

Minutes – October 23, 19 – Municipal Building Committee

Present: Melanie, Pete N, Will, Chris, Leah, Jere, Peter S, Heather, Stephen, Theresa, Deb

Called to order at 7:05 pm.

September's minutes approved. Keep the information regarding the rationale for a 1 story with walkout basement. Present this rationale to the public.

Chris and Leah presented 4 schematic designs. Three plans were a 1 story with a walkout basement.

Points of Discussion Summary from Building Committee Meeting 10-23-19 by Leah MacGavern

1. One-Story Option

The group agreed—once again, and finally--that this was not worth pursuing.

BA will no longer propose a one-story option.

2. Arrangement of Town Offices, Community Room, and Library

The group agreed that two parallel options should be pursued for the Nov. 19th meeting. One would resemble the plans BA presented to the group with the Town Offices on the Lower Level and the Library on the Main Level. The second should be the approach taken in the “preferred plan,” where the Town Offices are on the Main Level and the Library is on the Lower Level.

BA will pursue the two options above, bringing them to the same level of detail. Note: the Town Office plan on the Lower Level will definitely be more developed in response to comments about more light, more open plan and general better use of space.

3. Community Room at Upper Level

Because some felt that there should be a direct connection of the Community Room to the ground outdoors, a somewhat confusing discussion ensued about whether the space belonged on the Lower or Main level. However, the general consensus seems to be that the Main Level location, with the more dramatic space and views, is optimal.

*BA will proceed with plans that have the Community space on the Main Level.**

4. Community Room Connection to Outdoors

After some debate, it seemed that the majority opinion is that the Community Room should have a direct connection to grade, and that the distance from a deck to grade should be minimized. The group seemed to agree generally that removing the North Entry to the Library could facilitate a higher grade at this location, therefore allowing for a reduced number of steps to grade from the West Deck.

BA agrees that this change has benefits, but suggests that it would also involve compromises to the Lower Level Library plan. BA suggests that other solutions for connecting the Community room to grade should be explored as well.

5. Entrance to Library & Lower Level

Consensus was that the Lower Level entry to the Library (or the Town in the alternate scheme) should be moved to the West, allowing for higher grade on the North.

While this partially addresses the issue above, it dramatically alters some desirable features on the Lower Level plan. First, it removes the light-filled meeting room, relegating more community space to darker areas. Second, the entry at the rear of the building is not visible from parking, could therefore be confusing to patrons, and is not generally not considered good design practice.

BA will provide a sketch that shows the impact these changes would have on the Lower Level plan, in addition to alternate means of connecting the Main Level deck to grade. The group can then decide if this change has merit.

6. Look and Feel

- a. Porch at Front Entry: BA heard mixed comments, both in favor of a porch and in favor of leaving the design as is.

This could be an add alternate, easily added to the project if budget allowed.

- b. Center Entry: There was a question about an off-center entry being unusual.

BA is of the opinion that this is actually a standard historic type. A typical vernacular Town Hall may usually have a center entry, but this structure is a Community Center and is more than just a Town Hall. Having the entry to the North also makes the layout more efficient and better connects to the parking area. BA will proceed with this entry unless instructed otherwise.

7. Floor heights

Much discussion about floor/ceiling heights as it relates to the budget. Some felt a 10-foot Lower Level ceiling height could be reduced. There was also an argument for a lower Main Level ceiling height.

BA is sensitive to budget, but also has been asked to design a building that is historically appropriate and “inspiring.” Somewhere there is an ideal balance among these issues and BA will explore reducing heights with the objective of finding the right balance. This can also be tweaked once we have a real project estimate.

8. Exposed Foundation

The desire to minimize large exposed foundation walls was voiced loud and clear.

BA agrees (!) and will work with the site and the building plans to reduce exposed foundation, no matter how some of the issues above are resolved.

9. Vault Location

Some good points were made about the location of the vault given its structural requirements.

BA will investigate the merits of other locations and the effect on the Lower Level layout while considering the impact to natural light.

10. Town offices arrangements

There were several comments made about potential improvements to the Town Office Layout. In particular, many felt that the plan could generally be more open, with fewer closed offices.

Noted. BA looks forward to addressing this in greater detail.

11. Inspiring Design

Several favorable comments were received about the design generally at the close of the meeting.

BA is excited about some of the inspiring aspects of the designs presented. BA will make a point of highlighting inspiring aspects of the design.

***There seems to be a variety of visions for the community space. Programmatically BA has been asked to provide seating for approximately 50. Yet, some comments to the effect of “but we don’t want it to just be a big room” beg the question “then what is it?”**

Definition of Terms

Main Level Town Offices: *the conceptual plan option with Town Offices at the Main Level*

Main Level Library: *the conceptual plan option with the Library at the Main Level*

Lower Level: *the level below street grade level*

Main Level: *the level entered directly from the street*

Next Phase of Process:

Architects can bring forward 2 schematic designs. One design with library on top and one design with town hall on top.

After the meeting on 11/19, the architects need to give a final design to cost estimator on 12/12 to turn back to the architects on 12/23. **Bond vote** needs to be warned February 1st or so.

Construction Manager (CM) – at a minimum they’re hired when the bond vote is so they can work with Chris and Leah.

Committee with interest in involving local tradespeople.

Will for Nov 19 meeting advocate for construction management firm. Will could put together sample bid packages that would be put out for the project. We could put out in FPF “put out this pre-qualification form” to local tradespeople to apply to construction management firm.

Will could do RFP for construction management firm.

By 12/12 with full set of plans that could be sent to construction management firm – aggressive approach.

Heather will talk with Cindy at MCS to have what we had at the last time.

Next meeting we’ll discuss agenda for 11/19.

Peter will put on fpf and sp will put on town website.

Wednesday November 6th at 7 pm is the next meeting.