

CUMBERLAND PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX SITE LOCATION COMMITTEE

Meeting, Tuesday, March 10, 2015
6:30 PM

Call to Order at 6:30 PM

1) Attendance Roster:

Town Officials: Councilman Robert G. Shaw, Councilman Scott Schmitt
Committee Members: Sean Thompson (ex officio), Josh O'Neill (ex officio), John Desmarais (ex officio) Alex Marszalkowski, Kimberly McCarthy, Thomas Cabana, John Monaghan, Tim Draper, Mark Lindgren, Tom Letourneau, Dana Newbrook
Committee Members Absent: Jeff Mutter, Frank Matta, Alan Bourgette
Members of the Public: Marcia Green, Joe Palithorpe, Nicholas Goodier, Michael McKeon

2) Approval of March 2 Meeting Minutes: The Minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote of committee members present.

3) Open Meetings Law Overview

Josh O'Neill explained that he is the "filer" for the public body and will be posting all the meeting agenda's to the Secretary of State website. He will also be taking meeting minutes and doing research on behalf of the committee on sites being discussed and reviewed. Chairman Lindgren asked how to proceed on site suggestions emailed to him by the public. Josh said to send that information to him and he would get it out to the Committee and add them on new agendas as requests come in. Josh asked the committee if anyone had any general questions about the Open Meetings law. Nobody did, so the Chairman moved to the next item on the agenda.

4) Review and Discussion of Public Safety Building Space Needs Analysis by Kaestle and Boos

Michael McKeon was introduced to discuss the space needs assessment completed in 2013 outlining the square footage, costs, and floor plans for a new public safety facility. Mike first reviewed the document that totaled the square footage and line item costs associated with the assessment. These documents were previously emailed to the committee members for this meeting.

Kim asked a question about the proposed Regional 911 concept and how that might impact the staffing and square footage needs of the new facility. Michael McKeon responded that the Town would still have some dispatch at the facility, but equipment and staffing could potentially be reduced. Chief Desmarais said that the Town could look at the reduction of space as regional dispatch becomes clearer.

Kim asked whether the fire department was included in the square footage estimates. Michael responded that references to the fire department were only there because of a copy and paste error from previous versions of the study. This does not include fire department as part of the space needs analysis.

Tom Cabana asked how much space would be needed for parking. Michael responded that they looked at 6 acres for a site with additional buffer space needed for setbacks. He estimated that about 80 parking spaces were needed.

Kim indicated that, under the Town Charter, it appears that a building committee must be formed and has the sole authority to oversee planning and construction of public buildings. Therefore, she asked if a future building committee would be able to pick another site than what eventually gets recommended by this committee. Josh stated that in his experience, that is not what building committees are for. This committee is the one that will put forward a recommendation to the Mayor. In the future, if a building committee is formed, it would deal entirely with construction issues once a site is already selected.

Kim asked Mr. McKeon to clarify the minimum size lot necessary for the complex. Mr. McKeon indicated that he felt 5 acres would be the minimum, but in order to get 5 buildable acres, the committee should look for sites that are 6 acres or larger.

5) Review and Discussion of Planning Department Analysis and Map Handouts of Town Owned Land and One Private Parcel From Last Meeting

The committee began by discussing site #1 (Plat 62, Lot 3) just south of Tucker Field. Josh discussed his conversation with Chuck Horbert from DEM who is a state wetland scientist. He stated that he believed the site is basically unbuildable due to the large extent of wetland presence on most of the 22 acres. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove site #1 from committee consideration.

Several committee members then wanted to discuss specific details about where our Public Safety officials thought would be the best areas around Town for a new facility before discussion on the other sites included in the Planning Department handout. Police Chief John Desmarais then introduced himself to the committee and discussed what his needs are and some general background on how we got to where we are today. He mentioned that response times dictate a need to be closer to the center of Town and would rule out the northernmost and southernmost parts of Town. He mentioned that ideally we would want a site that is roughly north of Route 123 and south of Nate Whipple Highway. Finally, the Chief indicated that the complex should not be in a heavily residential neighborhood. Sean Thompson then stated that from the Rescue Department's view if a site could be found off of Mendon Rd. it would be ideal. Access to either Mendon Rd. or Diamond Hill Rd. is needed for access and response as well as mitigating noise disturbance of being sited closer to a residential neighborhood. As a result, the needs for the proposed site appeared to be: (1) 6 acres or larger; (2) closer to the center of town; (3) access to Mendon Road or Diamond Hill Road; (4) not in a heavily residential neighborhood; and (5) suitable for building (e.g. lot is not mostly/entirely wetlands or building is otherwise prohibited).

Chairman Lindgren asked Sean if the existing rescue vehicles could be housed at the existing fire stations. Sean stated that they could not because it would make response times exceed 6-8

minutes. Sean also stated that mutual aid options with other communities would be just as complex based on the locations of rescue vehicles in other towns. Chief John Desmarais and Director Sean Thompson thanked the committee for their questions.

The committee then moved on to consideration of Site # 2 (Plat 24, Lot 409 and Plat 25 Lot 22; Franklin Farm). Tom Letourneau stated that Public Safety has to drive our decision making as a group. After some discussion about conservation of Franklin Farm, and Abbot Run Valley Road not meeting the criteria (e.g. not on a main road, in a heavily residential area, not being ideal for response vehicle and response times), the committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove site #2 from committee consideration.

The committee then moved on to Sites # 3 and # 4 (Plat 27 Lot 271 and Plat 62 Lot 105). Both sites were deemed to be too far removed from access to major roads as well as having wetlands and conservation restrictions that would restrict most of the sites for development. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove sites #3 and #4 from committee consideration.

The committee then reviewed site #5 (Plat 17 Lot 142; Hines Farm) and quickly determined that its location (no access to Mendon or Diamond Hill Roads, and on a winding back road), as well as its protection under the existing conservation management plan would make this site unworkable. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove site #5 from committee consideration.

The committee then reviewed site #6 (Plat 39 Lots 24, 27, 64; National Grid Property). Chairman Lindgren noted that he has heard about some federal regulations that prohibit public safety buildings from being within the blast zone radius of an LNG gas tank. He wasn't sure if this was an EPA regulation or maybe a NFPA standard, but thought it deserved some consideration. Chief Desmarais stated that he didn't know if National Grid was willing to sell any of their property. He stated that if they offered a lease negotiation it could potentially limit how the future public safety complex gets designed. Kim stated that we should not rule this property out yet as there is enough acreage to work with and no conservation restrictions. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to continue consideration of site #6 (Plat 39 Lots 24, 27, 64; National Grid Property) at future meetings.

The committee then reviewed site #7 (Plat 27 Lot 143) off of Little Pond County Road. The site was quickly eliminated after discussion because it does not meet any of the criteria identified by the Chief and the Director. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove site #7 from committee consideration.

The committee then reviewed sites #8 and #9 (Plat 33 Lot 158 and Plat 33 Lot 188) which are adjacent to each other and comprise 52 acres of Town land near Mendon Road. Sean said that its location near Mendon Road and possible paper street access could make it workable for access and response. Taken together, the lots are the right size, do not appear to have wetlands or other building restrictions, are in the center of town, and are not in a heavily residential area. Several committee members asked that the planning department and town solicitor do some research on these sites to see what is recorded and what restrictions may exist for building. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to continue consideration of sites #8 and #9 (Plat 33 Lot 158 and Plat 33 Lot 188) at future meetings.

The committee then reviewed site #10 (Plat 18 Lot 4) which is off of Hines Road. Several members noted that the lot was not on a major road (Mendon Road or Diamond Hill Road) and is located in a heavily residential area, and therefore does not meet the criteria. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove site #10 from committee consideration.

Summary:

Sites Eliminated

- Site # 1 (Plat 62, Lot 3)
- Site # 2 (Plat 24, Lot 409 and Plat 25 Lott 22; Franklin Farm)
- Site # 3 (Plat 27 Lot 271)
- Site # 4 (Plat 62 Lot 105)
- Site # 5 (Plat 17 Lot 142; Hines Farm)
- Site # 7 (Plat 27 Lot 143)

Sites Continued for Further Consideration

- Site # 6 (Plat 39 Lots 24, 27, 64; National Grid Property)
- Site # 8 (Plat 33 Lot 158)
- Site # 9 (Plat 33 Lot 188)

6) Site Submitted for Committee Review

The committee began by discussing the site submitted at 32 Martin Street. (Plat 34 Lot 236). This site as well as the adjacent parcel at 50 Hunt St. Plat 34 Lot 253 was presented as being large enough and available for sale. The committee reviewed floodplain maps produced by the planning department showing half of Plat 34 Lot 253 within the regulatory flood zone and a portion of Plat 34 Lot 236 also falling within the regulatory flood zone. After some discussion about the dangers of locating public safety facilities in or adjacent to flood zones, the committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove these sites from committee consideration.

The committee then reviewed the site submitted for Plat 16 Lot 570 as well as a portion of North Garden Street. The committee reviewed the emailed description which included purchasing the land on Plat 16 Lot 570 as well as building on the site of the current police station. Chief Desmarais noted that the two sites and proposal as described would only yield between 3-4 acres of land. The committee agreed that this would not be enough land for a new public safety facility. The committee voted by unanimous voice vote to remove these sites from committee consideration.

Note - Plat 33 Lot 188 was already reviewed earlier and recommended to continue for further consideration

7) Other Sites for Consideration at Future Meetings

Tim Draper wanted the committee to consider the “Drop Zone” property for future discussion. Josh pulled up the property on a map and it appeared that the property was too small. Discussion will continue on this property at future meetings.

Audience member Joe Palithorpe asked to present information concerning a strategy to use the Monastery Land, but also add to overall open space protection in town. He presented the information to committee members. Committee members and the Chair indicated that any further discussion of this issue should be reserved to a future meeting, since it is a controversial issue and was not listed on the meeting agenda. The committee will consider this at a future meeting to be determined.

Chairman Lindgren asked the planning department to look into the property at Angell Farm for consideration at the next meeting. Kim also wanted the planning department to do an analysis of town-owned property between 6 and 10 acres that meet the other criteria described above to present to the committee.

Chairman Lindgren would like to work on a solicitation for public comment to be put in the Valley Breeze so the committee gets as much input from the public as possible. Josh will work on language to provide to the committee at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday March 24th at the Seminar Room of the Cumberland Public Library at 6:30pm.

Other Business

None

8) Adjournment at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Josh O’Neill, CFM, MPA
Staff