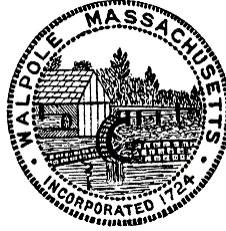


Approved 11/21/17

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 Old Town Hall Re-Use Committee was held on October 3, 2017 at 6:30pm in the Executive Conference Room in Town Hall.

The following members were in attendance:

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

The following guests were in attendance:

Thomas Gregory, Assistant Town Administrator
Sam Obar, Chairman of the Historical Commission
Jeremiah Huson, Architect

Richard Pilla called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

Mr. Pilla reviewed the meeting the Re-Use committee had with the EDC, the next step is going before the BOS on 10/10/17 to present a progress report and then a presentation to the Fall Town Meeting on 10/16/17 under Article 1. The purpose of the October 3rd meeting was to discuss where we are, look at all the suggestions presented to date, and prepare for the progress report. The report is simply to report what the Committee has done so far and who we have met with and what information we now have.

Establishment of a Support Group

A motion was made by Mark Trudell to create a support group to provide expertise and research in pursuit of the ReUse Committee's goal. The motion was seconded by Cliff Barnes.

The motion is approved 7-0-0.

Mr. Pilla appoints the following individuals to the Support Group:

- Jeremiah B. Huson, Associate AIA, AWS Blacksmith / Owner ForgeWorks, Walpole, MA, who has spent many hours measuring the existing layout of Old town hall to create “existing conditions” plans.
- Sam Obar, Chairman of the Walpole Historical Commission and working with Mr. Pilla’s firm who donated to do the Highest and Best Use Analysis.
- Eric Hurwitz, resident who put a lot of energy into creating a document laying out his idea of creating a School of Music in the Old Town Hall.

Potential Disposition Options - Mr. Pilla

Among the options which are available to the Town, are the following:

1. Town to retain ownership and assume all financial responsibility.- Sellbut add deed restrictions to alay concerns expressed by many. (The more restrictions the more likely the purchase price would be lower.
2. Lease to a party willing to make the necessary investment to stabilize the property, In consideration of the investment needed, Town would grant “free rent” for a period of time in order for tenant to recoup their investment in a property they would not own. Town to retain ownership, - make the necessary improvements, and redevelop the facility for a combination of commercial and cultural uses. - remove the drop ceiling and return the hall to its original condition in order to rent the facility, and create a Daycare on a different level

Town enters into a sale/leaseback arrangement whereby purchaser assumes responsibility for all of the costs of the necessary improvements, Town uses the building for its purposes, and then regains ownership after 25-30 years. Under this program, since it is subject to annual appropriations, the extent of the Town’s exposure at any given time is one year which mean considerably less “red ink” than what would be for a general obligation bond.

Review of Reports - Mr. Pilla

- Highest and Best Use Analysis - Mr. Pilla reviewed the uses as allowed “by right” in the CBD zoning district which the Subject Property is located in accordance with the Town’s zoning bylaws. As-built plans have been prepared by Mr. Jeremiah Huson, who noted thatthe 2nd floor has no weight-bearing walls so, it is feasible to open the hall to its “glory days.” The front stairwell would be kept as is.The elevator needs to be made ADA compliant, replacing the boiler is is likely , environmental contamination exists and will need to be remediated, HVAC system will need to be re-engineered and replaced, installation of steps from sidewalk to front door are some of the suggested and require improvements, Jeremiah is still working on basement floor plans which should be completed by TM on 10/16/17
- Parking - Mr. Pilla displayed an aerial photo indicating all municipal, street and parking spaces in the downtown. Mr. Pilla noted that the municipal parking area will need to be managed, especially since many of the parking spaces used by commuter rail users are no longer available as a result of the two proposed residential developments in the downtown. One element of the highest and best use analysis is to determine the demand for particulars uses and a “Gap analysis” will be provided to shows what uses will make the most sense for either Old Town Hall or other spaces in the Downtown., This report is a work in progress and will be completed by Thanksgiving. Environmental Assessment: It is evident that the building has environmental issues which will need to be remediated, and a Phase2 assessment will need to be

done to determine the extent of the environmental problems as well as the estimated costs to do so. The Committee will be asking the Board of Selectmen to appropriate funding for this work

Discussion on the Feasibility of each option

Mr. Pilla asks the Committee to take a look at the June 13, 2017 Public Forum List of suggestions as well as suggestions made at the September 26, 2017 EDC meeting. Each of the suggested uses were discussed whereby the Committee narrowed the list. Not only were the uses discussed, but the feasibility from a physical, cost/benefit, and market demand perspective were considered. The Committee concluded that it was too premature for any conclusions until additional information and analysis was made available.

The consensus of the Committee was that the reuse should include opening the hall back up and using the building for cultural/gathering purposes. In addition, the Committee discussed preserving the iconic face of the building. Another suggestion was to add on to the existing building in a way that would retain the Building's presence along the streetscape by exploring an addition that would create additional value. This addition would be designed to compliment the existing structure.

The need for additional and managed parking was brought up again.

It was also suggested the Committee would be wise to look at the Subject Building along with Blackburn Hall to determine whether the buildings could be programed in a way to generate maximum consumer traffic to the downtown which in turn would be a big plus for local merchants. If the Old Town Hall is done right, it could be a catalyst for the revitalization of Downtown.

Next Steps

- Presentation to Board of Selectmen: Tuesday, October 10, 2017
- Presentation to Town Meeting: Monday, October 16, 2017

Mr. Trudell makes a motion to adjourn at 8:30pm. Mr. Barnes seconds the motion. **The motion is approved 7-0-0.**