**PLYMPTON TOWN PROPERTIES COMMITTEE**Minutes, February 22, 2024, 2023, 6:30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Butler, Ross MacPherson, Colleen Thompson, John Traynor, Mark Wallis,   
Jon Wilhelmsen (Chair)   
GUESTS PRESENT: Dan Pallotta (P3), Jeff Shaw (Context Architecture), Scott Fanara (Grady Consulting),  
Plympton Fire Dept.: Chief Cheryl Duddy, Andrew Norton, Steve Lyons, Patrick Duddy

NOTES:

* Participants, town committees, and other entities are referred to by their initials. LD refers to Town Administrator Liz Dennehy. TPC is this committee. TM refers to the Town Meeting. ConCom is the Conservation Commission.
* When possible, action items will be noted in **BOLDED** letters.
* “We” may refer to this committee, but it may also refer more broadly to the Town as a whole.

JW opened the meeting at 6:32

1. FIRE STATION PROJECT / TOWN COMPLEX INFRASTRUCTURE – DP will have all the financial information to LD by next Wednesday. He has the numbers for Peter Dillon, the wells, and the system design. He is missing Grady’s plan to get the water to the various buildings. The wetlands application has not yet been submitted to ConCom. After the wells are done and the pump test performed, the treatment system will be designed. We don’t have an estimate on that part yet because we don’t know yet what the water treatment will entail. DP will work with Context to create drawings and pictures for presentation to residents.  
     
   The other piece of the project is the financial plan. A meeting with the town’s financial officers is planned for next week. The goal is to seek funding for the entire project, but the possibility exists that we will have to do this in two phases. The first phase would be to fund the project through the final design to set up the bid process for the next TM. The second phase would be building the station.

SF brought plans prepared by Grady Consulting (see pages 4 & 5). TPC and guests reviewed the plans and made recommendations for the locations of water/power trenches. It is suspected that not all the wires on the poles are viable and in use. Some may be part of defunct communications systems. The discussion also touched on the need to change the public safety buildings’ entrance (reduce the grade, change the wall) and the need to review the wires currently going to the buildings, and future changes to the campus parking lots and entrances.

MW asked about the proposed impound/storage area at the back of the police station. JS confirmed that it was a good location and would not interfere with the new building.

Chief CD asked about the generator for the new station. Discussion about the campus generators ensued. The usual runtime is 48 hours, but some storms require more time. Natural gas is piped in and needs no delivery, but it can be shut down (as in the Merrimack Valley in 2018). Diesel runs dirtier but is generally perceived to be a more reliable fuel source with local delivery and the unit is less expensive to purchase than a natural gas unit.

AN asked about taking the project to this year’s TM. DP explained tax levy, debt exclusion, how bonding works, what a BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) is, etc. It was also noted that every year we wait means an increase in prices. The goal is that, as with the police station, the new fire station will not affect property taxes. As current debt drops off in the next few years, it will be moved to the fire station to keep the debt level even. The town budget should stay roughly the same aside from regular annual increases.

DP also noted that the campus sewer system will be part of the project and thus part of the fire station design. It can be funded as a separate project or as part of the fire station.   
  
TPC also reviewed again why building a new station is better than renovating the current building. The cost of renovation would need to include a temporary station to house our fire and emergency services and apparatus. Assuming we can find a good location for this, we would then have to spend roughly three million dollars to build a *temporary* building. The current station would need to be increased in size, which could be difficult without disturbing the library/ball fields, parking, aesthetics and would leave the fire service still having to deal with the public use of the parking lot and ball fields. The building would need to be brought up to current fire code and OSHA standards. All of this would likely cost a good portion of a new station’s cost and would not allow for any future growth or changes.

AN asked about the timing of the project. DP said that from the awarding of the contract to everything being done should be around 18 months.

All guests left the meeting at 7:32.

1. FINAL DISCUSSION –TPC again noted that the goal is to keep the fire station building project from heavily affecting the budget. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue recommends that municipalities keep a steady level of debt. As debt falls off, the funds should be used for other large important projects. If the funds are put in the general budget they will disappear in minutiae. We have several areas of debt that will be falling off in the next few years. Additionally, we have a couple of new pilot agreements coming on. JT noted that the new Assistant Treasurer-Collector has experience in bonding municipal projects. He also mentioned that it might be worth a short term hire of a financial expert to help. This will all be reviewed in the upcoming financial meeting.
2. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – RM moved that the minutes for 2/7 be approved as written, NB seconded. All aye.
3. NEXT MEETING – Thursday, March 7, 2024.

NOTE: NO OTHER AGENDA ITEMS WERE DISCUSSED.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50

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A map of a golf course

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