

MINUTES
FIRE STATION BUILDING COMMITTEE

Thursday, August 24, 2023 – 10:00 AM
2 Concord St, Peterborough, New Hampshire

Committee Members Present: Seth MacLean, Bill Taylor, Chief Ed Walker, Danica Melone, Tim Herlihy, Carl Mabbs-Zeno, Mandy Sliver, Carol Nelson, Sarah Steinberg Heller, Tony Cassady
Also Present: Deputy John Fahey, Deputy Brad Winters, Keith Kelley (Harvey Construction), Jason LaCombe & Anthony Mento (SMP), Jeff Hyland (Ironwood Design Group), Alison Kreutz

Meeting began at 10:06 AM.

Jeff Hyland, landscape architect for Ironwood Design Group, which is collaborating with SMP, introduced himself to the group.

Following review of the agenda, Jason LaCombe said the goal of this meeting is to determine the best approach for the site plan.

Ms. Melone provided copies of a draft for mailing regarding the upcoming input sessions, to be distributed to Peterborough residents.

Mr. MacLean said he had reached out to the Ledger as there hasn't been much included about these efforts so far. He said he has put together a press release, which can be distributed to members for their review. It would be great to get that to the paper next week.

Mr. MacLean continued that Zencity contract has been executed, and written commitment has been requested by September 14. Zencity will offer a more coherent project-base website.

Ms. Steinberg Heller asked if there was any way the Budget Session (listed as TBD on the mailing) could be scheduled so the date could be included.

Chief Walker said there's no way to know what date would be appropriate yet.

Mandy Sliver agreed with Ms. Steinberg Heller, and said she felt the public might be confused by the 'TBD' on the mailing.

Ms. Melone said that could be removed from the mailing so the focus could be on the known details.

Tony Cassady agreed that was the best approach.

Also regarding the mailing, Carol Nelson asked for clarification about the Site Design discussion scheduled for the 14th.

Mr. LaCombe said it would include the site concept and also the building plans to be looked at in two weeks. He said it could also be called 'site concepts' or 'conceptual design.'

Ms. Steinberg Heller suggested replacing 'site design' with 'conceptual design,' and Ms. Nelson agreed.

Ms. Nelson said she preferred 'building design' over 'brick and mortar.'

Mr. LaCombe agreed that would be appropriate. He said each meeting will build on the previous meeting, and the Budget discussion would serve as the 'wrap-up.'

Ms. Sliver asked if the Fire Station Building Committee was responsible for approving expenses relating to the mailing. Mr. MacLean answered no.

Anthony Mento asked those who had attended the recent Fire Station tours to share what they took away from the experience.

Carl Mabbs-Zeno said the Kingston Station featured a large, expensive basement that was mostly unused, which did not make sense to him. He said he liked the flooring options in the bay, and that there was a lift for the ambulances so staff could work on them.

Mr. MacLean said there is a lift at the DPW building that could be used.

Mr. Mabbs-Zeno said that he was more convinced the size estimates for our station are appropriate following the tours. He noted the use of the training room by community in both stations toured. He said he wasn't impressed at their approach to the challenges regarding fire suppression, and had noted that the building was not property grounded.

With laughter from the group, it was noted that neither SMP nor Harvey worked on that station.

Ms. Sliver said it serves as a cautionary tale about cutting costs, and it's important to consider how things will look 20 years down the road.

Deputy John Fahey said it was nice to get a live comparison, and nothing felt significantly too large or small.

Deputy Brad Winters said the administrative space seemed a little small, but he liked the flow from the parking lot into the apparatus floor. He also felt the use of the two different building construction types (insulated concrete forms for admin space and steel for apparatus floor) was a good concept, and it was smart not to get locked into one type.

Mr. Mento said the Kingston training room is 500 square feet smaller than what is planned for Peterborough, but it seemed appropriately sized, so Peterborough could be sized down.

Deputy Winters agreed the overall space was sized appropriately for Peterborough's needs, but "wider would be better than longer."

Mr. Cassidy said Kingston was more up-to-date and impressive than Windham. He appreciated that Kingston was attractive but was not "over-the-top." He noted there were no solar panels on top of the bay, and felt placement of panels should be planned when working on the site for Peterborough.

Ms. Nelson asked, as Windham is 20 years old, were there signs of age, and what is budget for upgrading and maintaining the building?

Ms. Sliver said the Windham Chief had said the Town is not good at maintaining the buildings, and recent improvements would not have happened had it not been for the ARPA money. "They do not have plans for regular maintenance."

Mr. Mabbs-Zeno said the building didn't look terribly worn, though maybe a little outdated.

Mr. MacLean said going to sites and looking at solid examples is helpful, so we should make sure we keep looking at real examples as elements of the design are solidified.

Ms. Nelson asked if SMP offered VR options.

Mr. LaCombe said "we're not quite there yet" but an interface is in production.

An aerial view of the buildable site was displayed on the projector. Mr. LaCombe said SMP had brought four site concepts for review.

CONCEPT 1 HIGHLIGHTS

- Additional access road to DPW
- Ample green space in both front and back of Community Center
- Apron opens in the front (onto the street) and back. Bay is roughly 124 ft X 90 with 7 doors on front and back, with a roughly 60 ft apron. Rear apron would allow access to Motor Pool building.

- Public outdoor space would be created, with Training room adjacent to public space. Admin area would be on back side, residential area placed so everyone has access to apparatus bays.
- Direct access to the decon (decontamination) area after responding to calls.
- Overflow parking on backside. 112 parking spaces total.
- Some wetlands buffer impact, but no impact to wetlands themselves.
- One story design, with large flat roof area to be kept open for solar.

There were many concerns about parking and access to both the Fire Station and Community Center from the parking areas.

Mr. Taylor said firefighters should have dedicated spaces to park, close to the apparatus bay.

Deputy Winters asked if the retention ponds could be moved and replaced with parking.

Mr. Mento said that could be an option.

Ms. Sliver was in support of the public space with museum and outdoor concept.

Ms. Steinberg Heller asked, regarding wetlands buffer, if permission would be needed from Zoning and ConCom. Mr. MacLean confirmed.

Keith Kelley said he appreciated the additional access road: "Nice to get it away from the cluster of the conflict zone."

Mr. MacLean agreed that the access road would be beneficial for DPW staff.

CONCEPT 2 HIGHLIGHTS

- Site layout has less of an impact on Elm Street, with aprons positioned on the side of the building.
- Two access ways, each with lined parking. This frees up more green space along Elm Street, and is more pedestrian friendly.
- 153 parking spaces, with dedicated public parking.
- Museum would be viewable from Elm Street.

There was consensus from the Building Committee that positioning of the building on the site was more problematic than in Concept 1.

CONCEPT 3 HIGHLIGHTS

- Similar overall layout to concept 2, but flipped so that bays are moved to rear of building and administrative area moved to the front (overlooking Elm Street).
- Stair tower with mechanical penthouse
- Room for solar wall on front

Ms. Nelson said she felt that a two-story design might have better flow.

CONCEPT 4 HIGHLIGHTS

- Whole building considered a public front.
- Larger building area, with aprons far from Community Center.
- Loop road around back side (would have wetland impact).
- Parking consolidated in back, with larger green space in front.
- Separate new cold storage building.
- Abuts Community Center building
- Community Center entrance would be moved to rear of building, with through-way added.

Chief Walker said there is no-to-minimal consideration for snow removal or snow storage in any of the concepts. He said it would be virtually impossible for a plow truck to make an easy pass in front of the bays. He

liked functional elements of concepts 2 and 3, but “we are not going to be able to leave the station during a storm...Really significant issue.”

Ms. Steinberg Heller said parking should not be arranged so that vehicles had to back onto Elm Street.

Ms. Nelson said she didn't like the expansiveness of the buildings in Concept 4.

Mr. Mento said the energy efficiency of the Community Center could be improved if it shared a wall with the new station.

There was consensus from the group that Concept 1 was the most promising, and it was agreed that focus should return there.

Ms. Sliver said she appreciated SMP thinking outside the box and being creative with the concepts.

Mr. Herlihy said parallel parking area could be added to Concept 1 (at the end of the apparatus bay/decon area) to solve the parking challenges for the firefighters, getting them close to the bay.

There was further discussion about how parking could be arranged to benefit firefighters who needed to respond quickly to calls, and how best to handle snow in front of the apparatus bay doors.

Mr. Taylor suggested moving the decon section back, which would provide a flat face for ease of plowing.

Mr. LaCombe said a heated apron and extended overhang over the bay doors would help prevent snow piling up.

There was lengthy discussion about if and how the motor pool/cold storage building could be integrated into the design, and what the pros and cons of demolishing it would be.

Mr. Taylor said tearing it down would mean the cold storage would have to be built somewhere else.

Mr. MacLean added that it's currently full of DPW equipment.

Deputy Winters asked if it could be used for any PFR equipment. Mr. MacLean said potentially yes, if DPW equipment was moved around.

Mr. Herlihy asked if solar power and HVAC needs for the Fire Station, DPW, and Community Center could all be integrated and consolidated.

Mr. Taylor said, when the municipal campus concept was being discussed, that was the idea: “At the very least, we could start getting an idea of where to lay conduit for everything.”

Mr. LaCombe said sharing electrical and conduit could be done easily, but other considerations would need to be made. He added that the bay would provide ample space for a rooftop solar array.

Ms. Nelson if and how the footpath to Shaws and CVS would be integrated, and suggested that the path be built along the access road (as seen in the first concept) and there was general consensus that this would be an appropriate route.

The group returned to the debate about the cold storage/motor pool building. Mr. LaCombe said improvements like a new roof and new doors could be made to the existing building to increase its usability. It was established that it could be demolished for relatively small cost, and potential site design for the Fire Station could expand dramatically if the building was not there, but a new, larger storage building would have to be constructed in a different spot, which would be costly. Ultimately there was consensus that demolition of the motor pool building was not ideal.

There was a brief discussion about impact on wetlands and wetland buffers, and the potential for mitigation.

Mr. LaCombe said the buffer will be impacted on some level, but assured the group that buffers are taken seriously.

Mr. Kelley said that 1:1 replacement of buffer with mitigating features is very valid from a cost standpoint.

Mr. Mento provided a summary of the future considerations for the favored concept (Concept 1), including (but not limited to):

- More parking for PFR staff with easier access to decon area
- Incorporate pathway/sidewalk to Shaws & CVS along access road
- Consider keeping existing half-circle drive in front of Community Center
- Better area for farmers' market
- Additional green space behind Community Center
- Relocation of bocce court
- Maintain direct DPW access road
- Wetlands buffer impact considerations
- Radiant (heated) aprons
- Solar array (will be shown on next plans)
- Path to north side of Community Center gym
- Striping and directional flow of traffic
- Snow storage

The discussion returned to parking on the north side of the site (as seen in Concept 1).

Ms. Steinberg Heller was in favor, and said it was considerate of the Community Center's needs, especially for high-attendance events like voting.

Chief Walker said there could be one-way parking along the access road on big event days.

Mr. Taylor said the parking on the northside was extraneous, though he liked the idea of the additional parking.

Ms. Sliver agreed.

Mr. LaCombe said it could be added back to the design at a later time if funding allowed.

Mr. Kelley added it could be considered as an "add alternate" during bidding.

The next meeting will be held on September 7th at 10:00 AM in the Select Board Room.

The first public input session will be held on September 14th in the 1833 Room of the Library.

Ms. Nelson asked that the mailing be sent to PO boxes, and not just those with mail delivery.

Meeting adjourned at 12:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alison Kreutz (filling in for Gretchen Rae)

Mandy Sliver
Fire Station Building Committee Chair