11/11/2024 – Addison Town Hall Building Comm. Minutes

Present: Chris Stackhouse, John Spencer, Levi Barrett, and Bob Schatz.

John opened the meeting at 6:35 and noted the committee is short one member since Cheri Waterman resigned. The selectboard has at least one viable replacement who has submitted a letter of interest.

No Public comment was heard from the well-attended meeting.

The minutes from the last meeting on 9/18/24 were moved for approval by Levi, second by Bob, 4 yes, 0 no.

John mentioned he and Chris had met to discuss possible options for renovating the Town Hall that would spend significantly fewer dollars, each with pros and cons. He asked Chris to present those ideas.

Chris explained he first met with two of the Listers, who were happy to work on the first floor near the vault, but requested they have some separation for certain meetings with taxpayers. They also preferred their desks all face the wall for collaborative tasks. Cheri was fine with that concept but wished the main copier to be moved to the reception desk where it's most frequently used. Chris and Levi later met in the Town Hall with Josh Maxham, Fire Marshall. He gave us lots of good news that helped save money, meet code, and even a way to use the second floor.

John's first concept was to build the full project shell, but not finish the basement, second-floor, or fire stairs. An elevator would not even be needed, since a simple platform lift will meet code for access to the Town Offices. This scheme offers full use of the building after monies are raised over time through grants, donations, or Town funding. It also allows volunteers to make progress in the meantime.

A second scheme would build the narrow and shorter portion of the addition, housing the entry, platform lift, and stairs to Town Offices and basement. Letter when funds are raised the rest of the addition could be added over top, to then include the fire stairs and elevator. Once again, this gives the public full access to the three levels, especially the beautiful assembly hall on the second floor.

The third scheme is one that cuts the project to the bone, while still doing a full renovation to the existing shell and housing all Town Offices on the first floor. The main difference would be the addition would be far smaller, only giving the public access to the first floor with a half flight of stairs and platform lift. Access to the basement would be new stairs under the old stairs. The basement would consist of a mechanical room, the vault base and possible storage space. More dollars could be saved with a crawl space under most of the first floor. This scheme will allow access to the second floor, but only as a rented "business" use. With the loss of public access to the assembly hall, large town gatherings could be held in the gym.

Given the Laz Scangus, the architect has extensive knowledge of the building and its detailed budget, the committee would request permission to seek brief feedback from Laz. First asking his opinion of feasibility and code concerns, then asking his estimator to generate ballpark estimates for each option. We feel this information will be useful as the town and Selectboard

look for the best fit for a new Town Office, and hopefully at the same time give the Town Hall a use worthy of its history and the investment of tax dollars needed to save the building. It is the committee's hope that the tax payers could eventually hear these new design descriptions and costs, to be weighed along with other options not yet studied.

John raised the hope that an Addison centered 501c3 could start anytime to seek grants and accept donations that could help with many town needs. Michael Hollis spoke of his desire to form such an entity but felt the current ambiguity on what Addison is planning makes it impractical to write a coherent memorandum of understanding. Michael also recognized the long-term commitment to hard work in running such an organization, hoping for other committed members to step forward.

Bob mentioned the ACRPC is working with the Planning Commission to create a long-term plan for the Town center, trying to envision how the overall property could best be developed. Michael Hollis took that opportunity to invite us all to fill out the survey the Planning Commission has on the Town website that asks those very questions. The survey is open now and runs until Town Meeting.

Michael spoke of his willingness to fill the committee's empty seat but was also happy for any other qualified volunteer to be chosen instead.

Public Comment:

Someone asked where the money was coming from for the work on the Town Hall. John pointed out there is no money for new Town Offices to go in any building. Any money would require a bond vote.

It was asked if the only purpose of the third design was to house the Town Offices. Chris replied it seemed reasonable to use the Gym for large gatherings, since it's large, at grade, appreciated by all and owned by the Town.

David Spencer briefly described the multi-project cost benefit analysis he's been working on. He is happy to send it via email to anyone interested. He left a sheet for folks to leave their name and email.

Levi moved to adjourn, second by Chris, 4 yes, 0 no. John closed the meeting at 7:14.

Chris Stackhouse - Clerk