

Building and Facilities Committee

Minutes of 4-15-21; Zoom

Members Present: Bowers, Sherman, Beasley, Cross, Hogle, Cardillo, Bianchi; Absent: Cannon

Others present: Bob Harrington, DPW; Nancy Barthol, DPW Administrative Assistant; Mike Williams, consultant

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 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 April 1, 2021, were reviewed by the Committee and were then approved unanimously.

2. Old Business

a. Other

DPW land purchase:

The Chair noted that Kim Hallquist had asked the Committee to weigh in on the pending proposal she is bringing before the Selectmen Monday, April 19, to purchase the land abutting the DPW site. Materials related to this have been distributed to the Committee. Peter Hogle informed the Committee that the wetlands study indicated approximately 3-4 acres directly abutting the DPW site to the northwest which were dry and useable; and an additional approximately two acres southwest of that area, across Lyon Brook, which was also dry and useable, and could support a house. This latter portion abuts the DPW site comprising a narrow strip on the other side of Lyon Brook sufficient for access to the land being considered. He stated that he believed the asking price is about \$130,000, and that a recent Town reassessment had put the value somewhere around \$100,000, but he wasn't sure of the exact reassessment amount.

The Chair then called on Mr. Harrington for his thoughts. Mr. Harrington noted first that there is little to no room on the present site for any future needs or expansion of use. Having this land which abuts the present site will allow for any expansion needs or new uses which may arise for a very long time. The cost of relocating the DPW to a new site in the event of needed expansion or new uses would be problematic and extremely expensive. The DPW at its current site is accepted by the residents, but it would seem very likely to be controversial to

move the operation to a new site in Town. In addition, as the Committee is aware from its own review of Town buildings, the cost to move the DPW to a new location would be extremely high, especially in light of recent increases in the sales prices of land throughout the Town. Moreover, he mentioned a neighboring town where new home development led to complaints about the DPW activities being so close, and he is concerned that if the property were developed for homes that could be an issue here. Given all the considerations, he is very much in favor of purchasing this parcel while the opportunity exists.

Peter Bianchi inquired as to the power line easement and its affect on the use of the property by the DPW. It was noted that the power line easement was a very small portion of the eastern end of the property and there already exists a right of way used by the DPW over that easement in that area. This is not a problem. Mr. Bianchi then stated that he believed that there would not be a need for any expansion of the DPW activities and facilities since even with a substantial increase in population there would be the same amount of roads and such an increase in population would not require any additional equipment and use by the DPW. He sees no need or justification for the purchase of land we don't need. He is opposed to supporting the purchase.

Rip Cross agreed with the assessment stated by Mr. Harrington and noted that with the current real estate boom it would be penny-wise and pound-foolish not to purchase this parcel while it is available for the specific needs that exist or may arise for DPW activities and use. After additional discussion expressing support for the purchase for the reasons outlined,

It was moved by Mr. Cross and seconded by Mr. Cardillo

To recommend to the Selectmen that the Town purchase the land abutting the Department of Public Works on Pleasant Street, New London, along with the right of way to that property, as shown on the survey plans presented to the Committee as Plan #13279 recorded at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds on May 11, 1995, and Plan #12493 recorded at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds on August 28, 1992.

Discussion ensued on the motion, with concern expressed that it did not reflect adequately the reasons for the support of the purchase. Mr. Cardillo

noted that the Committee had been asked to review the Stahlman building for purchase by the Town for Police Department purposes, and that presentations on the current petitioned warrant article to purchase Stahlman had greatly expanded into a request that it be purchased for a number of different reasons than that for which it had originally been proposed. He was concerned that the Committee is stating its support for the very specific reason that it should be used for DPW purposes, but once purchased it could be used for any number of purposes and even sold by the Town for private development.

It was noted that the Conservation Commission already had an easement protecting Lyon Brook and had expressed no interest in expanding that easement. Mr. Harrington stated that once the Town purchased the parcel the easement for access to it from Pleasant Street would terminate as the Town already owns the land over which that easement runs. There followed a discussion on whether the motion should be amended to limit the Committee recommendation to use only by and for the DPW; whether it should be amended to require a due diligence review prior to purchase; and whether it should be limited in other ways to ensure its use for the intended purpose as currently stated. The Chair stated that the Town would necessarily do a due diligence review with Town counsel, and it was not a necessary or advisable inclusion in the motion. Others expressed the concern that the decision on the use of the parcel was for the Selectmen to determine or recommend, and that the Committee's vote was only as a recommendation to the Selectmen, who could then do whatever they thought proper and necessary; nor did it seem advisable to try to limit what the Selectmen might deem to be necessary and appropriate at some future date since so much could change over time. After further discussion and consideration,

It was then moved by Mr. Cardillo, seconded by Mr. Cross, and by roll call vote of 6 to 1

Voted: To amend the motion to include at the end the phrase "provided it be used for Town building and facilities purposes," so that the motion would read as follows:

To recommend to the Selectmen that the Town purchase the land abutting the Department of Public Works on Pleasant Street, New London, along with the right of way to that property, as shown on

the survey plans presented to the Committee as Plan #13279 recorded at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds on May 11, 1995, and Plan #12493 recorded at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds on August 28, 1992, provided it be used for Town building and facilities purposes.

Following additional discussion, the motion as amended was called, and by roll call vote of 6 to 1, it was

VOTED: To recommend to the Selectmen that the Town purchase the land abutting the Department of Public Works on Pleasant Street, New London, along with the right of way to that property, as shown on the survey plans presented to the Committee as Plan #13279 recorded at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds on May 11, 1995, and Plan #12493 recorded at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds on August 28, 1992, provided it be used for Town building and facilities purposes.

b. Discussion of Facilities Management software

The Chair requested that Bob Harrington, Director, DPW, discuss his review of software for facilities management. Mr. Harrington stated that he had reviewed several sites online that offer asset and facilities management software packages. He has requested that this Committee provide assistance in analyzing those different programs and helping to determine what best meets the Town's needs. He noted that the DPW already has asset management software for some of its other functions, and this would be an expanded program to specifically include management of facilities.

Mr. Bianchi noted that there is a distinction between "assets" and "facilities," as facilities are a Town asset, but there are many Town assets that are not facilities. He wanted to be sure that the review and discussion, and ultimate goal, was to provide program assistance to manage Town facilities as that is what this Committee is concerned with; the Committee has no input into Town management of other assets, and the distinction should be made clear.

Discussion followed, including the distinction that "buildings and facilities" are a

subset of “assets,” and that the topic being discussed relates solely to facilities management.

Mike Williams joined the meeting as a “guest consultant” of the Committee. Mike has agreed to assist in a review of this issue and to work with Bob Harrington in this review. Mike noted, as discussed, that there is a difference between “assets” and “facilities,” but that they are often interrelated, and programs may handle both issues simultaneously but in different ways. The key is to be sure that what needs to be covered in a program is in fact covered. There may be instances when facilities management, attention to repairs, upkeep and replacement of equipment and materials are all of a piece, and this needs to be considered.

Nancy Barthol, DPW Administrative Assistant, informed the Committee that, as Bob Harrington had noted, the DPW already has programs related to some asset management, and that the Department now has a full-time facilities manager so that a program is necessary to assist in that work.

Phil Sherman noted that he had experience in facilities management and would be happy to share that as this issue is further analyzed.

The Chair then suggested that Peter Hogle continue the discussion with Bob Harrington which he has begun and serve as the Committee’s connection to further review and provide analysis of this issue by Bob Harrington and Mike Williams, with input from Phil Sherman; and that he take the lead in organizing and setting up any meetings that would be appropriate. Mr. Hogle agreed to do so, and Mr. Williams reconfirmed his willingness to work on this issue going forward. The Committee was in agreement that this is an appropriate and efficient way to move forward, with Mr. Hogle periodically informing the Committee of progress, and the group returning to the Committee with its recommendations.

3. *Reports*

a. Transfer station: Mr. Cardillo reported that he and Mr. Hogle had met with DPW personnel at the transfer station, walked the entire site, and discussed needs and concerns. It was a very productive exercise, and he thanked

Mr. Hoglund for putting it together. It was a very efficient means to review a host of issues to bring to the full Committee for further discussion.

b. Other: The Chair reported there were a number of public meetings/forums coming up and wanted the Committee's input as to any presentations by the Committee: Selectmen's meeting on April 19, re: public hearing on Petitioned Bond Warrant Article to purchase the Stahlman building; Budget Committee meeting on April 21, re same; CAC meeting on May 1, on the Committee's report comparing the Stahlman building and the Buker building for Police Department purposes; and Town meeting in June. What should be the Committee's role? Discussion centered on two different roles for the Committee. First, the Committee is primarily a committee formed by the Selectmen to provide information, analysis, and recommendations to the Selectmen. Second, the Committee has an obligation to provide the information it develops and its analysis to other committees and boards in Town when invited to do so. Discussion centered on not wanting to overstep the Committee's role as primarily a source for the Selectmen, but not ignore a corresponding duty to provide to other committees/boards its analysis and conclusions where appropriate. The intention in both instances is not to advocate a position, but simply to ensure that the information developed by the Committee is available for residents' consideration in reaching decisions.

The discussion concluded with the suggestion that the Chair inquire of the Selectmen at its meeting on April 19, if it has objections to the Committee responding to the invitations of the Budget Committee and the CAC to speak to these issues. The Chair agreed to do so.

4. *Action Items*

(from 4-1-21)

- A. Peter Hoglund to discuss with Bob Harrington his thoughts on needs and solutions related to the DPW/transfer station, and to gather the relevant information and facts for future discussions with Mr. Harrington and the Committee. **In process.**

(present)

B. Peter Hogle to confer with Bob Harrington, Mike Williams, and Phil Sherman to establish meetings and discussions to analyze facilities software issues.

The next meeting to be Thursday, April 22, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., by Zoom.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bowers, Chair