

Capital Building Meeting Minutes; 7/30/24

Members Present: Mr. Marc Lapointe, Chairman
Mr. Chris Hajder, Member
Mr. William Anderson, Director of Engineering and Highway Services
Mr. John Hanson, Community Development Director
Mr. James Carvalho, representing the School Committee
Mr. John Salzillo, representing the Advisory and Finance Committee
Mr. Paul Burke, Member
Mr. Robert Alford II, representing the Advisory and Finance Committee

Also Present: Ms. Mallory Aronstein, Town Administrator
Analisa Motti, CHA Consulting representative
Peter Turowski, Turowski2 Architecture representative
Libby Turowski, Turowski2 (T2) Architecture representative
Erin D'Alesandro, Turowski2 (T2) Architecture representative
Mr. Steven Kitchin, Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman
Mr. Michael Beaudette, Board of Selectmen Clerk
Geraldine Mullaly, Resident of Swansea
James Pelletier, Resident of Swansea
Mark Shane, Resident of Swansea
Luiz Porto, Resident of Swansea
Stephen Mello, Resident of Swansea

Members Not Present: Ms. Sarah Carlson, representing the Advisory and Finance Committee
Mr. Ryan Pacheco, Vice Chairman

A Capital Building Meeting was held on Tuesday, July 30, 2024 at the Police Station Community Room, 1700 GAR Highway, Swansea, Massachusetts.

Mr. Lapointe called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM

Mr. Lapointe stated the meeting is being recorded for the purpose of meeting minutes.

Item 1: Vote to approve minutes of June 25, 2024

Mr. Hanson **MOVED** to approve meeting minutes of 6/25/24. Seconded by Mr. Hajder and so voted.
PASSES BY MAJORITY with ONE ABSTENTION from Mr. Alford.

Item 2: Update from CHA Consulting

Mr. Lapointe reminded attendees that this is the first time the Committee is viewing this presentation. Public input will be allowed, must be to the agenda and be mindful of the time.

Ms. Annalisa Motti of CHA Consulting, provided a monthly update to the Committee. She said CHA Consulting has been reevaluating existing conditions along with reviewing program needs. CHA Consulting and T2 Architects have been working closely to come up with a design that meets the Town's program needs.

Item 3: Presentation, Discussion and Action on Town Hall/Annex Construction Alternatives, T2 Architects.

Mr. Peter Turowski of T2 Architecture presented slides of the existing site at 68 Stevens Road, 6.3 acres. He said a zoning analysis was performed and no issues were found. The existing building at 4,000 square feet is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, built in 1905, designated in 1990. He said it was originally a 2-room schoolhouse with an addition built later to make it 4 rooms. He said it has a cracking stone foundation, especially on the corners, and is in poor condition. Mr. Turowski said there isn't much head space in the attic, the basement is damp, and the hip roof limits the ability to expand with dormers resulting in limited space gain with maximum investment.

Mr. John Salzillo joined the meeting at 6:15pm

Mr. Mark Shane, 16 Gardners Neck Road, asked the Chairman if the water table issues were examined. He said this location has a history of water issues. Mr. Lapointe said the property did pass a perc test. There was discussion regarding the current structure built out of grade and the various possible waterproofing ideas for the renovation.

Mr. Shane asked if there was an intrusive investigation when studying the building. Mr. Turowski said there was much that was already exposed, especially for the foundation and attic areas and that there was no need to be intrusive.

Mr. Turowski continued his presentation discussing the programming needs summary. He said the previous square footage presented to the Town was 10,600 square feet net and this proposal is 9,851 square feet net. He said they eliminated some storage, shared meeting spaces and a couple of conference rooms to realize the savings. He said the Selectmen's Meeting Room was increased.

Three alternatives were presented: 1. Addition with dormer, L-shaped building, with Selectmen's meeting space towards the south end of the building; 2. A T-shaped building, with Selectmen's meeting space in the front of the building; and 3. A new building.

Mr. Burke clarified the square foot area from net to gross. Mr. Turowski said the current proposed is 15,000 to 16,000 square feet versus the previously proposed 19,000 square feet gross.

There was discussion regarding which departments were included in the current proposal and that there is an effort to digitize documents to decrease storage needs.

Discussion continued regarding meeting space. Mr. Hajder discussed whether there is a need for this meeting space to be built since the Library is currently building a 100-person meeting room.

It was noted that the Library will be holding their own programming in that facility which will leave limited booking availability.

Mrs. Aronstein said the Town currently has an issue with booking space due to the many boards and committees operating within Town. She said there is limited space for ceremonial events and that the Selectmen routinely fill the current meeting spaces.

Discussion continued regarding the use of 81 Main Street if the renovation succeeds. Mrs. Aronstein said the structure was built as a three-room building and a balcony. She said there are grants with the Massachusetts Historic Commission which is a 50% grant to bring this building back to its original state. She said this would not serve adequately for a Selectmen's meeting room and can be used for so much more than meeting space. She cited various community events, use by residents, Eagle Scouts Courts of Honors, retirement parties, 100 year birthdays, and more.

Mr. Alford left the meeting at 6:50pm

Ms. Geraldine Mullaly, 990 Hortonville Road, asked if there was a difference in meeting space size in the options presented. The architects confirmed that there was not a size difference.

Mrs. Mullaly then stated that the Article from Special Town Meeting did not discuss a new design option and asked how the Town would segregate the money spent on developing a new building proposal on the invoices. Mr. Lapointe said that that is a question for Town staff and not for the Committee.

There was discussion amongst members of the public and the Committee concerning departments being currently spaced out in different locations, with some in trailers. Mr. Turowski said that the design places the majority of departments under one roof in a practical manner. The Committee agreed the comments after the November Town Meeting were to fix what we have.

Mr. James Pelletier, 37 Pearse Road, asked what the square footage of the current Town Hall is. Mr. Hansen said roughly 4,200 square feet.

Mr. Steven Mello, 35 Barbara Lane, asked about why the current building was deficient. Mr. Lapointe advised that he visit the building. He said the Committee has done their due diligence reviewing available properties both privately and town-owned and that all of that research is posted on the Town website.

Mr. Luiz Porto 200 Wood Street asked how many current staff work in the Town Hall. Mrs. Aronstein said there are 17 employees and that there would be 28 in the combined facility.

Mr. Shane stated a meeting room is essential for these offices. He said in his opinion a new building is a better option for expansion to avoid underlying issues with renovation with the understanding that there is a cost factor to take into consideration.

There was brief discussion regarding water and its availability at the site. Mr. Pelletier said there is a booster at this location.

Mr. Steve Kitchin, Vice Chair of the Board of Selectmen, said meeting space is open space that can easily be converted into needed office space in the future.

Discussion continued regarding chair lifts versus elevators. Mr. Turowski said a chair lift is not an option for a project of this size.

There was discussion regarding Option 2 and connecting the parking lot to the meeting room. Mr. Turowski said that once a design is in place they can look at different options. He said the side door is essentially the connection to the parking lot and the front door is more ceremonial.

Ms. Aronstein left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

The Committee agreed to take time to consider the options and that they would meet again on August 6, 2024.

Discussion continued regarding what happens to the current structure if Option 3 (new construction) is selected. The Committee agreed that if Option 3 was selected, they would determine a plan for that building at that time. A cost estimate can be provided once an option is selected.

Mrs. Mullaly suggested Option 3 be removed from consideration due to her concerns over the contract.

Mr. Carvalho **MOVED** to seek Town Counsel's opinion on whether the Committee can discuss Option 3. Seconded by Mr. Burke as so voted.

PASSES UNANAMOUSLY

Mr. Shane expressed concern with not knowing the cost before choosing an option. Mr. Turowski explained that the cost of new construction versus renovation won't be an exorbitant difference and that the reason for the options of new versus renovation is to show efficiency isn't lost or gained with either option.

Mr. Lapointe reminded Committee members to be sworn in.

Item 4: Discussion of public informational meetings

Mr. Burke **MOVED** to table discussion of public informational meetings. Seconded by Mr. Hansen and so voted.

PASSES UNANAMOUSLY

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Salzillo **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Carvalho and so voted.

PASSES UNANAMOUSLY

Meeting Documents:

Agenda
6/25/24 Meeting Minutes
Presentation by T2 Architects
Conceptual Floor plans as presented by T2 Architects

Amie Griffin

8/2/24

Respectfully submitted by, Amie Griffin, Minutes Clerk

Date