

March 15, 2022

Building and Facilities Committee
Police Station Site Review Subcommittee
Minutes of 3-15-22; P.D. Training Room

Members Present: Chief Cobb, Cardillo, Hoglund, Marashio, Keith, Bowers, Vance
Also in attendance: Bill Helm, Selectman; Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator; Adam Ricker,
Town Planner

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

1. Approve Minutes of March 1, 2022

The minutes of the previous meeting of March 1, 2022, were reviewed by the Committee and with one minor change were then approved unanimously.

2. Discussion of each member's rankings/pros and cons list

TDS

Chief Cobb introduced for discussion a continuation of the topic of each member's analysis of the pros and cons for each site. The first site discussed was the TDS property. Joe Cardillo inquired as to the discussion of this property at the last meeting after he had left. Chief Cobb responded that one of the main problems was its apparent lack of availability since the owners had indicated that it would not be for sale. Nancy Marashio stated that both the shape of the lot and its accessibility were concerns. Joe Cardillo noted that there were possibilities for this site and that there were residents who had indicated that it might be a good location for a police station. Bob Bowers stated that there were other concerns, such as its limited accessibility from the side street (Pearl Street), that it would need to be two stories and had similar slope issues as that of the Bonanno property, the garages and parking would have to be in the rear of the property, and that it abutted residential uses. Nancy Marashio noted that the height of the tower in this area of downtown and the general congestion on Main Street at this location were also issues. After consideration of these concerns the committee decided to remove the TDS property from the list of sites to be considered.

Broom

Chief Cobb next raised for discussion the Broom property. She noted that it is 1.4 acres and might meet the needs, but there would have to be further review of what would need to be done to the site to meet those needs. Peter Hoglund inquired as to the building and its internal layout, and whether it was a one-story building. He also suggested that there would have to be a determination of what renovations would be needed and how that would be accomplished. Joe Cardillo confirmed that the building is a one-story building. Bob Bowers stated that there were currently 39-40 parking spaces, but that with any additions to the building that would probably be reduced to more like 20 spaces, given the lay of the land and the need to use that area for access to any garages constructed. He suggested that it might be problematic to add a full second floor, and that there would need to be an addition constructed. Paul Vance suggested that with the age of the building, which he thought was approximately 40 years, renovations could be a problem. Bob Bowers and Joe Cardillo noted that the building was not that old and was probably built in the 1990's. Bill Helm asked to be

recognized and stated that the building was built in 1996. Nancy Marashio stated that if the site was useable to meet the needs she would consider it to be highly acceptable. Adam Ricker stated that the interior is fairly chopped up with small offices and hallways; with approximately 1200 sq. ft. on an upper, half-story. He also noted that it was built on a slab with no basement, and that the site itself contained a lot of ledge. Joe Cardillo reminded the committee that Mr. Broom had stated that the asking price would be \$2.2 million. Paul Vance stated that he liked the site for its safety and security potential (“hardening”). Bob Bowers stated that he thought there were questions on that issue as it abutted the Harbor Bank property on one side, the Sugar River Bank property and Irving gas station on the other side, and a residence to the rear. Chief Cobb noted that the communications tower would not be a problem and that Beltronics had indicated that it would probably require only a 50’ tower. Bob Bowers stated that pedestrian traffic would be a problem as there was not a sidewalk to the property. Paul Vance stated that each site would have pros and cons and the committee should note those as to each site. He suggested that the committee should agree to the issues related to each site and come to a consensus that is meaningful to those who read a final report on our work. It was agreed that this property would remain as a site to be considered.

Academy Building

David Keith started the discussion of the Academy Building site by stating he felt there was a significant problem with having the communications tower at that location. Paul Vance expressed that he had a real concern that the Town would agree to the change in use of this property and the increase in the parking area to serve the new use. Peter Hoglund noted that there is already a communications tower across the Town Green at Buker. Chief Cobb stated that she felt there would be a big impact on how the Town would view having the police station at this site. Nancy Marashio noted that this site would allow for the use of the Buker building for administrative purposes and that the use of an empty Buker building was a big concern of hers, and she felt it would be a big concern of the people in Town – what would be done with an empty Buker building. This is a very important consideration, and, in addition, the Town already owns this site so it would not be necessary to purchase other land. Peter Hoglund stated that any new addition could be designed to be aesthetically acceptable, and that portions of the Buker building could then also be used for storage needs, and it would keep everything in the center of town. Chief Cobb noted that she has the same concerns for safety and security as she has with regard to the present location at the Buker building. It is in an open area, and she doesn’t think that not having a defined use for the Buker building should be a reason to locate a new police station at the Academy Building site. Paul Vance reiterated that it would be a massive site as to parking, along with access and egress, and that with businesses surrounding the site, and with a walkway from the site serving St. Andrews Church, he felt it would be a problem and that it would be a huge change to the center of town. Chief Cobb stated that when considering a 50-year timeline there could be an issue. Bob Bowers inquired of the committee whether this site or the Broom site was the better choice. Peter Hoglund, Chief Cobb, David Keith, and Paul Vance all stated that they felt that the Broom property was the better alternative. Joe Cardillo noted that if the police department was not on board with

March 15, 2022

this site as a good choice it would be a real problem. Peter Hoglund then stated that despite his opinion that the Academy Building site is a good choice and would meet the needs, listening to the discussion he would not object to this site being removed from consideration. The committee then decided to remove the Academy Building site from consideration.

Cricenti

Nancy Marashio opened the discussion of the Cricenti property by noting that there is a problem with this site in that there would have to be decisions made with regard to the use of the remainder of the property not used for a police station. She felt that this would have to be a clearly planned out and defined use before proceeding with any purchase. David Keith stated that it was a lot of money to pay for the site itself and then the amount that would be required to build a new police station, and that it was too much to ask of the Town. Paul Vance stated that the committee had been asked only to decide whether a site would work, and not to decide other issues. Chief Cobb stated that the parcel was much too big for the purposes of a police station. She also inquired whether the cost should figure into whether we took this parcel off the list for consideration. Bob Bowers noted a number of objections he had as to this site, including that the site is removed from the main corridor of town, and would be even further removed if the police station were built in the R-1 zone rather than the commercial zone; it would have a large residential area next to it if the commercial zone were used for affordable housing, and already has residential uses along County Road and at the Fenwood condominium and Highland Ridge development; that the nature of the site and its uses would make safety and security an issue; that there would be access/egress issues due to the frontage of about 400' along the commercial zone up to the residence next to the property on County Road, and whether that access would be just for the police station if it were located in the commercial zone, or whether there would be a shared access with other uses if it were located in the R-1 zone; that the next frontage on County Road after the residence was at the top of the hill coming up County Road and would probably be dangerous to use; that there were multiple access points along County Road in that area, including three serving the hospital, two serving Hubert's, two serving the Cricenti Shopping Center, and one serving the back of the Colonial building, as well as the entrance to the residence abutting the property. He felt there could also be concerns about simultaneous entrance onto County Road in the event of an emergency that called for both the hospital vehicles and police vehicles at the same time. He also noted that pedestrian traffic would be a problem as there was not a sidewalk to the property. Peter Hoglund noted that the other sites under consideration would be stand-alone sites for the police station and not have the problem of multiple uses. Chief Cobb questioned whether this site was consistent with the issue of Town identity and noted that it was not on the main corridor.

Paul Vance stated that the committee's job is to find a site that meets the need, and that 400' frontage on County Road is not a problem. He then asked if we looked at 3-4 acres where the farm is how would that work. Chief Cobb stated that we aren't just looking at the use of 3-4 acres, and that she doesn't want to have as an issue the cost and size of the parcel, which would be a problem. Paul Vance responded that this is a legitimate concern but that in

March 15, 2022

terms of potential this site would work. Joe Cardillo stated that he sees this as a potential can of worms not dissimilar to the issues with the TDS site. He felt it would take a very long time to sort out all these issues and the use of this site. Given all the unknowns and the issues related to this site he does not believe it is a site that should be pursued for consideration. He also noted that there are other issues such as the removal of one of the last available commercial sites from commercial use. Chief Cobb expressed her concern that this will get lost in the shuffle, but that it probably was not a hard “no.” Nancy Marashio stated that she sees this site as a second layer and that if there are other further delays then it is a problem, but not take it off the list at the present time. Bob Bowers stated that he felt fairly strongly that there were so many issues that the site should be taken off the list of those being considered. Chief Cobb stated that she felt it should be left on the list but that a second layer of analysis was needed and there may be issues such that it is a path the Town does not want to pursue. The committee agreed that the Cricenti property will be left on the list as a secondary possibility.

McEnrue

Bob Bowers started the discussion by stating that he felt this property should be kept on the list for consideration. He stated that Harriman had already prepared plans for a new police station on a combined lot with the McEnrue property, and that it included what appeared to be 20 parking spaces, which was not the 40 Chief Cobb has asked for but was sufficient. Location is a primary concern, and the site is in the center of town, residents know where it is and it is in a good location, accessible by sidewalk. He also noted that it is close to areas such as the Town Green, the college, and the elementary school. He acknowledged that Chief Cobb had stated at the last meeting that patrol officers were out on patrol and not at the station, but that if an emergency call came in, there likely would be officers who could respond to those places quickly, if necessary, since not all officers would be out on patrol. Chief Cobb agreed that during the day ordinarily she, perhaps Lt. Keith and a detective would be in the station. Chief Cobb stated that longevity of use is an issue with this site and believes it should be removed from the list of sites under consideration. David Keith stated that with the renovation of Whipple Hall the site would have even more use and parking would become a bigger problem. Paul Vance stated that people in town and the police were not in favor of this site, and it is a very small site which is very close to the road. David Keith stated that unless a fence were put up there would still be a problem with summer camps and general traffic of kids and others walking across the site. Chief Cobb stated that she believes the question has already been asked and answered, citing the Town forums and the Master Plan, and that this site should be removed from consideration. Joe Cardillo stated that perhaps the town does want a new site but use of this site for the police station will remain until the town makes a decision. He also felt that the police department position of not being in favor of staying at this site is a major issue. Paul Vance stated his belief that purchasing this parcel and building a new building would be an inadequate solution – is the committee prepared to say this property really works and is a good solution for a police station for the next 50 years. Peter Hoglund stated that he wasn't sure it was the best location but that it is a feasible solution. Paul Vance stated that if the committee keeps it on the list, it is saying it is a logical site when maybe it isn't. Chief Cobb

March 15, 2022

said that the police department has major concerns about the site itself – it abuts residential homes and site issues remain. Nancy Marashio stated that there is a safety issue at this location and that the parking issue will never be solved; traffic is a serious problem and safety is the most important issue. The committee concluded that this parcel would be removed from consideration.

Bill Helm requested to be recognized and said it was important to move the process along as a decision would need to be made by the fall, which would make June the preferred timeline for a report from the BFC to the Selectmen.

Chief Cobb notified the committee that she had been asked by Colin Beasley, Chair, BFC, to make a report to that committee this Thursday, March 17. Joe Cardillo suggested that given that we were soon to have a report to the BFC it would make more sense for her to give her report at the next BFC meeting, in April, when they would have our report. He volunteered to inform the BFC of our actions to date. The committee agreed, and Chief Cobb will inform Colin Beasley of this committee's conclusion.

3. Preparation of list of top sites to submit to BFC

Based on the discussion above, the committee has concluded that the properties to be submitted to the BFC with a report are Bewley, Broom, and, as a secondary consideration, Cricenti. Bob Bowers suggested that Paul Vance had expressed some ideas on what should be in a report to the BFC and that he also had some thoughts on the topic. He suggested that the two of them could prepare a draft for review and discussion. Chief Cobb noted that she should participate in the preparation of that draft report. The committee agreed that those three would prepare a draft report and submit it to the committee for review and for discussion at the next meeting.

4. Other business

None.

5. Next meeting date

The next meeting will be on March 22, 2022, at 1:00 p.m., in the P.D. Training Room.

Action Items

3-16-22

- A. Bob Bowers, Paul Vance, and Chief Cobb to prepare a draft report to the BFC for review and consideration by the committee.

6. Motion to adjourn.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bowers, Recorder