

Fire Facility Site Selection Committee
Minutes of February 17, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office. Present were committee members Brett LaRose, Chris Griggs, Diane Cushman, Gerry Slager, Liz Herrmann, Alan Huizenga, and Shawn Oxford. Also present was Administrative Assistant Jen Stetson, Randall Freeman, Naomi Drummond, Mike Bromley, Brenda Tillberg, Amos Martin, Porter Knight, Neale Schuman, Sheila McGrory-Klyza, and Joel Bouvier.

Shawn Oxford motioned to approve meeting minutes from December 23, 2013, seconded by Alan Huizenga, all approved.

Gerry discussed the GIS maps. One of the maps that were printed showed an outlined area that demonstrated a five mile road radius from each of the structures, North Street and West Street. Ironically there was the same amount of house sites for each property, losing some in different places, but gaining some in the other. A different map indicated separate colors demonstrating the length of time it took to respond in increments of 5 minutes, 10 minutes and 15 minutes. The committee discussed insurance rates and how those would change for some people. Gerry Slager said he would talk to someone so they could put a monetary value on this for homeowners. A third map showed the sustainable water system. Diane Cushman questioned what that was. Alan Huizenga clarified, that this would mean being within the municipal water system and having the ability to use hydrants versus relying on tankers outside of the water district.

From the GIS study they found that there were 903 structures and the committee discussed figuring out the houses that would be affected by insurance.

The committee then discussed the Planning Commission response to their request. The Planning Commission met December 17th and provided the Fire Facility Committee with their findings regarding the two remaining sites. At the December 23rd meeting the committee decided to return to the Planning Commission asking for references to the Town Plan. The committee discussed the letter that Planning Commission submitted with their evidence in relation to the Town Plan. Shawn Oxford suggested that the committee find where these references are in the Town Plan so they would be prepared when they presented to the public. Diane Cushman did not think the committee should be responsible for understanding and interpreting the Town Plan and that they should invite or ask a couple members of the Planning Commission to be there so they could answer any questions that the public may have. Alan Huizenga noted that they should be considerate of how they state what the Planning Commission did as the letter says that they supported the West Street site and they opposed the North Street site, not that they voted whether or not the site conformed. Gerry Slager's concern was that this does not fit with the Town Plan and how do you present that site to the public with it not conforming to the Town Plan.

At 7:30 PM the committee called Town Administrator Bill Bryant regarding his insight with Peter Nelson and his property. Bill Bryant discussed his letter to the editor in the Addison Independent along with his

Front Porch Forum post. The Selectboard would like to see things continue with the Nelson's which is why they didn't respond to this. Bill Bryant also discussed the history with the Nelson's and the Selectboard regarding his property and a right of way to the Town's property on Stoney Hill. He talked about his thoughts regarding putting the Fire Station down on the Town's Stoney Hill property, which wouldn't make sense. In the past there has been discussion regarding purchasing or swapping property with him. Diane Cushman asked Bill Bryant if he thought it was appropriate for the committee to invite him to a meeting to create some understanding for him, as he publicly pointed out he clearly is confused about what the committee is looking for. Shawn Oxford agreed and thought if the committee could talk to him and help him realize what they want from him at this point it would help clarify his public statements. Bill Bryant said they would need Selectboard approval, but didn't feel that it would be inappropriate for the committee to request that from the board. The Selectboard would be interested in hearing his proposals. Shawn Oxford noted that this committee might be able to meet with Peter because they were not the Selectboard and this might help the situation. Shawn Oxford would email the Selectboard and request to be put on the agenda for the February 24th meeting requesting that they have permission from the Selectboard to contact Peter Nelson.

The committee resumed their discussion about the planning commission letter. Alan Huizenga was really concerned about this letter and didn't think that the committee should give up on the site just because of the letter that the Planning Commission sent. Shawn Oxford posed the question if the committee should add a 3rd site back to the list and leave it to the Selectboard to choose the best site. Chris Griggs thought that if the Nelson property didn't come back into the picture there was not a viable 3rd site on the table. He agreed with Alan in that this letter didn't necessarily mean anything, but in a small town that could certainly affect a site. Shawn Oxford asked the committee why they couldn't go with just the one site. Diane Cushman disagreed, being concerned that if something didn't work with the top site that they would have no other site to work with.

Gerry Slager discussed The Hub location and the concern that this brought to the West street property. Shawn Oxford talked about the length of time Bill Bryant had talked about with the Nelson site, and although it may be monetary feasible, the length of completion seems as though it could be longer than West Street. Alan discussed that no matter which site there will be negotiations and both sites are going to be negotiated.

The committee discussed what their next steps in this process were. Porter Knight asked if they were still going to have a public meeting. Brett LaRose was under the impression they were. Shawn Oxford noted that the process started with a public meeting and they as a committee wanted to finish the process with a public meeting. Porter Knight encouraged the committee to have only one site as it would be a stronger presentation having one site, and that it would exemplify the work that they did and show that they completed the entire process. Porter Knight also talked about the committee having a solution to the inquiries about The Hub that they could stay there and the two could work together.

Brett LaRose discussed the strength of having one site and if that didn't pass then the issue has to be about money. If the committee considered all things, no matter what, if the vote fails then the Fire Station would remain on North Street. Alan Huizenga discussed how important he felt the North Street

site was. He talked about this site being most cost effective and if they go to West Street they could be looking at something very pricey. Brenda Tillberg questioned the safety concerns of the intersection at the top of Stoney Hill. Brett LaRose discussed some different things that could change or be done to make that area more aware and alert. The committee has not completed any of this research as due to the unknowns about where the Fire Station will be.

Joel Bouvier asked about discussion with the Recreation Club and what happens if all of this falls through with that and Nelsons, then would there be no site? The committee agreed that they would continue down the list that they created ranking each site. Shawn Oxford pointed out that as they continue to discuss having two sites, when they held their public meeting the discussion could be very back and forth, the job of the committee was to pick one site and this does make the site that much stronger.

Porter Knight suggested that the committee go back to the Recreation Club with a distinct lot of what they would like and without over taking land that they don't need. Brenda Tillberg discussed the location of The Hub that has helped it become a successful teen center.

Naomi Drummond discussed her experience with Stoney Hill and how the Fire Department will stop traffic on that road to let the fire trucks out. Alan Huizenga didn't understand the difference between West Street and North Street. Naomi Drummond said the traffic light was helpful and a significant intersection was helpful. Brett LaRose appreciated her concern and understood, but there is no perfect site there will be issues with each site.

The committee discussed being setting a date for their public meeting so they could start to advertise it now. Chris Griggs didn't feel like they were ready to pick a date as they wanted to see where they could get with the Nelson property. The committee agreed to wait to discuss a date for a public meeting.

Brett LaRose proposed to the committee if they felt like it was a good idea to do an informal survey outside of the polls for Town Meeting voting. He suggested that if they could determine how a majority of the public felt regarding some of the different issues then they could have an advantage of knowing how the public feels. Porter Knight suggested that they do a survey without a dollar figure, but did you vote it down for one of the following reasons. Joel Bouvier agreed. Jen Stetson commented that the point of a survey is the encompass the entire spectrum of people whether they voted yes or no, so perhaps to ask people to rate their concerns versus why people voted it down, because people who voted yes still might have concerns. The committee decided not to do a survey as they didn't know what would come from the information they would gather.

Randall Freeman didn't think the letter from the Planning Commission determined anything. He also referenced the Planning Commission's result in the site is just one of the problems with that site which Brett LaRose had mentioned before.

Joel Bouvier wanted the public to visit Fire Stations within the state, so they could see what other Fire Stations have done to work within their means to keep the Fire Station where it currently. Joel Bouvier thought a nice Fire Station could be built at the current location.

Sheila McGrory Kliza stated that it seemed if there was one clear leader it would have a better chance of passing.

Alan Huizenga motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:55, Chris Griggs seconded, all were in favor.