

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 27, 2020

Members Present: Jay Butler, Mike Twomey, Jean-Pierre Minois, Jack Lawrence, Jeff Hubbard, and Patrick Reffett

Members Absent: Bill Olson, Tim Olson

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM) - Lee Sollenberger and John Sayre-Scibona of Design Technique (DTI); Designer/Architect - Lerner, Ladds, Bartels (LLB), Drayton Fair and Mark Ritz

Mike Twomey opened the Zoom audio/video teleconference at 10:08 AM.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Jay made a motion to approve the 5/15/20 meeting minutes which was seconded and then he reviewed some comments by Lee, Jack, and Mark which were incorporated into the minutes. The minutes were approved by a polled vote of 5-0. (Jeff joined the meeting late).

Jay asked about a point of clarification with Patrick that as long as committee members only send their draft meeting comments to Jay vs. reply to all, that is an acceptable practice. Jay asked for that so he could review any comments before the meeting.

Board of Selectmen (BOS) Meeting 5/18/20 for Project Update

Mike reported that the project update at the 5/18/20 BOS meeting went very well with no resistance from the Board with continuation on the project. He reported that Tim had the LLB contract extension in hand ready to be signed so that it will be completed soon.

Town Meeting

Drayton asked about the status of our Spring Town Meeting. Patrick reported that it will be held on Saturday, June 20th in a tent on the high school athletic field with the assumption that 150 people will attend. Mike was unsure as to whether or not a project update will be needed at that time. He also said that he thought the Fall Town Meeting was up in the air, later estimating a 50/50 chance it will happen. John then asked how long after a Fall Town Hall meeting approval of the project would the voters go to the polls for a vote. Jack noted that the voters will go to the polls on June 25th after the Spring Town Meeting. John thought one week was typical. However, no one seemed sure of a Fall schedule. Drayton mentioned the issue with contractors if it were a long time. Mike mentioned that if the project vote were extended to the Spring 2021 Town Meeting, that contractor bids would need to be rebid. Jack reminded everyone that we would soon have a new BOS with a new chair.

Planning Board Meeting 5/19/20 Review of Site Plan

Patrick reported that the Planning Board review of the project site plan went very well. He mentioned that Drayton, Jim Devellis and his Landscape consultant did an excellent job supporting the meeting. Patrick said that board members were satisfied with the site plan and approved it unanimously with a minimum of conditions involving more plantings, preservation of existing plants, and other small things. One of the board members initially felt that in this time of instability, that they should put the decision to vote on the site plan on hold. With comments by Mike, Chair Brian Stein, and especially by Drayton, according to Jay, the member suggesting delay was convinced to vote on the site plan. John said that saving projects from being diverted was Drayton's life's work.

Patrick mentioned that he had thought the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) was going to vote on the project (building height variance) at their June 3rd meeting but it now was scheduled on July 1st. Patrick did not think the ZBA had any issues.

Lee asked if Doug Trees was still around and whether or not he had any comment on the project. Jack said that Doug was around and was aware of the current status but that he has offered no comments. Mike wondered if Doug felt we were doing a fantastic job.

Construction Cost Estimate

Mike mentioned that he had originally planned to add his questions on the construction cost estimate as an addendum to the minutes of the last meeting. However, after some thought he felt that LLB should be providing the necessary details on such things as the sump pump design. In the example of the sump pump he saw the \$20k cost but no details to review. Mark agreed that not all design details were available. Drayton noted that he preferred to have a checklist of items that need further discussion or development and he was willing to develop details where needed. Drayton noted that he was working on some of the items raised at the last meeting but did not yet have a status report. Mike noted that Design Development drawings were always disappointing as they typically do not provide enough details. Mike and Drayton continued to debate this issue with Drayton indicating he was willing to support Mike in his need for details but he would prefer a checklist that he could use. Drayton said he could develop drawings for Mike if needed. Mike questioned if the DD drawings were worth discussing due to their lack of details. He wondered if the 85% cost estimate was too late to review details. Drayton insisted it would not be too late at that point.

At this point Drayton mentioned the lack of design comment from the Hamilton Historic District Commission (HHDC). Mike wondered if the current drawings had enough detail, especially in the area of the roof design where they had interest. Mark commented that the current drawings may not have enough details. Mark also mentioned that the drawings had been recently updated since the last meeting in the area of the chimney (restored to the drawings) and the cupola. Mike mentioned that Ed Howard had no plans to convene an HHDC meeting until July. Drayton wondered if we could reach out to Scott Clements as a representative of the HHDC interests. Jack and Patrick thought Scott was the correct person. Drayton offered to send an email to Ed Howard, copying Mike, and asking for the best way to get HHDC comments.

Mike next asked about the use of wood vs. composites on the exterior. Drayton asked which location on the building was he referencing. Mark indicated that wood had been specified everywhere in the current design and Drayton commented that if one follows the U.S. Dept. of the Interior standards that wood would be required. However, Drayton and John both commented that some communities allowed for composite materials on historic buildings. Mike wondered about the use of boral. (Secretary's Note: In past discussions with the HHDC the use of boral had been approved by the HHDC for other projects.) Drayton felt that they needed to use wood unless otherwise specified. Since the committee had decided to keep the original wooden, repaired windows on the building, he felt that was an indication of preference for wood. Mike questioned the use of wood in areas where lack of maintenance would cause problems and wondered what we should do. He suggested we need to ask the HHDC. Drayton admitted that he recommends the use of modern materials if no maintenance is planned but pointed out that the MA Historical Commission wants in-kind replacement. Jack pointed out that the wood available today is not the same type of wood available when the building was built. John said that it was necessary to use what is available and suggested some available pre-primed wood. Mike pointed out that fast growth pine is like cardboard. Patrick interjected that he had just emailed Ed Howard about HHDC help and asked about using a designee, e.g., Scott Clements. Mike asked when details might be available for review and Drayton said next week. Mike questioned if there would be enough details and Drayton thought there would be enough. John suggested in the interim putting composite wood as an alternate on the design drawings.

Request for Variance from MA Historical Commission for New Entry, Ramp Removal, etc.

Mike noted that he had asked Ed Howard about the letter from the HHDC to support the variance request for the new entry, ramp removal, etc. Ed said he would look into it but said the HHDC would not meet until July. Jack jumped in to remind all that we also need HHDC input on the design of the tension ties in the second-floor walls/ceilings, especially as regards rod iron vs. other materials. Drayton indicated that they were working on that issue. Mike said we had an issue if we need to wait for HHDC input until July. Drayton suggested that we work with Scott who seems to have the trust of that committee and hope the committee agrees with his inputs. Jean-Pierre suggested sending the details necessary to be in the variance letter to the entire HHDC committee. Drayton agreed but asked to wait. Mike suggested someone in our meeting write the draft variance support letter. Jack said he would do it but Drayton noted that Mark had prepared the application and knew the details and Mark said he could draft the letter. He will do so by tomorrow and send out to the THBC for comment. Mike indicated that we will need to get Scott on point.

Cell Tower

Mike asked for an update on the cell tower. Patrick said that the cell tower company got an opinion from the MA Historical Commission that they were in agreement with our HHDC to not locate the cell tower in back of town hall. The cell tower company is now in the process of asking a federal judge to rule in support of the construction by citing the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996. They would like to start construction in late Fall 2020 or early Spring 2021.

Drayton wondered if the MA Historical Commission person in the cell tower dispute might be the same one our project might encounter for a variance and asked if Patrick could give him a name. Patrick indicated that it was unlikely the person was the same as the person in the cell tower situation was a higher up in the organization. The person who would be looking at our variance application would be a case worker. While Drayton thought it would be a good idea to build a relationship with someone at the MA Historical Commission, he did admit that he might be then stepping over the local HHDC. Patrick will get some contact info and Drayton will discuss with the HHDC.

Miscellaneous Issues

Jay asked that given the situation with all of the questions that have been raised about the recent construction cost estimate, will there be a new revised cost estimate done or will we just wait until the 85% cost estimate is complete? He said he asked because he was wondering what to tell voters what the final funding ask will be at Fall Town Meeting for the project. After a moment or two of thunderous silence, Drayton suggested that we should only tell people that we are on budget and on schedule. However, Drayton said he could ask if PM&C could do a small revision to the recent cost estimate. Mark will ask.

John brought up the subject of a COVID 19 contingency, since it might result in extensive costs. Mike and Drayton reiterated their recent experiences that were summarized at the last meeting. Lee suggested setting a \$10k per month contingency. Mike asked for a motion and Jay made that motion that was seconded and approved unanimously by polling 6 -0. Mike said that the total would then be \$140k.

Mike asked about the status of the Paperless Initiative as he felt that the effort was “dead in the water”. Patrick indicated that the effort was crowded out by other issues. Both Jack and Mike said the effort was very important. Mike will ask Joe D. as to what is happening.

Jay asked Drayton if the committee could get a copy of the artist’s rendering of the completed Town Hall that was shown several times. Drayton said yes but indicated that he had sent a copy to Mike. Mike asked that it be sent to the DropBox.

Next Meeting

After some discussion on possible days, Mike announced that the next meeting will be held via Zoom audio/video teleconferencing on Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 1:00 PM.

Mike asked for a motion to adjourn that was made, seconded, and voted unanimously by polling at 11:05 AM.

A True Record
Jay Butler, Secretary