

Approved

Members

Richard Pilla, Chair
Cliff Barnes, Vice Chair
Christine Cochrane, Secretary
Ron Fucile
Beth Pelick
Mark Trudell
Roger Turner



Town Hall Re-Use Committee

Walpole Town Hall
135 School Street
Walpole, MA 02081

<http://www.walpole-ma.gov/town-hall-re-use-committee>

A meeting of the Walpole Town Hall Re-Use Committee was held on March 6, 2018 at 6:30pm in Room 116 and a note was put on the door of the Executive Conference Room in Town Hall as notice.

The following members were in attendance:

Richard Pilla, Chair
Cliff Barnes, Vice Chair
Christine Cochrane, Secretary
Roger Turner
Mark Trudell
Beth Pelick - Left at 6:47pm

The following member was not in attendance:

Ron Fucile

The following guests were in attendance:

Marc Romeo - Support Member - Arrived at 6:47pm
Sam Obar - Support Member

Richard Pilla calls the meeting to order at 6:40pm.

Minutes January 9, 2018

Cliff Barnes makes a motion to accept and approve the minutes of 2/13/18. Mark Trudell seconds the motion. **The motion is approved 5-0-0.**

Upcoming Meetings

The committee will now meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

Review proposed uses matrix to begin determining most desirable and feasible options

Mr. Pilla presents the matrix. Mr. Pilla states this committee needs to look at all the reuse options with a critical eye to make our recommendations and provide the reasons why that option. He further explains that the options will change based on reports of the Environmental Assessment etc. Mr. Pilla says this is an ongoing process and we need to begin complying each members thoughts and documenting them.

USE #1 - Municipal Building - Town Offices

Roger Turner

- Current Town Hall has a space issue for meetings and storage
- Possibly use Old Town Hall for offices for the various smaller committees

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- Emergency Management is in need of space for supplies
- If used for municipal space it may become an economical burden

Christine Cochrane

- Against being used for municipal space
- Fears it would sit as is with no renovations done
- Would like to see more citizens given access to the building to enjoy

Sam Obar

- Against municipal use
- Town does not need an excuse to have more offices and employees

Marc Romeo

- Municipal should be the last resort use
- It would be the “Walpole Thing” to do but would hate to see that happen

Mark Trudell

- Building Commissioner and DPW agreed this would be the lowest initial cost use but in the long run it would not generate anything positive

Cliff Barnes

- Against municipal use - it would be another building to have an impact on the tax rate

Richard Pilla

- The objection is to have this building be the catalyst for opportunities to bring business downtown
- If municipal use it would be closed nights, weekends and holidays - want it open

USE #2 - Performance & Cultural Center - Town Owned & Operated

Cliff Barnes

- Do not feel the town should own but should be privately owned and operated - Leaning this way but could be convinced otherwise
- If the town continues to own this - the town will have to pay for the repair and updates required and it will be very expensive
- Would like to see a Performance Arts Center
- Would listen to leasing options viable for long term

Mark Trudell

- Selling the building would provide a short term influx of cash
- Lease terms would offer a potential stream of revenue long term for the town
- Lease deal would be a better option for the town
- Would like to see a Performance Center with incorporating the cultural aspects with the Civil War Plaques and the original jail cells

Marc Romeo

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- The ability to have functions and performances in an Art Center is key to increase revenue
- A function space needs to be a part of this reuse
- Town should retain ownership - do not want the town to lose control of what happens in the Old Town Hall
- Town should never be involved in the operational day to day business
- Form a Non-Profit Committee to oversee
- New 500 market rate apartments are being built in downtown Walpole over the next two years - Built in audience is on the way

Sam Obar

- Agrees the town should not manage the facility on a day to day basis

Roger Turner

- Concerned with the restricted size of the performance area due to the location of the current elevator and bathrooms

Christine Cochrane

- Feels a Performance/Function use would be best
- Town keep ownership with a long term lease
- Concerned if a group exists that will provide such a large amount of cash and commitment

Richard Pilla

- Performance vs Cultural - can have both - Rotating displays
- Preserve but make more economically feasible by expanding the current building with additional clean space - Still preserving the historical aspects - Add an additional 1500 sqft
- Would like to conduct a Demographics survey

Roger Turner

- Cautions needing to check on the deed restrictions already in place
- Questions how would the town handle a possible bankruptcy

Schedule site tours to performance/exhibition venues

Marc Romeo reports he is making strides in arranging tours of the following three venues and will report back to the committee with possible dates.

TOURS

1. **TCAN** - Natick, MA - Performing Arts Center - Summer Street - Converted Fire Station - Built in 1890 - 300 seats
2. **Amazing Arts Center** - Framingham, MA - Town owned - Music, Visual Arts, Classes - 300 seats
3. **Franklin Black Box Theatre** - 15W Central Street, Franklin, MA

Old Town Hall Presentation

Mr. Pilla commends the Walpole Historical Society, and the Walpole Historical Commission on a very well done and attended presentation on the Old Town Hall on 2/21/18 at the public library.

Approved

Adjourn

Mr. Turner makes a motion to adjourn at 8:05pm. Mr. Trudell seconds the motion. **The motion is approved 5-0-0.**