

Wilmington Police/Fire Facility Committee Final Recommendation

December 16, 2015

Dear Selectboard Members & Town Manager:

This committee is pleased to present the final recommendation of our 5 month effort to **'look into a possible location or locations for construction or renovation of either a joint or separate police and/or fire facility for these emergency services'** because **'currently, the two are housed in locations that are in the flood zone and were flooded during Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011.'** The committee also considered the possibility of including Deerfield Valley Rescue in the development plans. This committee's unanimous decision is that construction of a new facility to house fire, police and if possible, rescue on the site of the former town highway garage located at 18 Beaver Street is the most preferred option for the town. The committee considered several sites in town, all of which have pros and cons listed on the attachments to this letter.

This committee's priority and focus was to evaluate all known available properties that could potentially serve as a suitable location for fire and/or police and possibly rescue. The criteria we agreed upon to evaluate the sites focused largely on location of the available sites. This is vitally important for the volunteer fire department; less so for the police department. However, it was discussed and generally agreed upon that a combined fire and police (and possibly rescue) facility is most advantageous for the town because 1) it concurrently moves both emergency services out of the flood hazard, and 2) it provides economies of scale both in terms of town and committee resources to plan and develop the project as well as in terms of construction costs.

This committee referred extensively to the Town of Wilmington Study of Fire Department Facility report presented by Breadloaf in December 2014. We re-examined the potential sites in that study and also two other sites. Breadloaf completed a lot of preliminary work on determining building requirements, site location as well as developing a conceptual plan for the former highway garage site. This committee has not endeavored to do any further budget work because it is our strong feeling that further budget work is site-dependent and Breadloaf has already provided preliminary budgeting of approximately \$5 million dollars for a combined facility of approximately 15,700 square feet. This includes consideration for space for a future aerial apparatus for the fire department. It is the hope of this committee that thoughtful design and competitive bidding will produce a cost-competitive building.

The former highway garage site is a 1.42 acre site and the lower (southern) 1/3 of the property is in the flood hazard zone. Since one of the primary objectives of this effort is to re-locate the emergency services out of the flood hazard, the committee spent some time discussing the portion of this land parcel that's in the flood hazard. The site is most desirable because of its central location in town and the fact that it's already town owned and therefore requires no

land acquisition costs. However, the portion of the lot that's in the flood hazard may not be reasonably built upon and is deemed by this committee to be the primary location for parking for fire and possibly rescue, as well as potentially for the public. Currently the Allen building and Haynes Hall are located on this portion of the property. It is the committee's recommendation that these buildings be re-located off the property to maximize the available space for site design. Alternatively the town-owned Allen building could be reduced in size and serve as a vehicle impound. Based on the Breadloaf study and a site visit by the committee we feel the site is suitably sized for a combined fire and police facility and with careful design, possibly rescue. The inclusion of rescue will add project cost, but also lease revenue to the town. Another option, subject to discussion with a design team, may be to build up the south end of the site with a suitable retaining wall that would allow for construction above the flood hazard. It may be possible to include space for rescue also, but that possibility is greatly enhanced with the re-location of the Allen building and Haynes Hall. The committee also recommends that the Selectboard consider negotiating the purchase of the southern end of the 3 adjoining lots on the northeast corner of the property. This would provide the access to the site that would allow for maximum use and access of the existing site.

If the Selectboard agrees with the committee's recommendation the recommended next step is to hire a design team via a competitive RFP process. If the Selectboard opts to do so and wishes for the committee to continue the charge will need to be amended.

It has been our pleasure to serve the town on this effort. Our town and communities rely on the emergency services provided by police, fire and rescue and we are pleased to assist in re-locating them to higher ground.

Respectfully,

The Wilmington Police/Fire Facility Committee

Dennis Heberlein, Jim Burke, Ken March, Joe Szarejko, Heidi Taylor, Jake White, Chuck Clerici