

TOWN OF MADISON
CONNECTICUT 06443-2563

MEETING DATE: Thursday, October 18, 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, Henry Griggs, Bob Hale, Kathryn Hunter, Jerry Davis
and Tom Scarpati

Members Absent: Rob Card

I. Call to Order:

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

II. Public Comment:

Dick Passero handed out an inventory of parking in the vicinity of the Academy Building, including 40 spaces along Academy Street, 62 on School Street, 30 at the basketball courts, 30 at the Congregational Church, and 134 at St. Margaret's. Bob Hale noted that guidelines for parking take into account the square footage and use of the building being served, with different formulas for municipal use, office use, retail businesses, and residential uses. Mr. Hale advised that it will be a P&Z decision on parking for whatever reuse is made of Academy and that surrounding parking will be taken into consideration.

III. October 11 Minutes:

Mr. Hale moved that the October 11 minutes be approved with a short amendment that Ms. Barret had circulated earlier in the week. Jerry David seconded the motion, which was approved by all members present.

IV. Discussion of GreatBlue Contract:

Henry Griggs reported on his communications with GreatBlue regarding 1) password protection for the online survey, and 2) adding capacity for more than 1,000 respondents to the online survey. It was the sense of the Committee that the password

protection was expensive and cumbersome, but that added capacity is worth pursuing. Mr. Griggs agreed to follow up with GreatBlue to get clarity on whether additional charges would be incurred if the GreatBlue contract is changed to add capacity even if 1,000 or fewer respondents answer the online questionnaire. Mr. Griggs will also follow up on a dedicated computer for the Town Clerk's office with link for online survey.

V. Report on Meeting with Colliers International:

Ms. Barrett, Mr. Hale and Ms. Hunter met with Marc Sklenka of Colliers International regarding cost estimates for renovation of the Academy. The original Plan B model estimate by Colliers that renovation of the building would cost \$17.7 million was revised downward per earlier discussions (by assuming lower costs per square foot for construction and other line item adjustments). After including work on the roof and installation of a commercial kitchen, Colliers provided a budget estimate of \$13.6 million, which Mr. Sklenka defended as a responsible budget projection (assuming construction in 2020). Mr. Griggs noted that such a precise figure suggests a degree of accuracy that is not inherent in this level of estimation, and suggested the Committee settle on a figure of \$14 million when describing the project. The Committee agreed on rounding to \$14 million and agreed that the Plan B model, which retains the building exterior and the interior layout, is suitable for all of the community-based options that will be brought to poll.

The discussion turned to the question of historic preservation tax credits and how they could bring the net renovation costs down significantly, whether the developer is a private party or the Town. Mr. Davis noted the significance of this information and its impact on cost estimates for the community-based options. Members discussed whether the potential reduction should be stated on the poll/survey as a percentage of total estimate or in dollar terms. Mr. Scarpati suggested that the poll/survey expressly state that the total \$14 million estimated project cost may be reduced by a stated dollar amount (based on tax credits). Mr. Davis agreed if the likelihood of historic tax credits is high. Mr. Griggs agreed to check into the likelihood of those credits being made available and report back to the Committee.

The discussion turned to other costs associated with proposed (specific) uses of Academy under the community center, town hall and marketplace proposals. Ms. Barrett noted that the Colliers estimate does not include a higher grade kitchen or interior finishes to the small theater or gym stage. Mr. Hale remarked that there are quantifiable costs associated with setting up a theatre. He suggested looking at the light-and-sound package installed at the high school as an example.

VI. Discussion of Community Options to be Included on the Survey:

The Committee turned to the topic of options for public use that should be included on the GBR poll/survey. Ms. Barrett restated here support for the Hand model (marketplace/events center) and the reasons therefor. Ms. Hunter remarked that she felt the inclusion of a marketplace as stand-alone option was not responsible because it is a commercial retail use

unsupported by a private proposal and that the Town is not capable of operating a 50,000 sf commercial enterprise. She noted that such a retail use would compete with Madison's downtown commercial center. Ms. Barrett disagreed. Members discussed whether the inclusion of a marketplace as one component of the expanded community center model would be the clearest way to present to the option to the public, while preserving the ability for the Town to include a marketplace if the community center option prevails at poll. Ms. Hunter noted that this would avoid confusion and dilution of the poll/survey on the community-based side. Most members agreed that if the poll/survey shows a preference for a community center over other uses, the Board of Selectmen could then pursue the issue of the marketplace (and other uses and activities to be included in the community center proposal) once the survey results are delivered and prior to referendum. Mr. Scarpati emphasized that the Board of Selectmen won't spend the funds needed for a feasibility study unless and until public opinion regarding the public option is clear-cut. He agreed that if the community center option is highly supported by the public, there will be an opportunity to advocate a marketplace within the center.

MOTION: Mr. Davis moved that the Committee return a draft poll/survey questionnaire to GreatBlue Research that includes three options for public use: a park, moving Town Hall, and a community center, and that the last option include reference to a marketplace among possible uses. Mr. Hale seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by all members present.

Discussion then turned to the Town Hall option on the poll/survey. As presently crafted, this option relocates the Town Campus offices to Academy. Mr. Scarpati stated that it was an oversight for the Committee not to include renovation and adaptive reuse of the Town Campus in the option. Ms. Hunter noted that the Committee does not have cost estimates for the conversion. The Committee agreed to ask Colliers to provide cost estimates for conversion of the Town Campus building to a community center.

VII. Update on Public Information Sessions:

Mr. Griggs noted that the AGC's press release regarding the upcoming GreatBlue phone poll and online survey was published in this week's Source. Ms. Hunter asked Committee members to review the draft "script" for the Public Education and Information Session and provide comments and edits. Mr. Hale suggested that the Committee reach out to the Town to assist with the slideshow to accompany the AGC's presentation.

VIII. Public Comment:

Catherine Ferrante commented that the people who will vote on the referendum are motivated to do so, referring to an earlier comment by Mr. Griggs that the people who fill out the questionnaire online are motivated and able to do so and as such do not reflect a random sample as with the telephone poll.

IX. Adjournment:

Mr. Scarpati moved to adjourn, and Mr. Davis seconded the motion, which was approved by all members present. The Committee adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

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