

Minutes
Board of Selectmen Meeting
December 13, 2016

6:30 p.m. A joint meeting of the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman Matt Borrelli at the Public Services Administration Building. Present were Ms. Marianne Cooley, Mr. Daniel Matthews, Mr. John Bulian, Mr. Moe Handel, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. Planning Board members included Marty Jacobs, Ted Owens, Paul Alpert, and Jeanne McKnight. Members of the Design Review Board (Bob Dermody, Mark Gluesing), PPBC (George Kent) and Finance Committee (Rick Lunetta, Dick Reilly, Louise Miller) were also present, as were Fire Chief Dennis Condon, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Operations Christopher Coleman, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance David Davison, Director of Planning & Community Development Lee Newman, Director of Design & Construction Steve Popper, Project Manager Mike Retzky, Project Manager Steve Gentile, and representatives of Kaestle Boos Architects.

6:30 p.m. Michael McKeon of KBA presented the work of the design team in the development of the Police & Fire Station project. Mr. Borrelli noted that the Selectmen felt the design was originally too modern, and were concerned about the parking in the front of the building. He said that he felt the current design was an improvement. Ms. McKnight raised questions about access to the facility and the lack of clear parking and pedestrian patterns. She asked whether re-zoning would be required. Mr. Gluesing said that the approach of the DRB is not to dictate design. He said that the Board evaluates what is presented and suggests areas for improvement. He said that the DRB preferred a more modern facility, and did not agree with the need to make it look more traditional. He said that the current plan, while better, still needs a common approach – which it is trying to do too many things. It would be better to use common materials and colors and apply them to an all-modern or all-traditional facility.

Mr. Handel agreed there seems to be a lack of consistency in the design. Mr. Borrelli said that he did not agree with a need to blend the new station in with the look of the Hospital. Mr. Gluesing noted that a tie in could be achieved by materials. Ms. Cooley asked questions about fencing. Mr. Bulian asked about the difference between modern and traditional in the cost to construct and maintain the building. Mr. Borrelli noted the need to have a

“Needham feel” and presence given that it is a 100 year building. He said he favored a more traditional approach.

Mr. Dermody said that the building should speak to what happens there in a poetic and important way. Mr. Gluesing said he had no concerns about Station 2. Mr. Reilly said that the Finance Committee will be interested to understand the need for increases in the size of both buildings. Mr. Lunetta raised concerns about the entrance and access to the front door given that the parking is closer to the back of the building. Ms. Miller reiterated the need for data to support the growth in size and cost. She asked about the option for creating community space within the building. Mr. McKeon noted that in the vast majority of new stations a community room is prominent and in the front of the stations.

Mr. Alpert asked how the building fits into the Chestnut Street corridor. Mr. McKeon said that he is developing elevation drawings that will show the relationship. Mr. Matthews noted that the project needs to move forward, and that operational and practical needs at the stations have changed. He said the project is a top priority of the Board’s. He said that he agreed that the mix and match design is not convincing, and said he preferred a more contemporary approach, and the creation of a good, practical facility like PSAB.

Mr. Jacobs said that he would prefer the Town back-up and study the optimal location for the Police and Fire Station. He said he did not believe enough study had been done. Mr. Borrelli reiterated that the Board believes the current location is optimal. Mr. Handel said that the location signals to the Town our commitment to public safety. He said a well-designed building that can set a standard is preferred, and the function of the building is important and should be visible.

Ms. Miller asked why the building was in the middle of the block. Mr. McKeon said that the fire apron must be at least 200 feet from the intersection. Mr. Matthews said he has seen three master plans that highlighted the need to improve the two stations. The studies revealed that the site was tight so the Town began the process of acquiring property. He said the Board told Town Meeting that the purchases were to allow for the reconstruction of the station, and Town Meeting spent a lot of money with a 2/3 vote. He said he feels the Board considered the options. Mr. McKeon noted that the current site is close to the geographic center of the Town.

Mr. Borrelli noted that both stations may run up against zoning restrictions that would impact their reconstruction. Mr. Owens said that there are a number of ways to address the “parcel that time forgot” other than using an overlay. He noted that requirements can be tweaked, and he feels the zoning can be addressed.

8:00 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Handel moved that the Board enter into executive session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiation position of the public body. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cooley. Mr. Borrelli polled the Board. Unanimous: 5-0.