

Capital Improvement Planning Committee
March 16, 2012 Brookfield Elementary School Library
Minutes

Members Present: Heather Lemieux, Kermit Eaton, Barbara Wilson, Sharon Mahoney and Peter O'Connell

Members Absent: Jerry Johnson and Sheila Frangiamore

The meeting was called to order at 7:02.

1. **Minutes: Kermit Eaton moved and Barbara Wilson seconded the motion to approve the minutes of January 26, 2012. So voted with Mahoney and O'Connell abstaining.**
2. **Bill Simpson attended the meeting on behalf of the Municipal Facilities Planning Committee.** Mr. Simpson reported that the Committee hoped to have definite proposals and costs estimates after two more meetings, but the current working proposal is to build a new Police Station on the Prouty Street property for approximately \$2 million and to renovate the Town Hall at a cost of \$4,000,000 total, \$1,000,000 of which would be grant funded through Community Development Block grants to fund barrier removal and the construction of a senior center in the Town Hall basement. The current thinking is to construct an elevator that would go to the second floor balcony, but not to the top (Masonic Meeting Hall) floor. The elevator would be located either in the Tower or up through the old ticket office/current Accountant/Building Inspector office.

Mr. Simpson indicated that he had sought information about the process and costs of borrowing the necessary funds through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program, but was awaiting a return call by Mr. James Lavin. He presumed that both projects would require a ballot vote to exclude the debt from the provisions of Proposition 2 ½. Mrs. Lemieux volunteered to send him information about the debt exclusion ballot procedure. The Committee thanked Mr. Simpson for his report and asked that the Municipal Facilities Planning Committee keep the Capital Planning Committee informed.

3. **Kathleen Wild attended the meeting to discuss the capital needs of the Common and Mall Committee.** Mrs. Wild noted that the Committee had received \$5,000 to conduct a geographic survey of the Common, the contract for which had just been awarded and the survey was being conducted. The Committee will be requesting \$5,000 in funding to continue their work with their consultant in FY13 to explore grant proposals to implement recommendations to move the monuments, implement changes to Common Street on the mall end (hopefully with funding from the State Department of Transportation, eliminate utility wires over the common, relocate the Gazebo, and do a more historically sympathetic planting of trees. Mrs. Wild asked Mr. O'Connell to ask the Board of Selectmen to initiate communication with the Massachusetts Office of Transportation about initiating a redesign of Common and River Streets with Route 9, which he said he would do.

Mrs. Wild estimated that such work would be done in a phased manner and estimated that three \$5,000 appropriations might be needed between FY14 and FY17 to ensure that the Town had the matching funds needed to qualify for State Historic Preservation grants. The Committee thanked Mrs. Wild for her report.

4. **The Recreation Committee was not present, but had forwarded their written request to Barbara Wilson.** Mrs. Wilson gave the hard copy to Mrs. Lemieux, who will scan it and send

it to the rest of the members before the next meeting. The request will be discussed at the next Capital Improvement Committee meeting.

5. **Setting Priorities Among Competing Capital Requests:** Mrs. Lemieux distributed the Sturbridge Capital Plan with their method for grading and rank-ordering capital priorities. The members present thought the system was as objective as it could be and asked Mrs. Lemieux to send their factors and grading criteria to all members so we could become familiar with them. The committee discussed whether the Capital Plan would include all capital expenditures, including those that had their own funding sources (school choice funds, Chapter 90, etc.) and agreed that they should be included in the plan.
6. **Financial Trend Analysis for Capital Planning:** Mr. O'Connell distributed draft indicators for the following areas that seemed to have the most relevance to capital planning:
 - (1) Debt/Borrowing as a Percentage of the Town's Equalized Assessed Valuation
 - (2) Annual Debt Service Costs as a Percentage of Total Annual Expenditures
 - (3) Annual Capital Spending as a Percentage of Total Annual Expenditures
 - (4) Stabilization Fund Balance as a Percentage of Total Annual Expenditures
 - (5) Free Cash as a Percentage of Total Annual Expenditures
 - (6) Uncollected Taxes as a Percentage of Total Annual Expenditures
 - (7) Total Uncollected Taxes, Interest and Fees

Mr. O'Connell indicated that the data for this trend analysis came primarily from the Department of Revenue Municipal Data Base and from the Accountant's Annual Reports. He cautioned that the data should be seen as tentative until reviewed and confirmed by the Town Accountant. Committee members found the indicators to be useful, but felt they needed more time to review them when the numbers were final.

7. **Town Administrator Study Committee:** Mr. Eaton indicated his willingness to serve on the Town Administrator Study Committee and will so indicate that interest to the Board of Selectmen.
8. **The date for the next CIPC meeting will be March 22nd at 7 PM at the Brookfield Elementary School Library.**
9. **Adjournment:** Kermit Eaton moved and Sharon Mahoney seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. So voted at 9:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter S. O'Connell, Clerk