

Building and Facilities Committee

Minutes of 2-4-21; Zoom

Members Present: Bowers, Sherman, Bianchi, Beasley, Cross, Cardillo, Hoglund, Cannon

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The roll was called, and each member present stated that no one else was in the room with that member.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting of January 28, 2021, were reviewed by the Committee and were then approved unanimously.

2. Police Department presentation -- Stahlman

The Chair introduced New London Police Chief Emily Cobb and thanked her for her efforts in looking into alternatives for attending to the Police Department needs. The Stahlman building proposal presents some interesting solutions, and the Committee looks forward to working together with her to examine the pros and cons and gather the data. Chief Cobb then presented information and thoughts related to the possible purchase and use of the Stahlman building for a relocated Police Station.

Chief Cobb noted that the building had been constructed in 1988, that according to the listing agreement, contained 7,320 gross sq. ft. of space, with 40 parking spaces, and that the property was assessed such that taxes were approximately \$12,500. She suggested that the rear parking area could be used by the Police Department, with the access road to that area marked as for authorized vehicles only. The public would be able to park in the front spaces. The building is centrally located in Town, which was one of the attributes noted by the Committee as to the Buker building. She initially visited the site on October 21, 2020, and also discussed with Beltronics if the radio/communications equipment would work on the site. Despite how the site might affect the height of the communications tower, the Stahlman building being at a lower elevation than the Buker building, Beltronics believed the site potentially offered a clearer line of sight to the tower on Mt. Kearsarge, and Chief Cobb showed a slide of an aerial view of the Stahlman site and Mt. Kearsarge demonstrating that. She noted that further analysis of the line of sight from the site to Mt. Sunapee is needed, both for existing and additional equipment on the Mt. Sunapee tower. The police

department recently applied for a grant for the additional equipment to be added to the Mt. Sunapee tower, which would improve regional communications capabilities.

On October 29, 2020, she contacted the Board of Selectmen regarding her interest in this property, and then obtained the floor plans of the building. On November 5, 2020, she met with Committee member Rip Cross regarding his knowledge of and thoughts regarding the building. Mr. Cross noted that the structure had a “clear span” roof, with no load bearing walls on the first floor, allowing for reallocation of space within the structure as needed.

Chief Cobb then noted that she had reached out to Frank Anzalone, Architect, on November 19, 2020, and, along with Detective Lt. Buddy Rowe, who has some construction experience, discussed with Mr. Anzalone the Police Department needs and possible configurations of the space in the Stahlman building. There followed a discussion of the preliminary plans prepared by Mr. Anzalone, which were projected as slides during the discussion. The proposal includes a 30’ x 30’ addition on the rear (northwest end) of the building. The ground floor would be the sally port, and the second floor would be the fitness center, which Chief Cobb noted was an important part of police training and meeting standards. She again noted that these are preliminary plans, and it is early in the process of analyzing the floor plans. She also noted that the dispatch area depicted on the plans would contain a kitchen area and a bathroom. The training room/conference room on the second floor would have an accordion curtain dividing the area to accommodate multiple uses.

Discussion followed, and Mr. Cross stated that the roof structure definitely needs to be looked at, and that snow loads are an issue, since, although it is not a flat roof, it has a very low slope, and the trusses may no longer meet Code (35 lb. requirement when constructed; 50 lb. requirement now). He also suggested that the area is partially wetlands, and the issue should be fully reviewed. (In the interest of full disclosure, he informed the Committee that he had worked for Bob Stahlman in that building, and remained friends with his son, Drew Stahlman.)

Chief Cobb informed the Committee that she had reached out to Frank Lemay of Milestone Construction, and that he had informed her he could have a conceptual estimate of the cost to convert the building into a police station in

four weeks from their visit to the site (January 29, 2021). She has also contacted the listing agent for the possibility of scheduling a site visit for the Selectmen and the Budget Committee. She stated that the listing broker has told her that others are interested in the property.

Chief Cobb inquired of those on the Committee who had attended the site visit regarding their thoughts. Joe Cardillo stated that this was a good idea to review, but has some concerns regarding its proximity to the elementary school and the bus and parental traffic on Pleasant Street. Chief Cobb agreed that that issue needed to be addressed, but that it would be best to do so in the future context of no longer having the Covid issue, which might result in less traffic. She also noted that a lot of the students used to take the bus and/or walked to various places in Town, such as Tracy Library, and that might alleviate some of the vehicle traffic. Mr. Sherman suggested that the first task would be to compare the cost of the space provided with the cost of the space available at the Buker building, and then analyze the cost of repurposing the Buker building if the P.D. moved to the Stahlman building. He also noted that there are myriad soft costs, not reducible to dollars and cents, that would need to be evaluated. There was general agreement on this approach.

Mr. Bianchi raised a question regarding a comparison of the sq. ft. set forth in the listing agreement (7,320 gsf.) with that set forth in the Assessor's property card (5,958 gsf.). He suggested that his discrepancy should be looked into, and agreement reached as to the actual gsf. available.

Mr. Helm, who had attended the meeting from the beginning, asked to be recognized, and first confirmed to the Committee, as noted at the last meeting, that his sole intention in seeking a petition to purchase the Stahlman property was to keep it in play for the March, 2021, Town meeting. With that now postponed until June, he was hopeful the review and analysis of this property could be completed in time to form a conclusion by the time a petition would have to be filed.

The Chair suggested that the best path forward would be for the Police Department Subcommittee take this on and work together with Chief Cobb to do an analysis and gather the data and necessary information for a thorough review and report back to the full Committee periodically. The Committee and Police

Station Subcommittee were in agreement. The Chair then assigned this review to that Subcommittee to gather information and data, and analyze the proposal, which should include the pros and cons of moving forward – much as that Subcommittee did with regard to the Buker building.

He also asked that the Police Station Subcommittee discuss any outstanding issues that may relate to the Buker building proposal in the context of their analysis of the Stahlman building and a comparison of the two proposals. This would include any outstanding questions Committee members may have related to the Buker building; and, again, asked that members of the Committee with specific questions on the Stahlman building direct them to the Chair, and he will pull together what he receives and forward them to the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee's review would also include working directly with Chief Cobb to ascertain what changes to the existing Buker proposal she believes would enhance its acceptability, including any possibility of minor additions to the building. (He noted that in the Committee's Fourth Report to the Selectmen it reserved the possibility of pursuing this possibility; and, with the new concept of purchasing a building and making additions to it, it is important to compare similar possibilities with the Buker building.)

Finally, he requested of the Subcommittee that it periodically (perhaps every 30 days) present to the full Committee its work and answer any questions Committee members had at that time.

3. *Police Department review – Buker*

Deferred.

4. *Reports*

Rec Dept.: Rip Cross reported that North Branch has responded with an estimate of the proposed work at the SAU building to serve the needs of the Recreation Department. That preliminary estimate is \$225,000, and would include a short handicapped accessible sidewalk from the existing sidewalk to a new entryway; the construction of that new entryway to the space; an internal bathroom added to the space; and other minor modifications as needed, such as "crash" door entries to the hallway. The Chair will pass this information along to the Recreation Commission, as well as a statement of the existing square feet of the space formerly used by the Rec. Dept. in the Buker Building and the approximate square feet of space in the SAU building. He will also ask that the

Rec. Commission keep this Committee informed on the discussions taking place between it and the Outing Club as to shared space in the next few years.

Whipple Subcommittee: Phil Sherman reported on the activities of the Subcommittee.

Academy Building Subcommittee: Peter Bianchi reported that there had been no new activities of the Subcommittee.

Transfer Station land: Joe Cardillo reported that there had been no further activity on the status of the Selectmen's actions regarding the acquisition/use of State land. Bob Bowers reported that he had received an email from Liz Meller of the Waste Management Committee urging that we assist the Selectmen in the negotiation of the purchase of the State land at the transfer station. He responded to her that we had already made that recommendation, and that Joe Cardillo was the Committee's contact with the Selectmen on this issue. He then suggested that when the Committee again discussed the needs at the transfer station, the Committee might wish to invite representatives of the Waste Management Committee for their input.

DPW: Peter Hoglund reported that there had been no further action on the status of the Selectmen's actions regarding the possible acquisition of the land abutting the DPW site.

Buker Building/P.D. safety and security: Mr. Sherman reported that they have looked further at the issues, specifically bulletproofing and the hazard from the sprinkler riser in the communications equipment room, and are making progress.

Other: Mr. Cannon reported that the Fire Department had hired the new Fire Prevention Officer and informed the Committee of his background. He also suggested that the Police Station Subcommittee may want to contact him if it felt he could be of assistance in their evaluation of the Stahlman building.

5. *Old Business*

None.

6. *Other items to come before the Committee*

None.

7. *Action Items*

Previous (from 1-21-28)

A. Colin Beasley to prepare a draft statement of the priorities discussions so far, to be available to the Committee for its meeting on February 18, 2021. **Pending**

(from 1-28-21)

A. Bob Bowers, Phil Sherman, and Rip Cross to prepare a draft charter for review and discussion by the Committee. **Pending**

New

A. Chair to contact Kim Hallquist to obtain the specific date by which a petition must be filed to be on the Town Warrant for the June meeting.

B. Chief Cobb to obtain from the real estate broker a copy of the Warranty Deed to Bob Stahlman (or his designee) of the property.

The next meeting is by Zoom, on Thursday, February 11, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bowers, Chair