr. Urbano stated discussion returned to using the old firehouse as a solution which put it back on the table – the committee is talking about space needs, parking needs, program needs, and passing referendum.

Chief Esposito spoke about parking noting it is at a premium in the area, saying the committee is not being realistic to not plan for the cars. He explained 50 spaces are needed on the property to provide enough spaces for daily firefighter operations. Discussion continued between Mr. Urbano and Chief Esposito regarding Fitzgerald's suitability, history of the site decision, compromising, parking across the street (pros and cons), if 35 spaces meets daily needs with supplementation for other times, TP&Z's recommendation for 50 spaces for 50 firefighters, and planning for the future. The safety and danger issues of crossing the street were examined by Ms. Cunningham and Chief Esposito. Ms. Cunningham adding there is a public relations issue here as well. Mr. Antinozzi asked if the back part of the site, behind the wetlands, could be considered.

Public comments were then invited:

Dr. Silberberg said the committee was dysfunctional. He wants to see a firehouse built, but at this point he warns it will be defeated at 7 million unless the committee comes together and lets the public in.

Mr. S. Rowland questioned the need for the 100' buffer to hide the building and addressed the issue of parking spaces. He passionately explained the danger in having responders crossing the street urging the committee to do what is in the best interest of the fire department not people's individual agendas. Mr. S. Rowland concluded stating all apparatus and all operations need to be on the same side of the street. Chief Esposito questioned if the public is worried about the \$7 million building or willing to build a \$6 million butler style building. The committee is working to build a centerpiece for the community, but to do that and have it function brings the price tag up. Mr. Urbano responded to the question of the buffer's purpose being to hide the building explaining it is a centerpiece of the town center, but it is the 'dead' side of the building that is to be screened from the most heavily used recreational property in town (disputed by some present). Impassioned discussion followed on whether there is merit to having a buffer and the impact (positive & negative) of having the firehouse close to the walking path.

Mr. S. Rowland turned his comments to Mr. Luther asking if the BOF is ready to sign onto a project of this size. Mr. Luther explained the bond situation and that there is no discussion on a 'cap' or acceptable limit, but there are concerns that the architects are the same as those for the Public Works and the costs are above what was proposed for that project and the proposed cost for the firehouse is higher than requested. Mr. S. Rowland stated he sees many negative comments made by the BOF on channel 79 and these remarks will drive the project further into the ground. Mr. Luther accepts what he said, but no position has been taken. Chief Esposito warned every month that goes by costs go up. Dr. Silberberg brought up relocating the trail. Mr. Urbano responded with the history of the compromise of protecting the buffer.

Discussion continued on the issues. Mr. Sabshin asked about moving the storage area closer to the road for the needed parking and Mr. Smith responded (38 spaces with the two 100' buffers is possible). The number of firefighters responding to calls was addressed (20-40, more at night). Presenting specific information to the public on the frequency of equipment use and how quickly it is removed was discussed by Ms. Cunningham and Chief Esposito (Chief Esposito said people don't have the knowledge needed to question the program and they should read the papers and come to the meetings). Mr. Urbano and Chief Esposito disagree on why and how the Fitzgerald property was chosen -- it was proposed by the conservation committee according to Mr. Urbano. The number of parking spaces needed vs. used to determine site location was argued. Chief Esposito addressed response times for different locations and he noted the great value the town has in the volunteers (a

paid staff costs taxpayers \$250 per \$100,00 in assessed house value plus insurance and union issues, according to the Chief). Mr. Urbano asked why the meeting was being videotaped and Ms. Moss explained it is her right.

Mr. Watts noted the stone wall is not a wall, but a pile of rocks and the cedar grove is a disgrace.

Mr. Dingwall stated in his 63 years in town (25 as a firefighter) he has never seen the town fight against the volunteer department like they do now, a department that is going to save lives adding it is ridiculous not to build the building because of a stone wall buffer.

Mr. Moser explained how the program requirements were developed and how the parking spaces should have been incorporated in the design proposal. Mr. Moser argued about response times with Ms. Cunningham. Ms. Cunningham stated he was misunderstanding her point, adding the members of the committee have put in many hours on the committee because they want a firehouse. Mr. Moser continued stating members should be doing this work for the firefighters not themselves. Ms. Cunningham agreed she is certainly not doing it for herself.

Mr. Sabshin said he is the only person left on the BOS who voted for the last firehouse proposal. He noted every conservation group voted against the proposal because it violated the cornfield. The buffer kept the wheels on the committee, but if the wheels are now coming off over parking and the buffer then a new plan is needed that meets both those needs. Mr. Antinozzi suggested building a butler building on the back of the site. Mr. Sabshin asked for more creativity with this site. The committee seemed to generally disagree. Discussion returned to utilizing the existing firehouse for some portion of the 20,000 sq ft. Dr. Silberberg wants to know for every vehicle, how many times it rolls per day, week, and month. He and Mr. King debated minimizing risk factors using a childbirth analogy (Mr. King saying the responders had no choice to cross the street). Mr. Sabshin stated the BOS would like to see 44 spaces – 38 plus the 6 lost from the plan presented to them. Mr. Stein explained what might happen at inland/wetlands in terms of where the project stands with the committee (having to prove no feasible or prudent alternatives if encroaching on wetlands). Choosing a CM at this point was discussed as were going the inland/wetlands at this time at all and options such as putting 20-30 spaces on the south side of the wetlands (Mr. Smith thinks that is more of an impact on wetlands).

Mr. Antinozzi asked Mr. Smith to explore moving the parking area up to 5' from the road instead of the current 15' and then put in one more row of parking. It would minimize wetlands impact and fit 12 or 13 more cars. Discussion followed on reducing it to 8-10 more spaces, reducing the size of the spaces from 20' to 18' if the town approves, and protection of cars from snow removal on the main street. Motion (Antinozzi—Cunningham) to have Mr. Smith redraw the plan to reduce the length of parking spaces to 18', introduce as many spaces as he can by moving the lot up closer to the road, and take that plan to inland/wetlands; motion carried unanimously. Mr. Smith reminded the committee of the new regulations beginning 10/1/06 and the need to talk to the inland/wetlands chair about timing. Mr. Smith agreed he would be ready to submit.

Mr. Smith then explained the septic system memo from 9/7/06 (file) regarding an alternate septic area. He recommends staying with what was proposed noting existing bar ways providing access with minimal impact. Motion (Rowland—Luther) to leave the septic as designed on the east side of the site, put the force main on the east side of the wall as per the sketch presented, and restore all disturbed areas to their former condition; motion carried unanimously. It was confirmed a sleeve will be there for future use by the old firehouse.

Review/Discuss Proposals for CM Services:

Mr. Antinozzi commented on evaluating the CM qualifications saying it is very difficult to determine costs unless an in depth analysis is done. In particular the reimbursables sections vary. Mr. Rowland noted Hawley did not personalize for this project and explained the committee would ask for more information from the candidates in the interviews. Discussion followed on interviewing all or some of the candidates. Prices and reimbursable structures were discussed and compared. Ms. Cunningham stated it is the references that tell if the reimbursables are reasonable. Mr. Rowland will draft up a list of questions. He explained how general conditions breakdowns for this duration are given by month and the committee can then compare items like

time assigned for project manager. Ms. Cunningham and Mr. Luther agree with dropping Hawley. Motion (Luther—Cunningham) to go forward to interviews with Newfield, LeRosa, and Bismark; motion carried unanimously with Mr. Antinozzi abstaining. Mr. Antinozzi noted he has worked with Hawley they are very good contractors. Mr. Rowland said their biggest project was \$1.799 million. Personnel qualifications and data systems were briefly discussed.

Report from Architect/Engineer: (see above)

Invoices:

Clerk: Motion (Esposito—Cunningham) to approve payment of the clerk's invoice for summary minutes of the 8/31/06 meeting in the amount of \$150. Motion carried unanimously.

Other Business: none

Adjournment:

There being no further business, motion (Cunningham—Urbano) to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aimee Cotton Bogush
Clerk

Attachments on file:

1. Don Smith: septic memo & sketch
2. Beth Heller: comments for meeting