

Wilmington Public Safety Facility Public Input Meeting

January 16, 2020

In Attendance: Chuck Clerici, Dennis Richter, Chief Matt Murano, Chief Scott Moore, Melanie Lopez

In Addition: Ralph Nimtze & Casey Gecha with NBF Architects

Absent: Greg Nido

Public Present: Bill Spirka, Jeremy White, Bobby Maynard, Carolyn Palmer, Jacob White, Sam Hall, Donald Wilson, Nikki Steel, Mike Eldred, Jake Roberts, Alex Struzinski, Daniel Elliot, Michele Doucette, Sheila Osler, Shelley Park, Meg Staloff, Lenny Chapman, Diane Chapman, Dale Doucette, Richard Ward, Todd Gareiss, Ellen Ostrander, Eric St. Denis, Sarah Fisher, Mike Tuller, Dennis Pike Jr., John Hescoock, John & Rachel Lazelle, Robin Lazelle, Robert Hall, Joseph Cincatta, Bruce Mullen, Scott Tucker, Carl Boyd, Frank Sprague, Nevil Hernandez, Jessica Lee Smith

Presentation

Brief Presentation by Chuck on progression of committee and to introduce site plan and 3D rendering Ralph Nimtze and Casey Gecha present more detail to site plans and 3D renderings

Questions/ Comments

Question on where police cars would be kept on schematic - would have regular parking spots.

Bruce Mullen - heavily against building location and cost. States that it is ludicrous to propose a 5 million dollar building to a town that is dwindling in population and impoverished. Taxes in town are already too high, increasing them will continue to drive potential new residents away. Suggests that better planning of responses could be used in case of natural disasters. There could be a cost benefit in keeping some equipment in another facility. Mentions how cost to move rescue to building previously owned by Frank Sprague. Asks why would the fire station be located south of town when most residential space is north and west of town. Why can't the police move into the new community center to save costs of new building. Or why can't Dover and Wilmington police be consolidated?

Bill Adams - Fire department needs an up-to-date building.

Bill Spirka- Fire trucks were moved to higher ground prior to hurricane Irene. Trucks need to be charged so that equipment necessary is powered.

Guy sitting next to Bill Spirka - Believes we need a new fire department. Both the fire and police need new space.

Lenny Chapman - Town [offices] is still located in the floodplain.

Scott Tucker (Town Manager)- Everyone is squeezed for space. Town is still figuring out what to do with old fire department building if new building is done.

Michele Doucette - The committee should not construe criticism of design and location with lack of caring for police and fire departments needs. Agrees with comments Bruce and believes the town is moving too quickly, why build a new facility if town population may only decline. After Irene, town studies stated for town to survive, downtown would need to expand

community space through Beaver Street. People come to Wilmington because it has a village atmosphere.

Question on how large building is - 18,000 sq ft

Sheila Osler - building is too expensive. Applauds comments thus far. If building is built in historic district, the architecture shown in schematics and renderings does not coincide with current architecture in town. Believes it would be better for building to be built in location close to Suburban Propane offices off of S. Main Street

Bob Hall- Ex Fire Chief. Applauds the work of police and fire departments. Something will be worked out. Lives are more important than the money it takes to build a new facility

Todd Gareiss - local landowner, happy to pay taxes for new safety facility. Says there will be two groups of people against the idea, those who only see the price tag and those who want to use the plot as community/greenspace only. Implementing green space in site design can only be better for the building.

Nikki Steel- Allen building belongs to the town (can be verified in town minutes of 1983-1984). Important to speak with Farmers Day Fair Assoc.

Bill Adams - Does not agree with drive-through fire bays.

Volunteer FireFighter - People have gotten killed when trucks are backed up. Having drive through bays could potentially decrease response time, if vehicles don't need to be moved.

Shelley Park - There is viable space in OSEC for police department.

Jessica Lee Smith - Other funding sources should be considered.

Chuck - Committee is happy to discuss moving police department and other funding opportunities. Some bonds will be ending around time of estimated bond beginning for new building. Will help to mitigate direct cost to taxpayers. Today's construction costs is an average of \$250/sq foot.

Jessica Lee Smith - the town cares about both departments, beaver street is wide and ideal for placement of fire department. Believes having police in town is necessary for tourists to feel safe and is a driving force for potential future residents.

Chief Moore - the best access to any spot in town is starting from south main street. If the department was located east or west of town, it would be near impossible for a fire truck to pass traffic (especially considering there is no shoulder in) on busy weekends. There are new building requirements for fire departments, and the current building needs to be updated. Lots of equipment in Allen Barn that is not being kept up and rotting due to lack of facilities - including pick up truck, snowmobile, boat, ATV, rescue sled, & emergency management trailer.

Many people are coming in daily to current fire department and he believes the best spot to be is in the middle of town.

Michele Doucette - Is 3rd floor immediately necessary?

Chuck - all suggestions will be considered.

Ralph Nimitz - space can be redesigned to try and make the most efficient possible

Firefighter - Showers are necessary to have in the fire department. Does not want to take carcinogens home.

Chuck- Green roof possible with current design. Cost of building an addition or adding 3rd floor later on will increase cost of construction, as projected construction costs are expected to rise.

Ralph Nimitz - NBF's proposal totals \$260,000 and includes all surveys and many engineering expenses.

Chuck - 7 bids were received, and the committee chose the best and least expensive.

Question on Act 250- towns are exempt, not necessary

Todd Gareiss - How high is building?

Casey Gecha- Projected to be about 30 feet above street level.

Chief Murano - During hurricane Irene, the police department was submerged in 3 ft of water. All officers were out doing their job and couldn't save everyone, didn't have the right equipment. Staff of 6 officers that cover the station 24/7. Every weekend wilmington's population increases to 10-12,000 people. Regionalizing police has been large topic, but if too many corners are cut, it decreases professionalism. Chief's #1 concern for future of police is the state of Vermont as more is being added to police duties from the state. During the hurricane 68 people were in OSEC and it was 3 days before the state was able to arrive. Anyone is welcome to the police department, they really need more space. Thanked everyone for support.

Jessica Lee Smith- Question on Wilmington police covering Whitingham as well

Chief Murano - Expects than if/when able the police in Wilmington will be contracted to help in Whitingham. Eventually all surrounding small town issues end up being an issue for Wilmington.

Question on Wilmington & Dover being consolidated to one department.

Chief Murano - Discussion did happen. Dover not interested.

Sarah Fisher - During selectboard meeting with Dover, they weren't interested

Carl Boyd - issue of walking trails and fire truck movement needs to be addressed. Lack of visibility due to the retaining wall of resting place needs to be considered for pedestrian safety.

Meg Staloff - Will need more work for pedestrian safety. Wilmington Works has been working on sidewalks - there will be growing pains.

Carl Boyd - He is CC Haynes Building Trustee. Building is more of a liability at this point and sits in the floodplain. It is not an obstacle to the building of the proposed project. Right now it is actually a danger to surrounding traffic.

Some opposed to design, especially flat roof. Want fire trucks below office space to conserve heat.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Agenda for Next Meeting

1. Visitors, Public Comments
2. Possible Changes to Agenda
3. Approve Minutes of 1/9/2020 & 1/16/2020
4. Next Steps

Next meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2020 at Fire Department at 6:00 p.m

Respectfully submitted,
Melanie Lopez
Secretary