

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Capital Improvements Program Committee
Meeting – April 14, 2014
Swanzey Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

Present were Dave Osgood, Steve Bittel and Bruce Bohannon, Deborah Davis, Jeff Goller and Francis Faulkner. Charlie Sheaff was unable to attend. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson Osgood.

Also present was Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe, Dan Scully and Katie Cassidy Sutherland from Daniel V. Scully Architects, and David Bergeron of Brickstone Land Use Consultants.

OTHER BUSINESS

Progress meeting with Architect on Municipal Facilities Needs and Site Alternatives Analysis. Representatives of the consultant firms presented brief overviews of existing building/site analyses and building programs for each of the municipal facilities being considered.

Bergeron discussed his effort to review all Town-owned properties for development potential related to the Town facilities. The Town owns approximately 80 properties, 98% of which are not appropriate for future facility use. Three sites were shown to warrant additional study:

- 120 Pine Street (Map 57, Lot 115), which is a site of a single-family home acquired this past year for non-payment of taxes. It is near the Public Works facility and Recycling Center, and could be used for expansion.
- Cobble Hill Road property (Map 71, Lot 17), a majority of which is wetlands, though 2 acres is uplands and useable, potential for Fire or Police Department use.
- Carpenter Home property (Map 34, Lot 20), which has land available.

Bittel remarked that the Carpenter Home property is subject to restrictions of underlying of trusts.

Individual facilities were discussed one-by one as follows:

Town Hall Structure

- The building is structurally sound except that the roof is unsafe; the trusses need repair or replacement.

- Attic storage should be moved out as soon as possible.
- The exterior is in fair condition, but need some carpentry repairs and painting.
- The roof is leaking and need repairs.
- The interior is overcrowded.
- Accessibility is a problem. The handicap ramp is not compliant or safe, and is to the rear of the building.
- There are life safety code violations in the firehouse portion of the building, specifically fire rating and exits.

Town Hall Program

There presently is 7,200 square feet available in the building, including the firehouse portion. Based on programming of existing and future needs, there is a need for 11,500 square feet of space not including the firehouse.

The site may be too small for much building expansion due to site limitations including the fact that the State right-of-way extends to the bottom of the front steps of the building. An addition to the building would be possible but the well and septic systems would need to be replaced for any expansion. Accommodating additional parking on site is a severe challenge but there is potential for shared parking with the neighboring School District property.

Public Works Structure

- There is a lot of shared space on the property.
- Salt storage at the front of the lot is not in a good location.
- Lots of expensive equipment is stored outside which is not ideal.
- Not enough storage.
- Location and details of well and septic system are uncertain.
- Bay doors are not wide enough for proper maneuvering of equipment.
- Vehicle repairs are hampered by the size of the bays.
- Office is significantly undersized.
- Does not meet fire codes.
- Cemetery shed is in good condition.
- Facility accommodates 20 vehicles, 3 are cemetery vehicles in the cemetery shed.

Faulkner mentioned that there appears to be a well head to the left of the work bays.

Public Works Program

There presently is about 9,000 square feet available in the building. Based on programming of existing and future needs, there is a need for about 21,000 square feet of space to allow for future growth. The existing site is 6-7 acres in size.

It was acknowledged that there is a need for a larger bay area and greater salt storage capacity. The salt shed should be moved to another location on the site, which would allow for expansion of the bay area, though the well location may pose an issue.

Recycling Center Structure

- This is a larger site that is well utilized, though it's an old landfill.
- Many operational inefficiencies.
- Not enough material storage or outside power.
- Inadequate office and bathroom facilities.
- Exterior doors, windows and roof are inadequate.
- Trailers are in poor condition.
- Dumpsters are in good condition.
- None of the outbuildings are worth repairing.
- The property is on the edge of the shoreline protection district, floodplain and wetlands, which severely limit expansion of use of the site.

It was proposed by the consultants that the Town consider locating all Recycling Center facilities under a single large indoor facility.

Recycling Center Program

There presently is 10,245 square feet available space being used. Based on programming of existing and future needs, there is a need for 24,000 square feet of space. The storage area could be reduced.

Police Department Structure

- The Town's newest building.
- Building is generally in good condition and the space is flexible as partitions can be moved.
- The building has a mold problem due to poor envelope and roof design. Roof needs replacement as well.
- Lots of thermal/insulation issues with the building.
- Several functional issues with internal flow are safety issues, with inappropriate mixing of groups of people within the building.
- The Chief's office is too small.
- Inadequate storage, have outdoor storage without environmental controls.
- There are parking conflicts as well, and parking for staff and the public should be better separated.
- Drainage in the parking area is inadequate and winter maintenance is a challenge.
- Building can be expanded to the south a little

- The site is about 2.5 acres in size and slopes up at the back. A retaining wall would allow for some expansion of useable space on the site.
- Site is not ideally located due to it being in a residential neighborhood.

Police Department Program

There presently is about 4,300 square feet available space being used. Future programming needs have not been fully developed yet, but present and future needs may call for space that is double the size of the existing facility.

The septic system can handle expansion of the building, though the well may be in the way.

The existing building could easily be repurposed if not used as a Police Department.

Fire Department Structures

- There are many issues with the existing buildings, from code violations to size restrictions.
- Issues with the Center Fire Station are of the biggest concern. This station and the Town Hall cannot coexist as presently configured.
- Location of Fire Department stations is driven by response times to incidents, and more information is needed on this.
- Future facility needs are also affected by potential for change over time, such as whether there would be full-time firefighters or the need for a municipal ambulance service.

Fire Department Program

There is presently 10,135 square feet of combined space being used in the three firehouses, and all facilities are inadequate. The first estimate of “wanted” facility configurations for the Department came to about 20,000 square feet of space, but a second estimate of “needs” of the Department lowered that figure to about 6,000 square feet.

There is a need for a bunk room, not only for the existing intern program but for the potential for full-time firefighters in the future.

Bergeron noted that there is property along the proposed Safford Drive extension that could be a good location for a new firehouse. He said that approximately 2 acres is available and noted that the property owner has indicated a willingness to give the property to the Town.

Next Steps

Scully stated that the Committee needs to establish priorities for each facility to move forward with the project most effectively. It was agreed that the Committee would review in detail the reports provided and get back to him with priorities

An example of priorities for space include whether in Town Hall there should be separate or combined office spaces. This would drive not only space calculations but internal space configurations.

Bittel asked what the costs were of the alternatives so far, stating that that would likely drive much of the decision-making. Scully stated that only ranges of cost could be developed at this early a stage.

Scully suggested that if, for example, 24-hour fire service is in the offing 10 years out that any new building should anticipate and design for it. If not actually constructed it could be accommodated through design for an addition.

Scully will prepare a priority list for immediate building repairs for presentation to the Committee. He and Sutherland will distribute the facility analyses and programs to the Committee members electronically as soon as possible.

Schedule next meeting

It was decided that the Committee should meet to review the assessments and programs in greater depth on its own over the next two weeks, and it was decided to meet on April 21 at 4:00 PM and April 28 at 4:00 PM at Town Hall.

MINUTES

- Regular meeting(s) of February 19, 2014 – Deferred review and approval to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion at 5:33 p.m. by Goller to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bohannon. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

Submitted by,

Shane O'Keefe
Town Administrator

Approved on April 28, 2014.