Town Hall Barrier Removal Committee
Minutes of September 9, 2009

Members present: Donna Neylon, Donald Faugno, Clarence Snyder, Barbara Clancy, John Wild, David Holdcraft and Peter O'Connell. Absent: George Dellomo.

Also present: Steven McAlister, Clark & Green, James Allen, Greg McManus, Gordon Bertrand, Don Bosse, Bruce Clarke, Herb Chaffee, Mike Seery, Barbara Wilson, Matt Bansfield, Bill Thompson

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes: Minutes of the August 17 meeting were circulated in advance of the meeting, but approval was delayed until the next meeting.

Discussion of Project Costs: Steve McAlister of Clark and Green gave a brief overview of estimated project costs if the whole project were to be done by an outside contractor at average prevailing wages:

Renovation of all interior spaces (not including Police area)	$ 1,838,953
Elevator Addition	$ 870,304
Sitework (grading and septic, etc.)	$ 295,000
General Conditions	$ 210,299
General Administration	$ 128,582
P&P Bond	$ 50,147
Contingency	$ 339,328
Escalation (summer 2010)	$ 149,305
Total Construction Cost	**$ 3,881,917**

Steve estimated that if we phased the project, the cost of barrier removal only (elevator, bathrooms, doors in existing offices, sitework, septic, etc.) would be about $1.5 million, but since the costs were not broken out that way, this was only an estimate. Donald Faugno noted that the barrier removal work would exceed the 30% trigger to install fire suppression and other code work.

The cost of fitting out the basement area designated for the Police Department would be approximately $300,000 if done by outside contractors ($100 per square foot for 3000 square feet).

Focus Group Input: After a brief introduction by Donald Faugno, Steve McAlister visually reviewed schemes presented and rejected by the committee and the reasons for the rejection, culminating in a more detailed presentation of Scheme F. Mr. Faugno invited comments from community members invited to give their input. Questions and comments are summarized below:

Elevator location and cost: Steve McAlister noted that the elevator in the rear of the building would cost approximately $150,000 more than if it were built inside the clock tower, but the advantages (preservation of interior, full staircase to code, no need to build an entrance on the side of the building which would impede emergency vehicle traffic, etc) outweighed other considerations. Other comments:

- Might a modern looking elevator might provoke opposition from the Mass Historical Commission and/or the historic preservation community?
- Had the committee considered a two-story lift as an alternative to the elevator? Answers: Committee focus was the long-term so interim measures were not discussed and that the marginal cost of extending the elevator from the second floor to the third floor was modest to preserve the auditorium and create needed office space.

Basement: The basement constituted nearly 1/3 of the projected renovation - would it be prohibitively expensive and would it be dry when completed? The Committee was urged to do due diligence to be sure and suggested there could be alternatives, including the construction of an interior wall. Another commented that there may be opposition to the proposal to have the police in the basement.

Auditorium: Questions were raised about the wisdom of keeping the Auditorium as a community space when it was rarely used and suggested that it could be better used as a meeting space. Others said the auditorium would be used more and could generate income from private events if it were accessible. The committee was urged to consider energy measures, including the creation of separate heating zones for large spaces such as the auditorium.

Third Floor: A question was raised about the adequacy of the narrow back stairway as the second means of egress.

Roof: Adequate snow guards are a must to prevent cascading snow on people entering the back elevator.

Project Cost: Comments:

- The committee should determine the cost to do the minimum work to make the building accessible and meet the required codes.
- If CDBG grant funding is sought for the elevator, the Town must first appropriate monies to bring all space served by the elevator to code (basement and third floor). The auditorium balcony level could be locked off. The Committee needs to determine what these costs will be.
- The committee needs to provide the community firm comparisons of the cost of renovating the Town Hall to the cost of constructing a modern office building and of doing nothing to the Town Hall. The comparisons should compare "apples to apples" in that they include comparable costs and include eligibility for grant funding, or the lack thereof.

Publicity: The Committee was urged to develop a public information plan to acquaint the community with the need, the cost and the benefit of the Town Hall Renovation, particularly those people new to the Town who may never have seen the upper floors.

At 9:12, Mr. Faugno thanked community members for their attendance, their questions, and their support for the project.

The Committee members remaining (Faugno, Snyder, O'Connell, Holdcraft, and Wild) agreed that the input had raised some good questions but had been generally supportive. After some discussion, the Committee concluded that the work required to meet the February, 2010 proposal deadline could not be accomplished and that the Board of Selectmen and CDBG committee should be notified so a different project could be submitted for that deadline. Mr. O'Connell agreed to relay that decision to the Board and CDBG committee.

Steve McAlister reported that with the exception of a couple of tasks, Clark & Green has demonstrated the feasibility of renovating the Town Hall to meet the specified needs as called for in the current contract. He agreed that C & G needed to work with the committee to demonstrate that renovation was a better alternative than either doing nothing or building a modern office building and to reorganize the cost estimates into Phase I Barrier Removal and associated triggered code requirements and Phase II remaining costs. He suggested that the Committee may wish to request funds for an extension of the feasibility study to answer questions needed before the Committee requests Town funds for design and development of bid-ready documents. He agreed to come to the next meeting with a proposal.

Mr. Holdcraft said that the Town Access Committee could work with Steve McAlister to create an edited narrated description of Scheme F to be broadcast on cable as part of a community outreach effort. Mr. Faugno and Mr. O'Connell agreed to work on a timeline for the next meeting outlining tasks that need to be accomplished leading up to requests to the town for funding for the project and approximate deadline dates for the work to be accomplished.

Next Meeting: September 24 at 6:00 in the Town Hall Banquet Room:

Adjournment: Peter O'Connell moved and David Holdcraft seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. So voted at 9:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter O'Connell, Clerk