

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS WORKING GROUP
Room 4, Belmont Town Hall
MINUTES OF September 29, 2017

2017 OCT 23 PM 2:01

Members Present: Pat Bruschi, Floyd Carman, Anne Marie Mahoney, Roy Epstein, Jenny Fallon

Members Absent: Phyllis Marshall, Mark Paolillo

Others in Attendance:

Gerald Boyle, Director of Facilities; Gail Mann, Library Trustee; Senior Planner Jeffrey Wheeler; Spencer Gober, Assistant Town Planner and HDC Liaison; Assistant Police Chief MacIsaac; Michael Smith, of the Historic District Commission (HDC)

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m.

Police Station: Short- and Long-term Proposals – HDC Input

Chair Mahoney began by stating that the Historic District Commission needs to be informed about the short-term plan for the Police Station. An elevator may be placed on the exterior of the building. She asked what the "Historical" impact would be of placing the elevator there. Mr. Epstein explained where the shaft would potentially be located. Mr. Smith said the front of the building is a concern, but the back of the building would not present an issue. Chair Mahoney added that a sally port would need to be placed on the building's side.

Mr. Carman stated that there is an even chance that the elevator will be in the front of the building. Mr. Epstein added that it would be only there for the next 8-10 years or so (after which a long-term plan will hopefully be in action).

In answer to a question (from Mr. Boyle) of what his major concern might be (with regard to the externally placed elevator), Mr. Smith said it would be best not to destroy the integrity of the existing exterior façade of the building. He expressed interest in partnering with this group to solve the challenges. Mr. Epstein raised the issue of the narrow driveway. He said putting the elevator on the left side of the building would fit with the design of the building, but might impact the driveway's access. This will need to be studied further. Mr. Epstein asked if the HDC would want to weigh in on the Light Building, Mr. Smith replied, yes it would. He requested to be involved with the architects and with the design planning.

Police Station: Long-term Proposal – DPW Neighborhood Meeting Recap

Chair Mahoney noted that the meeting last night went well, with about 20 neighbors in attendance. The feedback was valuable and mainly concerned sight lines, traffic, sound, landscaping, etc. She noted that it is challenging to show a picture of the potential long-term Police Station plan, as people get attached to its details, even when it is meant as the most

basic of a rough concept. It may not be worth it, she said, to show drawings in meetings going forward, since what we are showing is simply an outline of what will fit on the site. This point was briefly discussed. Mr. Epstein said it will be helpful if the MCPWG becomes up to speed on the process of converting a private way into a public way, as this will need to be elucidated (concerning Woodland Street) going forward. This point was briefly explored.

Mr. Epstein noted that several attendees at the meeting described access from Pleasant Street as a “deal breaker”. His view was that it was premature to take a position on this question but suggested neighborhood traffic and vehicle count data will be useful to assess potential impact on use of Woodland Street.

Special Town Meeting (STM): Short-Term Solution Warrant Articles, and MCPWG Report

Ms. Fallon suggested that perhaps the STM article be put forth at the STM *before* the MCPWG report is issued. It might be less confusing for TMMs this way.

Chair Mahoney read the draft STM motion (Article 4). It was noted that the article pertains to the short-term plans, which will be explained in the MCPWG report. The MCPWG report was then discussed, with questions including:

- what will be the report’s content?
- how many priority scenarios should be put forth?
- what financials should be included?
- what timing scenarios should be included?

The group discussed key messaging for TMMs:

- be clear about the impetus for the short-term plans (to keep buildings running before long-term plans can be implemented)
- explain why they are requesting money (at STM) to move forward short-term plans now
- explain that this approach allows for a considered strategy that integrates planning for the BHS, Library, DPW, and the Police Station
- explain that this approach allows for the opportunity to recommend long-term planning at the annual TM in June
- be clear that the plans are evolving, are fluid, and involve many moving pieces (BHS outcome unknown, Library outcome unknown)

Chair Mahoney stated that SMMA is currently exploring some of the issues with the Police Station, so that there may not be a specific short-term plan ready for the STM.

Discussion of Financial Report for STM

The group then discussed what fees will need to be included in the fiscal request for the article (cost of design? OPM? etc.). The full short-term costs (DPW, Police Station) overall will not be known until the design phase is completed. It was suggested that an “order of magnitude” number be provided to TMMs.

Assistant Chief MacIsaac asked about the BHS debt exclusion question: could the Police Station be included on the BHS ballot? Ms. Brusch replied that there can be two questions on the ballot, but they will need to be separate questions, not combined.

The group discussed issues relating to potential locations for the Police Station. The Police Station can be built (on the DPW site) without re-doing the DPW. There is pressure to deal with the Police Station now, Mr. Carman said, there is a real lawsuit risk, in waiting.

Treasurer’s Financing Memo: BHS, Police Station, DPW, Library, Operating

Mr. Carman explained his memo concerning the above noted facilities. There are no specific dollar numbers attached. He included potential operating overrides in 2020 and 2028. Other issues that need to be considered:

- Rink
- BMLD Substations
- Incinerator Site
- Community Path
- Waverley Sq. Facelift
- Future School Renovations
- Belmont Center Parking Garage

Other questions to consider for each potential project:

- is it mission critical?
- does it improve the quality of life for the community as a whole?
- does it generate revenue?
- is the project cost-neutral?
- what are the long-term implications of a decision or lack thereof?
- what are the barriers to the planning?

The group agreed that the memo is a useful tool for fiscal planning purposes.

Library Fundraising

Ms. Mann stated that a fundraising goal will not be identified at the STM. An expert fundraiser will need to be consulted and that has not happened yet.

Minutes

Chair Mahoney noted that the following sets of minutes need approval:

- ***September 15, 2017*** – Mr. Epstein reviewed his edits to this draft. His edits will be circulated for the group to review and a vote will be taken at another meeting.
- ***September 22, 2017*** – This set will be approved at a future meeting as well.

Planning for Public Meeting and Possible Tours

Chair Mahoney noted that determining a tour date (for the public, of the Police Station and the DPW) is still in process.

She will send out slides (ahead of time) for the October 19 Community meeting. Feedback is welcome.

Other

Mr. Epstein suggested that Town Moderator, Mr. Michael Widmer, be at the next MCPWG meeting.

The potential building committee for the short-term DPW plan was very briefly discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Next meeting: Friday, October 13, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 4 of Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Gibalerio,
Minutes Recorder