

MEETING MINUTES  
Community Facilities Building Committee  
Special Meeting  
January 5, 2022

In attendance:

Lori Hayes-O'Brien, Chair  
Dawn Cantafio, Vice Chair  
Mike Buswell  
Ted Chase  
Dean Fabrizio  
Ron Foligno  
Dave Galla  
Gail Ritacco  
Tony Silber

Also in attendance:

Vicki Tesoro, First Selectman  
Rina Bakalar, Director, Economic and Community Development  
George Estrada, Director, Public Works  
Cindy Katske, Chief Administrative Officer  
Kathleen McGannon, Chief Administrative Officer  
Jason Marsh, Chair, Aquatics Committee  
Dmitri Paris, Superintendent of Parks  
Daniel Schopick. Esq., Town Attorney

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

There was no one to speak during public comment. Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien tabled approval of minutes to next meeting so members of the committee would be able to review the previous meeting's minutes.

The committee was put on hold during the height of the pandemic, but it appears to be a good time to look at the project again. Some options the committee had been considering are no longer available (e.g., Church Hill properties). Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien invited the guests to share their ideas and opinions on how the project can move forward.

Mrs. Tesoro wished the committee a happy new year and said that she will be on the meeting to answer questions the committee might have for her.

Mr. Estrada has reviewed previous meeting minutes as well as reports and documents related to the committee. In his opinion, the Long Hill location is viable in terms of location, however some of the challenges presented include relocation of the Board of Education facility and abutting residential area.

Mr. Estrada also gave an overview of the recently acquired Hardy Lane properties. Some of the advantages include the size of the parcel, accessibility, existing utilities, and less impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

Ms. Bakalar briefly reviewed the history of evaluating and narrowing the number of properties in consideration for the project. She agreed to the viability of the Long Hill site, but pointed out the 16 directly abutting properties. Ms. Bakalar recalled that the Hardy Lane property had been mentioned as early as 2018. A site in the area of the golf course was also considered, but was ruled out due to proximity of wetlands. She pointed out the importance of choosing a central, accessible location, as well as consideration of the benefits to locating the project near local businesses.

Mr. Paris discussed some of the challenges faced by the town's community facilities, particularly in terms of cost-effective operations and providing services and programming on par with what the community deserves. He expressed his enthusiasm for moving the project forward and working with the community.

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien suggested that the committee might want to reconsider including an aquatics component in the project, working with the existing aquatics committee. Mr. Estrada noted that including both competition and recreational aquatics components in the project allows for operation efficiencies as well as provides additional opportunities for programming.

Mr. Marsh discussed the concept of construction with an eye to conservation, particularly if the committees decide to develop near the Pequonnock River Valley. Mr. Estrada shared a map of the parcel, which included an outline of the original concept footprint in three different locations. He also discussed the ability within that site to have separate entrances for different programming needs.

Mr. Chase asked for the status of the committee. Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien answered that a report to the Town Council will be due six months from the current meeting. He then asked Ms. Bakalar what areas would be considered centrally located, to which she replied that Trumbull Center, Long Hill, Town Hall Area would be ideal in terms of accessibility. Mr. Chase also inquired if the Hardy Lane properties were purchased for a specific purpose. Mr. Marsh answered that his understanding is that the properties were purchased in order to control development in the town, which Mrs. Tesoro confirmed. Ms. Bakalar added that proposed development of the site could potentially have added 300-400 homes on the parcel.

Mr. Silber suggested putting the proposed facility near where the existing Hardy Lane homes are, in an effort to preserve the environment near the valley. He also mentioned the potential need for a traffic signal. Mrs. Cantafio added that there are many ways to develop with an eye to conservation and sustainability.

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien invited the committee to submit questions in advance of the next meeting, and she will forward them to appropriate personnel.

Per Attorney Schopick, previous work product is available for the committee to use. He also reminded speakers to introduce themselves prior to speaking.

Mrs. Tesoro informed the committee that there is funding still available for design from the previous committees. There will be a request going before the Board of Finance for additional funds for concept/design.

Mr. Buswell asked if the Mary Bill property has ever been considered for the project, acknowledging that the site is not being centrally located. Ms. Bakalar answered that the property was on the original list, however, it is not centrally located or on a public transportation line, and therefore is not ideal. Mr. Paris added that there are designated wetlands on the property as well.

Mr. Marsh pointed out a unique opportunity to build a community-oriented facility, and he noted that bringing two projects before the community for a referendum could split the community rather than bring it together.

MOTION to adjourn made by Mrs. Cantafio, seconded by Mr. Galla. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Submitted by Laura Shiel