

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

March 3, 2015

Town Hall – Main Level, Helen Nelson Conference Room

CORRECTED SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

(Corrections are in Bold)

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Alan Bongiovanni at 5:00 PM.

II. Roll Call – Members present: Alan Bongiovanni, Chairperson; Jim Marocchini; Dave Nagel; Rodney Mortensen; Whit Przech; and Sarah Jorgensen Bucchi (arrived at 5:12 PM). Others present: Members of the public; Chuck Boos, Freddy Khericha, and Nelson Bastos, Kaestle Boos Associates; Andy Brecher, Economic Development Director; Dave Langdon, Director of Facilities Management; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.

III. Public Participation – Anna Eddy, 41 Churchill Way and President of the Library Board of Trustees. She was before the Committee last month and it is her understanding that some of her statements were misconstrued, or she misunderstood the question, and her answer caused confusion. She wants to set the record straight. The question related to whether the Board was in negotiations with the Town regarding parking. In her mind that meant active negotiations. The Board is not currently in active negotiations. That would mean that the Board have a contract in front of them and were doing some bartering. She can give a timeline to let the Committee know what the Board has done with the Mayor and the Town Manager and Council representatives. They started back in December 2013 when the Board established an ad hoc committee with the charge to arrange and meet with representatives from the Town. That finally came to be on May 7, 2014. They met with the Mayor, the Town Manager and several Town Council representatives about the utilization of the library's open land for parking. There was nothing concrete at that time. On May 12, 2014 the Mayor came to the Trustee's meeting and went through the open space in conjunction with the Town's renovation plans and the space that the library had. They talked about the library's footprint. From there they decided to continue. Exploring would really go beyond that and so the Trustees hired an attorney in the summer of 2014 to draft an agreement as a starting point between the library and the Town. That agreement was in the works through August and September, up until the time the referendum failed. At that time it made sense to the Board to stop what they were doing because the Town was going back to the drawing board with the formation of this Committee. Although there is nothing active the Board is still keeping the door open. It is hard to put the pieces of the puzzle together when you are still figuring out how the pieces are shaped. That is where things stand right now. The Board is dealing with the

Mayor and the Town Manager, both Ms. Eddy and the chair of the Board's site committee, they met with them on November 12th regarding the Town's addition after the referendum and the impact on the proposed utilization of the library property. During that discussion they talked about the Trustee's decision for an expanded facility, formally, for the first time. At that point it was recommended that the Board make a presentation to the Town Council, which they did on January 13th. There was a tour and a presentation. The Committee was invited to that and most members attended. That is where the Board is. Are there negotiations? Not formally, but have there been talks? Yes.

Scott Greczowski, 46 Miami Avenue. His wife volunteers for the Human Services food bank. They were cited by OSHA and the food that has been stored on the stage must be moved off the stage. On the Human Services side there is something that needs to be done.

IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Mr. Przech made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2015 meeting as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Marocchini. The motion passed by a vote of 5 YES to 0 NO.

V. Discussion with the Economic Development Director – Andy Brecher, Economic Development Director, spoke with the Committee. He is tasked with assisting with business retention and recruitment, and also with special projects. He is also the point person to improve the Town's brand and strategy for the future. The grand list is stagnant. A lot of young people are not being attracted to move to town. The Town could encourage high density housing for the top ten percent of wage earners. These people value experiences more than possessions. They are not interested in repairs or home maintenance. They like games, sports and activities. An expanded recreation center on the Town Hall campus would help to attract this type of potential resident. Make the recreation center the outstanding feature of the project and of Newington Center, like the Town did previously with the library. Make it a space with an excellent heating and air conditioning system for use 52 weeks a year. He is advocating for attracting this new segment of the population. He would like to see an award winning recreation center.

VI. Town Hall Conceptual Starting Point Workshop – Presented by Chuck Boos of Kaestle Boos Associates, the Project Architect. This presentation is a vision for the project. The goal is to create a building with an image that reflects the character of the Town. It should respect zoning requirements, especially the setback line along Cedar Street. The building should be readily identifiable by its main entrance. This is important for visitors. They will see the entrance when they turn on to Mazzoccoli Way. He discussed the various drawings, starting with the Site Plan at Town Hall Complex. It showed additional parking for 95 to 98 cars while respecting the space needed for the potential future library addition. He discussed the Main Level Floor Plan. The main entrance would be five feet below the upper level and nine feet above the lower level. The Parks and Recreation area could be segregated for weekend or evening programs without having the rest of the building open. The new promenade corridor, 16 feet wide, would go from the main entrance and lead to a large meeting room for the Town Council and the Board of Education. The Town Clerk, Tax Office, Assessor's Office, and

Registrars of Voters offices would be on this level, with Board of Education spaces in the rear. This concept retains the courtyard, which lets natural light into the center of the building. He discussed the Upper Level Floor Plan, which shows two gymnasiums, locker rooms, the Building Department, Engineering Department, Town Planner's Office, Town Manager's Office, Finance Office, and Health Department. The gym would be three feet above the level of the upper parking lot. This can meet the requested Community Center program. He discussed the Lower Level Floor Plan. This would house Human Services, Facilities Management and the Transition Academy. The boiler room would also remain on the lower level. It could stay as it is or an extension could be built. Mr. Boos concluded his presentation with some general comments: The core facility will not be torn down. Other sections will be new. You could only put Parks and Recreation in the south end, where they are now, if you demolished the whole building. He moved them to the north end to accommodate their needs.

Mr. Nagel asked if Human Services were displacing Channel 14 (NCTV), where would NCTV go. Mr. Boos replied they could stay where they are or they could be moved to the main level with the Information Technology Department. Mr. Nagel noted that NCTV's area had been renovated just a few years ago with state of the art equipment. Mr. Mortensen asked about the south side of the building design, how many feet would it be from the building to the road? Answer: 45 feet to the curb, extending out to 60 feet. Mr. Mortensen noted that parking for everybody is atrocious now. Response: the total gain in parking would be close to 100 spaces. Mr. Mortensen stated that the big issue is, with the talks between the library and the Town, to protect the library space for future expansion. Does this plan benefit everybody? Mr. Bongiovanni stated that the design presented fits on the site, and that the Committee needs time to review and digest the plan and how well it meets the Committee's needs. He felt it was a beautiful rendering. Mr. Boos stated that he recognized that there was an upper limit in terms of spending. He encouraged the Committee members not to confuse image with dollars. The dollars are in the area. He felt the project could be done within the previous project's budget limit. You might also find space that the police department could use. It is premature to put a cost number on the table. He encouraged the Committee to look at the needs analysis and come up with questions. Mr. Marocchini asked Mr. Boos to point out the areas that would be torn down. These are the existing main entrance to parks and recreation and much of their space, the area that is within 35 feet of Cedar Street, and the Transition Academy wing. The Transition Academy wing is at a completely different level. Mr. Bongiovanni asked if Information Technologies' functions could be on the lower level. Answer: some could. Much of the main level is from the old classroom module, where functions can be consolidated. Ms. Jorgensen-Buchi stated that Human Services doesn't want the Transition Academy next to them. Human Services were originally supposed to be in that area. They need the garage area for pallets of food. She has a problem with demolishing an area that was just renovated in 2011. There would no longer be an auditorium. A theater group in town rents a building because they cannot use the Town Hall auditorium. Mr. Nagel stated that this was why he recommended that the Committee ask the Fire Marshal about the items needed for code correction. Mr. Baron stated that the Chief had received the request and responded that he would be providing a detailed code review.

Mr. Mortensen asked about the elevation difference. Answer: six feet from Garfield Street. The site would be fully accessible. Mr. Mortensen stated that when the Town renovated the lower level the police department was looking for space. The Committee needs to look 15 to 20 years ahead and maximize space. Unaccounted space will be taken. The Committee needs to do this right. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that the Committee needs to work with this a little bit, and check with end users to see if they like it. It is attractive. He noted that the design called for the Transition Academy to go to the lower level. He asked if buses will have access. Answer: they could create their own entrance. Mr. Langdon asked about the boiler room location. You would be building in front of the existing Town Hall. How will the boiler room be tied in? The boiler room is where the front main entrance will be. Mr. Boos responded that the tunnel would be extended. There would also be new transformer and new utilities where they are needed. Mr. Langdon observed that the boilers are fairly new, an air handler will be new, and all will go away. He felt that Information Technology and Channel 14 would need to be separated. Mr. Przech stated that Dr. Collins had told him that the Transition Academy was scheduled for the lower level initially, that it cost \$850,727 in 2011 and that it must be located in a Town (rather than a Board of Education) building. Mr. Mortensen expressed the opinion that Mr. Langdon needs to be plugged in on what is coming on board for future planning purposes. Mr. Boos noted, on concerns of removing existing facilities equipment, that this is a long term building. Energy efficiency is critical. The building needs a system that meets certain LEED standards, with new mechanical systems, or else it won't serve the Town well.

VII. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – Mr. Bongiovanni stated that the Committee could have a workshop in the near future to expedite consideration of this proposed design. Ms. Jorgensen-Bucchi stated that she would like to have the presentation made again for the public, many of whom could not make this 5:00 PM meeting. Mr. Bongiovanni stated that another presentation could be made at a later date and later time slot, after the Committee has had a chance to review it. The Committee agreed to meet on March 9th at 6:00 PM. Mr. Boos was asked to bring full scale drawings. Mr. Bongiovanni concluded by stating that it was an attractive looking building that shows promise.

VIII. Public Participation – Judy Igielski, 23 Old Musket Drive. She had comments and questions, which the Committee chose to respond to immediately, rather than during Response to Public Participation (responses will be in parenthesis). She is here as a resident. Page one of the presentation looks nice. On page 2, where is the garage (south end of the lower level)? Is it a “to scale” drawing? (Yes) Where is the location of the impound lot (It is not beyond the bus garage, it is the one currently used by the police department)? The space for the additional 95-98 cars is owned by the library, how many feet to their building would be left? (The buffer that was in the study) What do the dashed lines represent? (Those are the areas that will be eliminated) Parks and Recreation will have program space. Human Services will have privacy. The Transition Academy students used to be at the High School. She is concerned as a resident that there is enough land for the library's expansion. Is there a number of handicapped parking spaces that have to be allotted (Yes, one handicapped space for every so many regular spaces)? Will

parking in handicapped van spaces be acceptable for non-vans with a handicapped sticker (Yes, as long as you have a handicapped sticker)? She thanked the Committee members for their time and effort. These are tough financial times. Citizens don't want tax increases but also don't want to make program cuts. She thanked the Committee members for volunteering (Mr. Boos offered to make a presentation to the library board).

Maureen Klett, 104 Harold Drive. She felt it should be the Committee's decision, not Mr. Boos', as to whether he should make a presentation on the renderings to others. That should be at the direction of the Committee. She does not understand the privacy issues for Human Services. She does have concerns about moving the Transition Academy. It was moved here because federal law changed to require the Board of Education to relocate it so that it was no longer a school based program. The Town has invested money and commitment on the Transition Academy. It still has to be paid for by Newington taxpayers. Did anyone run this idea by the Board of Education? As someone who supported it, she is uncomfortable in moving it. If it is moved, she has no issues with placing it near Human Services.

Steve Silvia, 45 Basswood Street. He expressed his gratitude and compliments to Kaestle Boos Associates. He is excited about the solutions presented. He would reinforce the attempt to retain the existing Transition Academy. He would also recommend trying to reduce the number of access and egress points to parking off of Garfield Street. He would like to see fewer intersections. He fully agrees with the Economic Development Director. If more pizzazz and aesthetics are added to the Community Center, this will help attract people to town.

John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive. He likes the design plan, but doesn't think the Town can afford it. It could be \$37 million. That is too expensive.

Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace. She is reminded of the old building committee when she hears that the Community Center should drive the process. No state of the art Community Center will be a magic bullet. She did some research on recreation programming also. Life sports were the top trend. One study suggested about forgetting high priced gyms. Recreation should connect residents with under used recreational spaces such as trails, etc. She also looked at values of park resources as espoused by the National Recreation and Parks Association. The trend is towards outdoor, life long, low impact recreational facilities.

IX. Response to Public Participation– Mr. Bongiovanni stated that the Committee is still digesting the conceptual plans and would not be able to respond this evening to many of the questions raised and comments made. The Committee will be happy to address all concerns as it moves along. Parks and Recreation programs are the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Board. As to the cost, the Town Council will tell the Committee if they do not like the cost of the recommended project

X. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.