

Minutes of the Capital Building Committee Meeting of Wednesday, September 14, 2022. Present were Derek Heim, Chairman, James Carvalho, John Salzillo, Robert Alford II, John Hansen, and William Anderson. The meeting convened at 6:23 p.m. at the Police Station Meeting Room, 1700 GAR Highway.

Mr. James Devol, Mr. Chris Hajder, Mr. Tom Blakey, Mr. Marc Lapointe were absent.

Also present at this time were Mallory Aronstein, Town Administrator; Mr. Scott Olobri, Assistant Superintendent/Facilities Manager, and Ms. Sarah Carlson.

Chairman Heim called the meeting to order at 6:23 p.m.

The Committee reviewed the meeting minutes of August 31, 2022. Mr. Carvalho **MOVED** to approve the minutes of August 31, 2022. Seconded by Mr. Hansen.

Mrs. Aronstein notified the Board of two changes made since she distributed the minutes. She said the reference made by Mr. Devol during his update on the Library project regarding the Town's reimbursement amount was \$6.8 million, not \$7.5 million as drafted. She said the other change was a correction to a misspelling of Mr. Hajder's name.

Mr. Heim called for vote. Heim, yes; Alford, yes; Anderson, yes; Carvalho, yes; Hansen, yes; Salzillo, abstained.

The Committee reviewed the various proposed alternatives for the Town Halls, Council on Aging, and Highway Department and how those alternatives affected plans for the School and Fire Departments. Mrs. Aronstein presented an email from Mr. Chris Hajder and a spreadsheet created by Mr. Jim Devol. She said that these two members were unable to attend the meeting tonight but wanted to share their feedback and thoughts on selected alternatives.

The Committee reviewed the comments and opinions provided by Mr. Devol and Mr. Hajder.

Mr. Heim said that he wanted to confirm the charge issued to the Committee by the Board of Selectmen. He said it was to propose potential sites for future development of municipal buildings. He said the Committee may come up with more than one preferred alternative and that it is very clear the Committee can propose multiple scenarios for the Selectmen. Mr. Heim said ultimately the Board of Selectmen will vet the proposed alternatives, take it to Town Meeting, and it will be vetted by the citizens. He said that the Board and the Advisory and Finance Committee will work out the funding mechanism part of it.

Mr. Alford said that he watched the School Committee meeting and asked that Mr. Carvalho discuss the recent vote they took.

Mr. Carvalho said that he met with Mr. Hansen, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Aronstein, and Superintendent of Schools John Robidoux to review the Middle School locating at the Del Mac Orchard and how that would be impacted by the municipal buildings also locating there. He said they went over a plan that showed space for a building the same size as the high school with parking and fields that also accommodated the Town Hall/Council on Aging facility and a highway facility on the same parcel. He said the plan also showed a secondary means of access which is a requirement of the Massachusetts School Building Authority to get grant funds. HE

said there are 18 to 19 buildable acres left over after town needs and that the Superintendent felt comfortable with that. Mr. Carvalho said it is a win – win situation as it solves the problems for the Town and leaves needed land for the school.

Mr. Carvalho discussed the proposed purchase of the Sousa Property and noted that all needs can be met without the purchase, although the purchase is still a good idea. He said it would good for an elementary school but that's twenty years down the road. He said the School Committee agreed and voted to support the municipal offices locating at the Del Mac Orchard, but only if the Board of Selectmen allowed the remaining land to be reserved for the school's future building plans.

Mrs. Aronstein updated the Committee regarding her discussion of the Sousa Property. She said the owners were willing to work with the Town. She said she received a price for an appraisal of the property of \$2000 for both of the parcels. She mentioned that the owners combined both parcels for maximum selling ability, but that they were not interested in selling to developers and did not want to see houses built on the property.

Discussion continued regarding the Town forced to pay fair market value for property and that higher sums were not allowed. Mrs. Aronstein said that whatever the appraisal amount was reported via the appraisal services would be the offer price to purchase.

Mr. Anderson said he wanted to correct a statement he made at the last meeting. He said before he met with the Superintendent, he believed only the Highway or Town Hall could fit while still accommodating the school. Mr. Anderson said in reality both can fit and that he played around with mapping and was able to fit a barn style highway facility on the property while accommodating the Town Hall/Council on Aging facility and the middle school.

Mr. Anderson presented the plan and discussed it with the Committee. He said that the plans allow for the placement of a salt shed and wash bay as well and still provide adequate access for the schools. Mr. Anderson also discussed the town's future sewer infrastructure and said that a pump station could also locate there as Wood Street is part of Phase I of the sewer design work.

There was brief discussion regarding the sewer plans for the Town.

Mr. Heim said he was less concerned about the Sousa property at this point if the plans show all of the buildings can fit on the one parcel without it. He said the purchase of additional property creates a barrier as residents will be wary of buying more property. Mr. Heim said that the purchase of the Del Mac Orchard was specifically for future growth of Swansea.

Mr. Alford said the purchase of the Sousa property does not have to be packaged with the facilities discussion but that there was value in purchasing it.

Mr. Heim called for comments on the scenarios.

Mr. Alford **MOVED** to recommend Scenario 2: Locate all buildings at Del Mac Orchard without purchase of additional property. Seconded by Mr. Hansen.

Mr. Salzillo said if the Town proceeds with this alternative, the Town will have former sites to contend with. Mr. Salzillo said he does not like taxes and likes getting a value and a bang for the

buck. He said he was coming around on this site and that it seems like the cooperation amongst town departments has happened. He said it was not another property coming off the tax rolls. He said if it can work it is probably the best scenario.

Mr. Heim said he appreciated the comments about the vacated buildings and sites. He said that is next on the agenda at his request because he believes the Committee should make some decisions about plans for those and that the public will want answers to those kinds of questions.

Discussion continued regarding the fuel depot location and that it would remain at the current DPW/Highway Facility.

There was brief discussion regarding proposed uses of the Town Hall Annex land with the Animal Shelter there and potentially creating a dog park.

Mr. Hansen said he agreed with the comments stated but requested that the Committee discuss the Sears Farm Road location and why that location does not make sense.

Mr. Heim said the research he continues to conduct gives him concerns over the contaminants in the area.

Mr. Hansen asked about the change to the Highway Department's operations.

Mr. Anderson said there is no change in winter operations if the facility moves to Del Mac Orchard. He said at Sears Road, there will be changes to the truck routes and the trips to the salt shed during storm events. Mr. Anderson said you need to bring utilities to both sites. Mr. Carvalho said it is a shorter distance at Wood Street. Mr. Anderson said there would likely be contaminants on Sears Road. He said the Police Department is interested in placing a firearms range at that property and the Fire Chief is seeking to place a training facility there. He said the property would work well as a working yard to store highway materials. Mr. Anderson said Sears Road also works as a transfer station or composting site.

Mr. Anderson said it is a cost savings to the Town to build buildings next to each other. Mr. Alford said the Town can build tomorrow on the Del Mac Orchard property. He said there are many issues on the Sears Road property and he is not in favor of moving the Highway Department there.

Mrs. Aronstein asked if the Committee was going to discuss funding recommendations. Mr. Heim said the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory and Finance Committee would work together to sort that out.

Mr. Heim called for the vote. Heim, yes; Alford, yes; Anderson, yes; Carvalho, yes; Hansen, yes; Salzillo, yes.

There was discussion of other viable options. The group agreed that this was the best scenario and the others would not work out very well.

Mr. Hansen asked about the public outreach to be conducted for this project not only for the neighborhood but also town wide. Mr. Heim said that would also fall to the Board of Selectmen.

The Committee discussed the use of surplus properties. Mr. Heim said he was glad Mr. Salzillo brought this up and agreed that this was a significant part of the process.

Mr. Salzillo said how this proposal is presented to the community is essential. He said that there is a lack of press coverage and it is difficult to get the message out. Mr. Salzillo emphasized how to market the proposal.

Discussion continued regarding public outreach. Mr. Alford suggested recording hearings and meetings to go over this information. Mr. Hansen suggested having presentations made at various public meetings, such as those at each Fire Station's monthly meeting.

Discussion continued regarding the Council on Aging parcel and whether the Town should work with the Diocese of Fall River concerning the rectory adjacent to sell to a developer.

Discussion continued regarding selling off the Council on Aging site to a developer and whether mixed use would be allowed by right.

Discussion continued regarding the Town Hall being restored to its previous purpose as an actual hall and true meeting room for the community. Mrs. Aronstein discussed reallocating the funds set aside for the Town Hall roof which finished under budget to restoring the building through a vote at Town Meeting. She said the Town could seek a grant from the Massachusetts Historic Commission for matching funds.

The Committee agreed to further discuss and vote on the use of surplus properties at their next meeting. Mr. Hansen said the committee should verify if any town uses for these facilities existed.

Discussion continued regarding the vacant properties, including ideas for subdividing the Annex property for house lots, establishing mixed use for the Council on Aging facility and to redo the Town Hall.

There was discussion regarding the fuel depot remaining at the property and not relocating.

The Committee discussed the process by which to provide recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Heim said at the last check point he presented to the Board of Selectmen and a preliminary report was provided to the Board of Selectmen. He said he informed the Selectmen at that time that eventually the full Committee would like to make a presentation to discuss the recommendations.

Mr. Carvalho **MOVED** to request a Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen to make a recommendation to the Selectmen and report on progress, and to hold the meeting after the Committee's next meeting. Seconded by Mr. Alford and so voted. Heim, yes; Alford, yes; Anderson, yes; Carvalho, yes; Hansen, yes; Salzillo, yes.

Mr. Heim said that there are three groups required to formally propose this to the Town: the Capital Building Committee, Advisory and Finance Committee for financing and the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion continued regarding the successful efforts of planning and collaborating across all departments.

There was brief discussion regarding the Town's current facilities being outdated.

Under Committee Member Reports, Mr. Hansen updated the Committee regarding the Comprehensive Plan process and notified members of an upcoming workshop to take place on September 28 for the next element which includes public facilities. He said this is a broad chapter and includes services, programs, and outdoor facilities as well as buildings. Mr. Hansen said the survey were sent out and the Town received great feedback that is invaluable to inform the Town's decisions concerning the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Aronstein updated the Committee regarding the presentation by the Library Building Committee that took place at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on September 13. She encouraged everyone to watch the presentation. She said one member of the Selectmen requested that the Capital Building Committee make a formal recommendation on the project.

Mr. Salzillo said he believed libraries are a thing of the past and he would rather spend a few dollars to spruce up the library.

Mr. Heim said he was concerned that the price tag increased so much since the Library was entered into the program.

Discussion continued regarding the Library Building Committee presenting at the fall Town Meeting.

The Committee discussed next meeting dates and agreed to meet on October 13 at 6:00 p.m. The Committee also agreed to request a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and targeted October 18.

At 7:52 p.m., Mr. Alford **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Anderson and so voted.

Respectfully submitted by Mallory E. Aronstein, Town Administrator

Documents reviewed by the Committee:

Minutes of the Capital Building Committee meeting of August 31, 2022

List of proposed locations for town facilities and discussed uses

Scenario Planning Narratives

Scenario 1: Purchase Sousa Property and locate all buildings at Del Mac Orchard

Scenario 2: Locate all buildings at Del Mac Orchard without purchase of additional property

Scenario 3: Del Mac Orchard as location for DPW Building and Town Hall/COA

Scenario 4: Del Mac Orchard as location for DPW Building and Middle School

Scenario 5: Del Mac Orchard as location for Town Hall/COA and Middle School

Scenario 6: Construct a new Highway Facility where it is presently located

Scenario 7: Build a new DPW facility at Sears Road or East of Salvation Army

Scenario 8: Construct a Town Hall/COA at the Town Hall Annex

Scenario 9: Purchase or lease office space for Administrative Buildings

Scenario 10: The No Build Scenario

Email from Chris Hajder regarding preferred scenario of Town Hall/COA at Del Mac Orchard with purchase of Sousa property for “other” uses; Building DPW at Sears Road Property

Spreadsheet from James Devol ranking various scenarios and offering commentary on each.

Plans presented by Mr. Anderson detailing situational placement of structures on Del Mac Orchard parcel