



TOWN OF MADISON

CONNECTICUT

06443-2563

MEETING DATE: Thursday July 23, 2018

MEETING PLACE: Town Campus, Room A, 8 Campus Drive, Madison, CT

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Ad Hoc Academy Building Guidance Committee

Members Present: Sarah Barrett, Rob Card, Jerry Davis, Henry Griggs, Bob Hale, Kathryn Hunter, and Tom Scarpati

Others Present: Tom Banisch and Al Goldberg, Board of Selectmen; David Anderson, Town Planner.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

I. Public Comment.

Dick Passero reported that hard copies of committee materials are still not available at the library. Henry Griggs said he would follow up.

II. Presentation by David Anderson, Town Planner

Mr. Anderson presented estimated costs of several possible scenarios that have entered the public discussion on repurposing the Academy Street building. They all assume a cost of about \$900,000 for abatement of the hazardous materials in the building such as asbestos, lead and PCB's. They also assume that construction would take place in 2020 and so the estimates include an escalation factor of four percent per year resulting from higher costs for materials and labor.

A. Full demolition of the building with no construction	\$1,574,430
B. Full renovation of existing building with a minimum of interior re-construction	\$17,730,400

C. Full renovation of existing building with a high degree of interior re-construction	\$28,754,900
D. Part demolition of the building (1936 addition) and partial renovation (1921 section) to a high degree	\$17,816,200
E. Partial demolition (1936 addition) and partial renovation (1921 section) to a minimum degree	\$12,850,300
F. Full demolition and all new construction of a 85,500 square-foot structure	\$21,889,300
G. Full demolition and all new construction of a 107,000 square-foot structure	\$33,991,600

Note: Mr. Anderson’s spreadsheet will be made publicly available in hard copy and on the Town website.

III. The committee turned to a discussion of several topics related to the presentation.

A) Mr. Griggs asked the committee to keep in mind two external considerations:

- 1) The possibility that any degree of demolition could spark a lawsuit under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act, which gives standing to any citizen of the State to sue to prevent “unreasonable demolition” of a structure that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 2) The newly renovated Scranton Memorial Library will be almost double the size of the current library and able to serve as something as a community center. The new building will have more meeting space, including two rooms that can be cordoned off for public use after regular library hours.

B) Ms. Hunter posed several questions, including whether environmental considerations had been incorporated in the estimates. Mr. Anderson said that they had. She also inquired whether a cost estimate could be prepared for a scenario of preserving only the front façade and for hard-scaping the balance of the parcel for use as a park. Mr. Anderson said that numbers could be worked up for that kind of proposal.

C) Mr. Davis reminded the committee that there has been discussion about moving Town offices into a renovated Academy building, which would have the desirable impact of bringing more people downtown to that portion of the Green and help revitalize the area.

D) Mr. Card noted that the process of estimating costs for various scenarios had the advantage of bracketing the range of possibilities. He asked whether the Town has a

vision for the future of the Academy area. Mr. Anderson said that in general, adaptive re-use that would bring vibrancy to the area is the goal. There are no solid or detailed plans, but a corridor to draw people across Route 79 would be desirable. He suggested the Committee consider the Guilford Green as a model with its many and varied businesses and other attractions and steady usage. He noted that a special exception has been made for the Academy building, which is in a residential zone, to bring it to a higher use.

E) Ms. Barnett raised the question that this project may present a good opportunity to create a wastewater treatment facility that would have widespread benefits.

F) The First Selectman, who was in attendance, noted that there are a few potential development ideas from parties who have not yet submitted proposals. The Committee urged him to bring those to the table as soon as possible, preferably within three weeks (by August 10) so that the Committee may incorporate them into its review. Mr. Scarpati mentioned that members of the public are attracted to the idea of a mixed use and any proposals along those lines would be welcome.

G) Mr. Scarpati suggested that any “parametric” rendering of potential projects would be useful, and that even a “wavy line” architect’s drawing could help the public and the Committee to better comprehend how ideas would play out in reality.

H) Mr. Hale cautioned that although it is desirable to develop ideas for public consumption it would be a shame to waste time and money on proposals that probably have no chance of being endorsed by the committee or approved at referendum

IV. Survey research timeline and other deliverables.

The discussion then turned to the status of the survey research. Mr. Griggs said he is pursuing a second possible vendor but that most of the market research firms in Connecticut are limited in scope and capacity: they do mostly commercial work centered on focus groups and supermarket testing. A member of the public supplied him with a reference to an academic researcher in New York who focuses on health care policy.

There was consensus that the Committee would like an opportunity to interview GreatBlue Research before the Selectmen sign a contact with them.

Mr. Scarpati commented that whatever survey numbers are presented to the Committee, “I won’t believe them.” He, Ms. Hunter and Ms. Barnett urged the Committee to seriously consider circulating a town-wide questionnaire, either in lieu of or supplementing a public poll, so that everyone in Madison will have an opportunity to have his or her voice heard.

V. Public comment

Audience members commented that they would like to see the questionnaire idea developed and put into practice and that they are skeptical that a poll of 400 residents, however scientific, will be perceived as representative of the entire town.

VI. Adjournment

There being no objection, the committee adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

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