

Facilities Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 6, 2021
4 PM
Remotely via Zoom
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Peter Lennon (Vice Chair), Rob Corson, Amanda Kelly, Mark Leighton

Others present: Town Planner Dave Sharples, Police Chief Stephan Poulin, Fire Chief Erik Wilking, Judy Rowan (as a rep of the Budget Recommendations Committee)

Members Absent: Kris Weeks (Chair)

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Lennon at 4 PM.

Mr. Lennon read a statement:

As Acting Chair of the Facilities Committee, I am declaring that an emergency exists and I am invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A:2III(b). Federal State and Local Officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community and its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurrence with their determination, I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of Town Government and services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location. At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely. Even though this meeting is being conducted in a unique manner in unusual circumstances, the usual rules of conduct and decorum will apply.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room. (The attendance was taken.)

1. Approval of Minutes

a. Public Meeting Minutes of April 15, 2021

MOTION: Mr. Corson moved to approve the minutes of April 15, 2021 as drafted. Ms. Kelly seconded. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 4-0.

2. Public Safety Complex Study

Mr. Lennon opened the discussion on the Public Safety study done by CPSM [The Center for Public Safety Management, LLC]. He asked if anyone on the committee had watched the Select Board meeting where the study was discussed, but the members had not, although Mr. Lennon and Mr. Leighton had looked at the report itself. Mr. Lennon said he doesn't know how accurate the news article by Alexander LaCasse

is, as there is nothing in the report that says the Fire Department should stay in the renovated Safety Center and the Police Department move to a new building, nor was there a mention of a satellite Fire Station in the northern part of town. Mr. Lennon asked Chief Wilking whether there were further analytics that supported the new recommendations, and Chief Wilking said when he spoke to Chiefs Pozzo and Piland [of CPSM], he asked for clarification on answers he felt were vague in the report, and the answer was that they don't establish public policy, only give guidance. No additional data has been collected since the 2018-19 study. Mr. Lennon said the CPSM reps anointed a conclusion without having done the work that would narrow the analysis in their reports to that conclusion. Ms. Rowan said based on their data, most of the Fire/EMS events occurred in the downtown area, so it was most likely that the Fire Facility would be in the downtown area. Mr. Lennon insisted that the study does not take a position. Ms. Rowan said it was up to the town to make those decisions from a financial point of view. Mr. Corson said there's info in the report that could target a specific area based on the guidelines and heat map of activity. They didn't pinpoint one area, but there's data there that would support it. Mr. Leighton said they did give an opinion that one of the potential locations considered for a satellite station would take more calls. They also recommended considering the concept of a single Public Safety building if it made financial sense. Mr. Lennon said they're trying to figure out the RFQ to spend \$100,000 on a further study, and he doesn't want people thinking CPSM had narrowed down the options the way it was reported in the paper.

Mr. Lennon asked for feedback on a draft of the RFQ. Mr. Leighton said it talks about a facilities study, but he suggests they add a space needs analysis; it's in the outline, but they should add the wording to make it part of the scope. Ms. Rowan said she believes that the town voted down the second substation twice. She doesn't want the RFQ to give the idea that that recommendation would be a shoo-in, since it's quite controversial. Mr. Lennon asked Mr. Sharples to add that information. Chief Wilking said he believes it was voted down once prior to his arrival in 2005, and never got beyond the Budget Committee/CIP/Select Board process after that. The town has not seen it since 2003. Ms. Rowan said that's not her memory of it, but she just wants the person being hired to be aware that the project is controversial. Mr. Leighton said this is just about getting qualifications back, and they can clarify the options later.

Mr. Lennon asked if they should take a vote to approve the RFQ draft, but Mr. Sharples said that was not necessary. He'll get it out Friday or Monday.

Mr. Lennon said regarding site options, there are nine hypothetical sites, and the RFQ and study talk about narrowing them to three options, then to one. Mr. Corson questioned whether they need to be so specific at this stage. Mr. Lennon said if they think it's premature to discuss that, they can postpone it. Mr. Leighton said once a consultant is selected, they can have a brainstorming session and give them the options. Mr. Lennon asked Chief Wilking to clarify the options. Chief Wilking said the two person team that came to do the FD analysis drove around town, and felt the area where Holland Way intersects Hampton Road is a significant piece of property. From a standpoint of public safety, this area would allow access to the highway and the North Hampton side, and could still service downtown. There's also a property the town owns

on White Oaks Drive. Mr. Corson said that in a previous report, downtown Exeter was the greatest insurance risk, and proximity and speed to get to that area was a critical factor, but he didn't see anything in this report that talked about risk and economic loss that would help them focus on the downtown area. Chief Wilking said the driver of this facility study was reviewing staffing and operations; he doesn't think identifying risk was part of their charge, although there is a portion of the study that focuses on risk. The downtown area obviously offers the largest risk for a fire that will overwhelm their resources quickly.

Kris Weeks, the Committee Chair, mentioned that he was present at this meeting but could only stay for 30 minutes. He had wanted to start the discussion on sites at this meeting; if not, when would be a good time, and who should develop that list? Mr. Leighton said they should have a consultant involved in that discussion. Mr. Weeks said they should come up with something before that. Mr. Sharples said there's not much land left in Exeter, and a lot of it is ledge or wetlands, so he's not finding many suitable sites. Mr. Leighton suggested that they come up with criteria, such as keeping the Fire and Police facilities together, rather than specific options. Ms. Rowan suggested including factors like response time to specific sites to the criteria.

Mr. Lennon advised that members should send ideas about sites to Mr. Sharples, and Mr. Sharples agreed, because they must be sensitive to private property and from a negotiations standpoint they don't want to discuss options in a public forum. Mr. Corson said they also have a shared document where they can put down potential criteria.

Mr. Weeks, Chief Poulin, and Ms. Rowan left at this time.

3. Working Session

a. Review milestone spreadsheet against updated CIP plan

Mr. Lennon asked for feedback on a timeline of Facilities Committee involvement in the CIP. Mr. Leighton suggested they could meet with the Department Heads at the same time as the subcommittees. Mr. Lennon said that's not until October, and the Facilities Committee needs to meet beforehand. They want to make recommendations to the Town Manager and Town Planner before they submit the CIP. Mr. Sharples said there are 11 Department Heads, but only four of them are submitting CIP projects, and only two or three are facilities projects. The Committee generally approved of the timeline.

b. Facilities Master Plan - Goals and Framework

Mr. Corson and Mr. Leighton said they wished the Facilities Condition Assessment was complete prior to their discussion. Mr. Corson said he put all the properties into the shared drive with some commentary. Mr. Leighton asked if Planning could put such a project in the CIP. Mr. Sharples said if they're looking for it to be ready quickly, it may not be a CIP project, since CIP is usually years out. He can talk to the Town Manager about it. Mr. Corson discussed an example of an entry in the assessment using Town Hall. Mr. Lennon said he'd like to ask Ms. Rowan about the progressive debt service analysis, which he understands is not quite finished. Mr. Sharples said Mr. Dean and Bob Kelly have been putting together some financial sheets that he can share.

4. Old Business

a. DPW

Mr. Lennon said the DPW input is on hold, but they should invite them to talk about maintenance and give an update on their garage plans. Mr. Lennon asked if Jeff Beck in Maintenance files status updates quarterly, but Mr. Sharples said he didn't know. He [Mr. Sharples] will invite them to the May 20 meeting.

b. Town Library

Mr. Lennon said that Mr. Weeks found the March 2021 Library Renovation update to be too vague, and asked if the members felt that they needed more specificity. Mr. Corson said they should establish some things that would be helpful to see in these reports, ie where are they in the project, when is completion, how are they tracking the budget, as well as any issues that may have arisen. Mr. Corson said they've removed the upper walkway to the building, so there's only one means of egress. Ms. Kelly said there is an additional door. Chief Wilking said he was unaware that the ramp was coming down. Mr. Corson said they should be doing an interim life safety plan and submitting it to the Fire Department. Chief Wilking said he would be surprised if it had been designed without meeting all the relevant safety requirements. Mr. Corson said ultimately it will meet the requirements, but during construction it's the only egress. Chief Wilking said they usually give some latitude during renovations. It's possible that they did coordinate with the Fire Safety Officer already.

c. Raynes Farm

Ms. Kelly said she had a conversation with the Raynes Farm Trustees on accessibility. They will look at where to put parking, consider a small ramp into the building, and plan the route from the parking lot to the building. She reported that Mr. Bisson said Mobi-Mats might be good for the town to have; if they were mobile, they could be used at different events. They talked about the potential for accessibility in the field. There's a trail that's not very established, and they looked at grades and said maybe they will build out the accessibility down the line. Mr. Lennon asked if the Trustees made a pitch for money for grant matching, and Ms. Kelly said they didn't discuss it, although they did ask for a letter of support. Mr. Corson said that the Facilities Committee asked Raynes Farm what we can do to help them. What is the Facilities attitude toward the complex and support for them going for the money? How high a priority is \$100,000 for Raynes Farm, compared to their other funding priorities? Ms. Kelly said she thinks they should evaluate the project on its merits, and let the town figure it out. Mr. Lennon said if that's the case, then they shouldn't have weighed in on other projects they've done. Ms. Kelly said when it comes to money, she doesn't think it's the committee's charge to determine whether to spend the money or not. They may have to have the Select Board clarify their charge. Mr. Lennon said he thinks it is in their charge, and they'll have to agree to disagree. Ms. Kelly said on this project, they should evaluate whether the project has merit

and move on. Mr. Lennon said they should see whether the project has merit in relation to other projects. Mr. Corson said ultimately, if there's a town owned property, they have a responsibility to be advisors to the town with managing and maintaining. There's a financial part of it. Ms. Kelly said she strongly disagrees, and they should only consider if the price fits what they're asking for.

d. Exeter Build Out Plan

Mr. Sharples said that a build-out plan has been in the works for several years, but has not been completed. His studies money is only \$5,000. Hopefully he can do it this year. Mr. Corson said from a Planning standpoint, it would help to determine growth and what they need to build in for future items. Mr. Sharples said about 450 units were added in the last few years through the approval process by getting variances from the ZBA. A buildout is done looking at current zoning ordinances, so there's an x factor.

5. New Business

- a. There was no new business discussed.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Corson moved to adjourn. Ms. Kelly seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary