

**TOWN OF MADISON**

**CONNECTICUT 06443-2563**

**MEETING DATE:** Thursday, October 4, 2018

**MEETING PLACE:** Town Campus, Room D, 8 Campus Drive, Madison, CT

**SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

**Ad Hoc Academy Building Guidance Committee**

Members Present: Sarah Barrett, Jerry Davis, Henry Griggs, Bob Hale, Kathryn Hunter.

Members Absent: Rob Card, Tom Scarpati.

Others Present: Al Goldberg, 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 27 Minutes:

Mr. Hale moved that the September 27 minutes be approved, which Ms. Hunter seconded. The motion passed without objection.

IV. Communication from Town Counsel:

Chair, Henry Griggs, reported that Town Counsel advised that review and discussion of the draft poll/survey from GreatBlue Research does not qualify for "Executive Session". Mr. Griggs suggested that the Committee work on same in small groups to avoid "publishing" the contents of the poll/survey prior to completion. Kathryn Hunter and Sarah Barrett expressed their confusion over the need for confidentiality in the work, noting that the Committee has been openly discussing the content and substance of the poll/survey at meetings for weeks now. Ms. Hunter noted that transparency in the process is one of the primary purposes/goals of the Committee.

V. Developers Subcommittee:

Jerry Davis reported that he is updating the matrix of private developer proposals and will prepare a mirror version for the various public/municipal options. In addition, he will include the cost/benefit per household for the various proposals (but must discuss same with Assessor to determine the most accurate measure).

VI. Report of Discussion with GreatBlue Research on Draft Survey:

Ms. Hunter reported on her call with GreatBlue Research with comments on the [initial] draft poll/survey questionnaire. Ms. Hunter had four global comments on the questionnaire. The first was to structure the questionnaire to be more “directional” than “informational”, as the purpose of the poll/survey is to provide the BOS with a clear direction from residents as to what to do with Academy. GBR advised that, in addition to asking respondents to gauge the level of support and opposition to each option presented, a question can be added asking respondents to choose one favored option to bring to referendum. The second was a request to clearly distinguish the private developer proposals from the proposals for community uses for ease of public understanding. The third regarded rotating the two sets of proposals (and questions within each set) to avoid bias. And the fourth was whether there should be a separate question about keeping the open space behind the Academy building.

The last point led to a discussion of the land question and whether it was implicit that the land is not included by virtue of the building-only developer proposals. Bob Hale noted that all of the developer proposals include some land for parking and septic and that perhaps this should be quantified by acreage. Ms. Hunter suggested that since we don't have exact numbers, this may be addressed by reference to the land set forth in each proposal for ingress, egress, parking and septic, so that everyone understands this is not the ball fields, playground and open space. Bob Hale added that the issue of additional parking for the public proposals needs further exploration and should be addressed in the public education campaign and the survey. Jerry Davis and other Committee members supported a separate question about keeping the open space behind the Academy building, and Al Goldberg said it would be useful for the BOS to have that information.

Ms. Hunter then updated the Committee on her discussion with GreatBlue on the paper questionnaire to supplement the phone poll and online survey. GreatBlue suggested setting up a dedicated computer at Town Hall in lieu of the paper version - for use of voters who don't have a computer at home or who require assistance in using. Ms. Hunter opined that this is a fair compromise on the issue, as it allows all who wish to have their voices heard to participate through the online survey, while preserving GreatBlue's control over the process and results. Ms. Hunter noted that the GreatBlue contract caps online responses at 1,000 and requested that the cap be raised. Bob Hale questioned the cap altogether. Mr. Griggs said he would follow-up with GreatBlue on both the dedicated computer for public use and raising/lifting the cap.

## VII. Other Uses Subcommittee:

Ms. Barrett recapped the various community-based proposals that the Committee has discussed and as shown on the draft poll/survey from GBR: a park, moving Town Hall, a community/arts center, the “Hand” marketplace/events center and the Card model (combination Town Hall and community center). Committee members agreed that a reduction in options was preferable to avoid diluting the poll. Ms. Hunter noted that Rob Card had agreed that the “Card” model may be eliminated on the condition that the community center option include meeting space (as there is a shortage in town). Mr. Davis remarked that the community center and marketplace proposals have considerable overlap and suggested that the marketplace option be folded into the community center option. Ms. Barrett explained that the marketplace/events center proposal is a retail use/commercial enterprise designed to generate income. Members debated the two options and features of each. Mr. Davis suggested that he would circulate a list of specific attributes of the two proposals that might be tested separately on the GBR questionnaire. Members voiced concern that this might confuse the issue and weaken support for a traditional community center option. The Committee agreed to defer a final decision on the community-based options until the next meeting.

Mr. Davis also urged the Committee to consider the risk factors associated with the various proposals and how they can be presented objectively and whether such information is included in the poll/survey or solely in the public education and information materials.

## VIII. Public Information Sessions and Publications:

The Committee tentatively scheduled two public information sessions (one in the afternoon at the Senior Center and one in the evening at Polson) for November 13th or 14th. Sarah Barrett will check on availability of space on those dates.

Mr. Goldberg urged the Committee to “give it time” between the information session and the start of the telephone survey. That would point to a December 3rd start of the phone poll by GBR.

Mr. Griggs agreed to follow-up with the BOS on Town’s publishing of poll/survey notices and public education materials in the Source and other venues (including possible social media sites).

## IX. Public Comment:

Catherine Ferrante recommended that the private and community options be made public at the same time (in same information materials) and not staggered. She also opined that the marketplace option is not feasible for the Town since it lacks a private developer proposal and requires a commercial operator. And, she suggested the Committee use the term “gymnasium” as opposed to “gym” to distinguish it from a private fitness center in

the Dakota developer proposal.

Roz Fahey suggested that there might be too many questions on the draft poll/survey and that the Committee should consider eliminating some questions and options.

Dick Passero said the process of compiling information and preparing the questionnaire has become “exhausting and complicated” and urged the Committee to ensure that its public information communications and the survey questions be clear and understandable.

X. Adjournment:

Ms. Hunter moved to adjourn, and Mr. Hale seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The Committee adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

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