

Town of Newington, NH

PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes, Monday, May 20, 2013

Call to Order: Chair Denis Hebert called the May 20, 2013 meeting at 6:30 PM.

Present: Vice Chair, Mike Marconi; Patty Borkland; Bernie Christopher; Jack Pare; Justin Richardson; Alternate Member, Peggy Lamson; Board of Selectmen Rep, Rick Stern; and Jane Kendall, Recorder

Absent: Thomas Morgan, Town Planner

Public Guests: Steve Bush; Scott Campbell; Joey Cresta, Reporter for "Portsmouth Herald"; Chris Cross; Ruth and George Fletcher; Nathan Fredette; Granville Knox; John Lamson; Leah Lamson; Gail Pare; Melissa Prefontaine; Dave and Theresa Tomlinson; Eric Weinrieb, President of Altus Engineering

Public Hearings: Proposal by Library Trustees to expand the Langdon Library at 328 Nimble Hill Road, Tax Map 24, Lot 6, pursuant to NH RSA 674:54

Planning Board Chair, Denis Hebert opened the informational public hearing up for comment.

Board member, Justin Richardson passed out a letter of recusal explaining that his prior discussions with Selectmen, Library Trustees, and other officials taking a stance against the Langdon Library expansion proposal had "...prejudiced (him) to the point where (he felt he) cannot render an unbiased opinion."

Board Chair Hebert said he too had spoken out against the expansion proposal, but has since accepted and respects that it had been voted in by a two-thirds majority at the Town Meeting, and felt he could participate in the Board discussions to assist in making sure it would be the best possible library construction project possible.

Alternate Board member, Peggy Lamson acknowledged that her sister-in-law, Leah Lamson was a library trustee, but that she had never communicated with her on the library expansion subject even though Peggy was also in favor of the project.

Eric Weinrieb, President of Altus Engineering said the Library Trustees had engaged Architect, Ron Lamarre, and Building Consultant, Bill Lavallo who engaged Altus to prepare the civil engineering documents. Weinrieb said they had Dave Hislop survey the property. Weinrieb said he checked with the Board of Selectmen to be sure they didn't have any concerns over a conflict of interest since Altus Engineering also did consulting for the Planning Board. Chair Hebert said they had considered another engineer but decided that Altus could do a good job without being biased. Chair Hebert said the purpose of the informational hearing would be to go over the plans, specs, and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Weinrieb said the library operated under different rules than other private construction that comes to the Board for approval, and that the Planning Board's advice would be considered, but is not binding.

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Eric Weinrieb said they met with the City of Portsmouth Public Works, and Pease regarding extending new water lines to the area by the end of summer, which would benefit the entire Historic District end of Town, not just the library.

Chair Hebert asked if they had decided on what materials would be used for siding of the Library expansion, and was told the side and back would be concrete, with board and batten siding, and brick front. Patty Borkland asked what color the cement would be, and Lee Lamson said they hadn't made a final decision yet. Melissa Prefontaine said the Trustees were working with the Historic District Commission, who was leaning toward gray concrete, and brick in the front to match the existing brick. Selectmen, Rick Stern asked if they would use real brick, and Melissa said yes, they would be using water struck brick. Chair Hebert asked why they weren't using brick for the entire exterior, and Melissa said the cost would be prohibitive, and it would be impossible to match the existing brick exactly so they were using the new ADA entrance with glass doors as a visual break so it would appear to match. Melissa said decisions were made in compliance with the Department of Historic Resources recommendations to fit in aesthetically with the Historic District. Chris Cross suggested they consider adding a stonewall as a backdrop for historic character. Mike Marconi said it might be nice to have cobblestone along the front of the building too.

Denis Hebert asked about drainage, and Eric said the soils were exceptional, and so they would only be using a stone drip edge without gutters except for a collection system at the corner, which would run to the system in the back. Hebert asked about the dip in the front that collects water and freezes, and Weinrieb said years of plowing deposits of salt and sediment built up causing a delay in draining but the soils below were still good so they hadn't planned on doing anything. Chair Hebert asked how deep the sediment went, and Weinrieb said he thought there was probably 2-3 inches. Hebert suggested they consider rototilling the area to break up the surface, and Weinrieb said they could or just scrape off the sediment, and put new topsoil down. Library Director, Scott Campbell said he and Town Planner, Tom Morgan met with Jamie House from the Stormwater Center at UNH the previous week who said they were interested in doing a rain garden in two areas. Justin Richardson encouraged caution in using so much salt on Town Roads that easily leaches into the aquifer and builds up. Eric Weinrieb agreed that it is important to get away from using so much salt on the roads. Rick Stern said the road crew needs to take a course in how to use the salt trucks better because it often releases too much onto the roads.

Eric Weinrieb said the current septic tank system is at the end of its life expectancy, and will be replaced with a pipe to gravity leach field that will serve a maximum capacity for large meetings, which would be infrequent. Denis Hebert asked why they weren't using a chambered system, and Weinrieb said the nearby pine tree roots aren't that deep, and would be disturbed.

Weinrieb went on to say the pines are quite mature and need to be harvested, and said the remaining trees are often vulnerable to blow down whenever old trees come down, so they might consider taking all of them down. Melissa Prefontaine said they had asked an arborist to look at the trees. Scott Campbell said the arborist

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identified the dead trees that were ready to come down, as well as those with double crowns, and snags that were at risk of coming down. Denis Hebert said he thought the trees shouldn't be cut until they needed to be, and asked if the Conservation Commission had been involved with the forestry management. Peggy Lamson said the Town voted to allow the Library Trustees to manage the landscaping of shrubs and trees within 100 feet around the Library. Peggy said the last time the Town had harvested the timber was in 1948 for the Veteran's Association. Justin Richardson said the sign says the Town Forest was started in 1711, which predates the U.S. Constitution, and Dave Hislop did a survey after the PDA deeded the forest back. Denis Hebert said it needs to be managed, and Richardson said there is a management plan for the Town Forest, but there is no indication if the 1950 warrant article to convey landscaping of the 100 feet around the Library ever passed, and there would be a question if that would extend out from the new building expansion, as well as space for proposed solar panels. Richardson said he thought the Town should define the library site since it was not done. Peggy Lamson said she thought the Trustees should have jurisdiction because the RSA written said the Library Trustees shall have entire management of the property. Denis Hebert asked how many trees would need to be taken down, and how much space would be needed to place solar panels. Lee Lamson said there was no plan for solar panels, only clearing to allow passive solar lighting to come through the windows. Eric Weinrieb said a lot of trees might need to be taken down, especially around the septic system, but it could be left up to the Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen how many more trees. Denis Hebert said it would be beneficial to know how many trees need to be cut so they could move forward without another meeting. Weinrieb said they would be cutting trees within the work limits and then discussions on additional cutting would be separate from the building proposal. Gale Pare said they would need a landscaping plan to screen the monuments.

Patty Borkland asked if the road would change and if the cars would be parking close to the building. Eric Weinrieb said the first plan had parking areas 23 and 40 feet away. Discussion ensued regarding an alternative site plan, which would eliminate travel in front of the building, and would require driving back onto Nimble Hill Road from the north side parking area to access parking on the other side. Rick Stern said he thought the road in front of the Library was the original historic parade route and should be kept. Gail Pare said it was historic and should be kept, but was not the original parade route, which has been since lost when paved under Nimble Hill Road. Melissa Prefontaine said the original design was with angled in parking because the Fire Chief wanted a certain amount of access. Jack Pare said it would take more money to tear the road up, and they could put the handicap access along the existing road. Denis Hebert said he thought parking further away from the building would be helpful to avoid blocking emergency vehicles with street side parking in the front. Justin Richardson said he liked the idea of parking away from the front. Patty Borkland said she would not like parking far from the building. Gup Knox said it was important that parking not encroach on the Meeting House, which is the oldest surviving meetinghouse in the state and a

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prime historic edifice. Gail Pare agreed that she wouldn't like additional parking near the Meeting House, which would change the historical character. Melissa Prefontaine also said they didn't want a commercial look with fire lane stripping or parking stripes. Chris Cross who lives across the street suggested the Planning Board review what the parking requirements would be. Gail Pare asked if the ADA entrance at the side would need to be enlarged, and Melissa Prefontaine said they were told it was fine as it was. Discussion continued regarding the placement of parking areas including in the back, and Mike Marconi said he thought it important that two ADA entrances be close to the front. Gup Knox said he served on two ADA committees and agreed that he didn't like the idea of handicapped entrances being relegated to the back of a building. Eric Weinrieb said there are three scenarios, but building toward the back would make the ADA access accommodations more challenging, and would require more staffing for visibility. Justin Richardson asked why they would need to see everywhere, and Weinrieb said they just need to see the entrances. Lee Lamson and Melissa Prefontaine said their preference was to keep staffing small to keep their operating budget down. Gail Pare said she had no problem with the idea of parked cars, which showed activity in the area instead of looking abandoned.

Denis Hebert asked if there would be a cost savings to the building budget now that the City of Portsmouth is bringing the water lines in. Melissa Prefontaine said the Fire Chief still wants sprinklers. Eric Weinrieb said the most important thing is that exits be close so people could get out of the building and to an ambulance in an emergency. Hebert said it would be good to have Chief Sylvia attend one of the meetings so they could ask him questions.

Patty Borkland asked Melissa Prefontaine about the budget and a concern that costs could add up from repairing the older section of the building. Melissa said they had three engineers look at the building, and know they may have more issues behind the walls, but that they had a guaranteed maximum price, and a buffer, which they didn't want to eat up on extras. Melissa also said that most libraries are built using a template so there isn't much deviation.

Denis Hebert said he was troubled that the architect was working on a plan before going before the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen per the State RSA. Peggy Lamson said NH Libraries must follow the strictest RSA's. Mike Marconi said he has not been against a library expansion, but was concerned with the financing. Marconi said he had spoken to someone at Wal-Mart who said they could donate, and asked if the Trustees had solicited any of the businesses in Town for donations. Melissa Prefontaine said they were going to Rockingham Electric with the architect later in the week. Peggy Lamson said it's hard to ask for money, but nice to ask for building material contributions.

Justin Richardson asked if they had a plan for reduced lighting to prevent light pollution. Eric Weinrieb said they planned on using low level LED Ballard lighting on timers with motion detectors. Denis Hebert said there's a new astronomical light timer that works well at a low cost. Chris Cross said he thought the lighting should respect the historic style with up lighting, and down lighting on the new part.

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Denis Hebert asked how many bathrooms were in the building, and Lee Lamson said there were two. Hebert said he was concerned because the Planning Board had been sued over a previous plan that was approved without sufficient bathrooms. Bernie Christopher pointed out that Barnes and Nobles only has two bathrooms.

Denis Hebert requested that Eric Weinrieb submit plan specs and a construction schedule 60 days prior to construction as required by State RSA's. Weinrieb said the specs were not developed yet. Melissa Prefontaine said construction would be bi-phase. Bernie Christopher asked if the architect would be responsible for the specs. Peggy Lamson said that is what had been done for the Old Town Hall. Eric Weinrieb said the plan was being presented in a non-binding meeting. Weinrieb said usually the plans are developed, then the specs, and he thought a recommendation should be made to the Board of Selectmen regardless of input and deviation from the plan. Denis Hebert said they didn't have all the necessary information to make a recommendation, and would need another meeting with the Fire Chief to address egress and fire truck access. Justin Richardson said he agreed with Eric Weinrieb that a private project is different than governmental use of funds, which needs to review costs, and specs, but that the real issue is for the Board of Selectmen to determine what jurisdiction the Library has on the surrounding property. Chair Hebert said the public should be able to see the specs as percentages become complete. Weinrieb said he done 40 schools and libraries and never been required to present the specs at the public hearing. Chair Hebert said he was concerned with cost overruns as occurred with the Town shed, and the Portsmouth Middle School.. Denis Hebert then went on to read RSA 674:54 on Governmental Land Uses, and said towns are required to ask for specs. John Lamson said he thought it sounded as if they should have a contracting officer, and asked if the Board of Selectmen would hire a person for that role. Rick Stern said the Board of Selectmen did ask for input from the Planning Board. Eric Weinrieb recommended using the Town building inspector. Mike Marconi said Attorney Paul Sanderson with Local Government Center said several towns got into trouble because they didn't use a contracting officer. Melissa Prefontaine said the Trustees were in negotiations with the clerk of the works that is a contracting managers rep, and they are already using a construction manager at risk to ensure the Guaranteed Maximum Price. Denis Hebert said it's important to have watchdogs to be sure the contractors are honest while making an honest profit. Melissa Prefontaine said the Trustees were seeking the Planning Board's input, and thought they should meet again to meet the key players. Hebert said there would be one more meeting on Monday, June 6, 2013, and then they would be done.

Adjournment: Mike Marconi motioned to adjourn, and Rick Stern seconded. All were in favor and meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm

Next Meeting: Monday, June 3, 2013

**Respectfully
Submitted by:** Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary