

TOWN OF MADISON

CONNECTICUT

06443-2563

MEETING DATE: Thursday, September 13, 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.

Members Excused: Rob Card, Tom Scarpati.

Others Present: Bruce Wilson, Board of Selectmen

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m.

II. Public Comment

There was no initial public comment.

III. September 6 minutes

The September 6 minutes were approved without objection.

IV. Report on Recent Communications

A. Message from Town Counsel, Floyd Dugas

In response to his inquiries on behalf of the Committee, Henry Griggs reported that he had received an e-mail by way of the First Selectman's office regarding the potential of a lawsuit against demolition of the Academy building, as follows: "It would be a fair representation to state anyone has standing to bring a claim under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (see Fort Trumbull Conservancy LLC v. Alves, 262 Conn. 480 (2003)), provided they alleged environmental impact. Whether they could ultimately prevail under the facts presented is another question and no one we could answer at this stage without knowing a lot more detail and even then would be largely speculative at this stage." Kathryn Hunter asked if the legal remedy available to a party is injunction (preventing demolition) or if damages might be awarded if such a suit were successful. Mr. Griggs said he would look into it.

B. GreatBlue Research Message on Paper Questionnaire and Timeline

In response to his inquiries on behalf of the Committee, Mr. Griggs reported that he had received a message from Brady Lee of GreatBlue Research Inc. outlining GreatBlue's fee for executing a paper questionnaire. Mr. Brady advised that the additional fee of \$5,000 (already appropriated by the BOS to cover the additional cost of hand questionnaires) would cover only 200 questionnaires. Mr. Grigg's added that he regarded this as a high cost and told Mr. Lee to hold off any planning for the paper questionnaire. The Committee agreed with Mr. Grigg's assessment and began a discussion of alternative approaches. Bob Hale asked if GreatBlue could produce a questionnaire that is scannable, and Mr. Griggs said he would follow up. Members then discussed Ms. Hunter's suggestion that the Town, at its cost, make copies of the online survey questions and place them in the Town Clerk's office during the same period as the phone poll and online survey so that residents can complete the questionnaire in person and the Town Clerk can collect. The collected hand questionnaires could then be delivered to GreatBlue to tally and incorporate into its analysis and summary of poll results. To stay within the additional \$5000, it was even suggested that the Town Clerk could tally the questionnaires and GreatBlue simply analysis and summarize the results. Members agreed that utilizing the Town Clerk's office will maintain some degree of control and prevent duplication. Mr. Grigg's will follow up.

C. Town Clerk on Paper Questionnaire

Mr. Griggs also received a note from Town Clerk Nancy Martucci stating that the Registrars of Voters would have to approve any paper questionnaire that might be distributed in connection with the general election in November and that they could only consider the request after being presented with the exact wording of the questions. Ms. Hunter noted that said information is helpful for any organizations seeking to do an independent poll, but that the paper questionnaire that is under discussion with GreatBlue is to supplement the phone poll and online survey and is not intended to be conducted in advance/outside of GreatBlue's polling.

V. Report of the Developers Subcommittee

Jerry Davis and Ms. Hunter presented a table summarizing the four developers' proposals for Academy. The document will be a key element of the Committee's public education and outreach on the private proposals and possible public uses of the building. Mr. Davis and Ms. Hunter walked the Committee through the basic business terms and proposed legal structure of the private proposals, as well as estimated tax revenues, contingencies for financing and certain impacting factors. Ms. Hunter noted that none of the four proposals includes demolition of the building, but that the Horton Group proposal

requires more land than the others and relocation of a ballfield and septic and parking for the Chamber of Commerce and Youth Services.

The discussion turned to the outlines of the public education and outreach plan, and it was the sense of the Committee that two public information sessions should be conducted providing detailed information on all options to be brought to poll, including developer proposals and community uses. It was suggested that one session be held at the Brown School and one closer to downtown. It was agreed that the Committee will invite the developers to submit a statement to be part of the record.

It was also agreed that the Committee's presentation will include an explanation of the validity of the polling methods being used. Members then discussed need to confirm who is providing pool of numbers for the phone poll, demographic criteria for the poll and logistics of conducting the poll.

The discussion turned to the question of who would choose the developer if public sentiment from the poll points toward a private solution. Bruce Wilson said that would fall under the purview of the Board of Selectmen, which has reserved the right to determine the option(s) to be brought to referendum. Ms. Hunter asked Mr. Wilson to confirm his earlier statements that the BOS will be guided by the public poll in its decision-making for the referendum.

VI. Report of the Other Uses Subcommittee

The Committee then turned to the questions that it has for Colliers International, especially the issue of finding comparables for mixed public/private or public only uses.

Sarah Barrett mentioned the example of the Marketplace in Roanoke, Va., which Centerbrook Architects worked on. There was continuing discussion of whether mixed private/public options should be included in the public poll given the lack of any private proposal for such uses (i.e. marketplace and cultural arts center) and the Town's ability to operate a commercial enterprise. Committee members have not yet reached agreement on the scope of options and will wait for some guidance from GreatBlue on how to format and frame questions for the poll before voting on which options to bring to poll.

Mr. Wilson suggested that the public information and outreach include an explanation of the options not brought to poll and reasons therefor.

Returning to cost estimates, among the questions that Colliers will be asked to help answer are:

What are the likely operating costs for various public uses?

What are the costs of moving Town offices to Academy?

What comparables exist for various models under discussion?

Why are the construction and project costs cited by the developers significantly lower than the estimates Colliers has provided?

In addition, the Committee would like Colliers to provide an existing inventory of meeting and function space in Madison that is available for public use.

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hale both reminded the Committee about the “Madison model” where certain functions such as custodial services are shared for municipal uses.

Mr. Hale also said he would like to re-visit the cost estimates that Colliers provided for remediation of hazardous materials in the building.

Mr. Davis noted that most of the developers are utilizing grants and credits for construction and asked if the Town had researched the same. The Committee agreed that funding sources might be an important factor in lowering the cost of community/public options.

Mr. Wilson asked that the Committee provide an update at the Board of Selectmen meeting scheduled for September 24th.

VII. Public Comment

Dick Passero suggested that the developers proposal matrix be expanded to provide the same information for the community/public uses and that the Committee’s public information and outreach include a detailed description of the Academy building – the “asset” – that is to be voted on (as many in the public have not seen the interior of Academy). He also suggested that the description of estimated tax revenues from developers’ private proposals be presented in terms of per household benefit, as many might simply see a number and assume it will impact the mill rate. Catherine Ferrante echoed Mr. Passero’s sentiments regarding presentation of estimated tax revenues for the private proposals and endorsed breaking down all numbers (revenues and municipal restoration costs) on a per household basis so that the public can understand the actual financial impact of all options. The same members of the public commented that the Committee that the public education campaign should take care not to let people dwell on the annual revenues that the developers have suggested would accrue to the Town, since the major costs under any development scenario are in the area of construction.

VIII. Adjournment

Ms. Barrett moved to adjourn, and Mr. Davis seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The Committee adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

The Town of Madison does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and the meeting facilities are ADA accessible. Individuals who need assistance are invited to make their needs known by contacting the ToADA/Human Resources Director Debra Milardo at 203.245.5603 (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf -- 203.245.5638) or by email to milardod@madisonct.org at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting.