

Oxford Space & ARPA Funds Advisory Committee
Meeting
March 12, 2024

Attendance

Chairman Jeff Luff, Lynn Aiksnoras, Mary Beth Nelson, Larry Ellis, Rich Krueger, Herman Schuler

Chairman Jeff Luff opened the meeting at 7:05 PM and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Acceptance of Minutes

Acceptance of minutes pushed to the next meeting's agenda. The original recording clerk injured her hand and could not complete them in a timely manner, a new clerk was found and the minutes completed.

Amendments

None

New Business

- 1) New Focus of Board Building Committee Discussion Moving Forward After Presentation to BOS.

Discussion

Chairman Jeff Luff explained that when the committee met with the BOS they were asked to move forward with the project and become a building committee.

Chairman Jeff Luff, Lynn Aiksnoras and Mary Beth Nelson had a follow up meeting with George Temple to clarify what the committee's next steps should be.

Mary Beth Nelson did not feel the follow up meeting offered all of the clarity she was seeking, specifically not knowing what the building will ultimately be used for and if the

inclusion of the Police Station in the scope of this project is still on the table. However, she did feel that it was clear that the next steps should include moving forward with planning and getting RFP's.

Lynn Aiksnoras: Cautioned the committee to continue to include the residents of Oxford in decisions and seek input in order to maintain transparency. In addition, she has summaries of community input and surveys about what the community hopes to see done with the project, this includes data collected by All in for Oxford.

Chairman Jeff Luff asks for clarification on whether it is appropriate for a group to be represented in a committee meeting.

Herman Schuler and Lynn Aiksnoras both agree that it is fine since it is really just a list of ideas.

Chairman Jeff Luff mentioned the money must be allocated and approved by the BOS by December 31, 2024. Logical next steps include meeting with the town engineer, Brian Nesteriak, to go over the project and get drawings done in order to start getting quotes for the project. The focus should be on getting the building usable. The company that provided the original building inspection will not be used, citing an unknown issue and he was uncertain of the name of the company. As per the Town Charter, the job will be put out to bid as it is over \$10,000.

The committee begins discussing what the inspection would include, since there is no solid plan as to what the building's ultimate use will be. It is reiterated that there is a critical time frame and \$2.5 million budget. It is suggested that there is really only enough time and money to get the building in usable condition.

Larry Ellis makes a motion to go to the BOS requesting approval to get bids for the Building Inspection. Rich Kruger seconds. Herman Schuler abstained. Motion carries.

Herman Schueler discussed his decision to abstain from the last motion. He believes there is too much uncertainty over what will be included. He believes the Police Dept needs to be off the table.

Lynn Aiksnoras: The building inspection will answer the critical question of finding out if the building is even worth having anything more put into it. It is a natural first step and has the added benefit of answering some critics and concerned citizens.

Mary Beth Nelson: Discusses the continued uncertainty of what the building will be used for. Without any firm plans it is difficult to move forward with plans. Are we creating a community center?

Chairman Jeff Luff: Generic/Multi-purpose rooms should be the focus.

Citizen Keith Nelson: Re-iterated that \$2.5 million dollars will only get the building in usable condition with open space that allows for flexible use.

There is a group discussion about using the term "Community Center". It is suggested that the committee change the name so as not to get bogged down in parceling out the spaces with specific purposes in mind. Citizen Keith Nelson suggests changing the name to "Open Space Building" for Oxford's needs.

Mary Beth Nelson discusses the initial charge of the committee, given to them by George Temple, was to create a Community Center. This is creating some confusion now, since the remaining budget may only allow for the building to be made usable.

There is group discussion that the money can be taken from this project and given to other town projects. This especially becomes a risk if the committee does not move forward in a timely manner. The general consensus becomes prioritizing getting the building inspection, bathrooms, windows, roof, HVAC, and auditorium done.

Lynn Aiksnoras believes that George Temple never used the term Community Center and instead simply discussed what could be done with the Old Center School.

Discussion returns to what would be included in the scope of the project. The cleanup, building inspection, some windows and the roof could be done. The bathrooms need to be updated, but not relocated. Steam units were re-done 5 or 6 years ago and heat is working well. Air conditioners will be installed using mini-splits.

Chairman Jeff Luff will ask the BOS to approve hiring Brian Nesteriak in order to create the drawings, so the committee can go out to bid and start getting RFP's.

Lynn Aiksnoras asks how long it would take from approval by the BOS to getting the building inspection done.

Chairman Jeff Luff believes it will take about 2 months. In the meantime he asks Lynn Aiksnoras and Mary Beth Nelson to start working on ideas and concepts about what the spaces can be used for and get ready to promote those ideas to the BOS.

Audience of Citizens

None

Discussion the Board Deems Necessary

None

Adjournment

Larry Ellis moved to Adjourn the meeting at 8:23 PM. Mary Beth Nelson seconded this. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted By

Laurie Carr

Clerk

[Signature]
TOWN OF OXFORD, CT
TOWN CLERK

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