

**Town of Woodbury
PUBLIC BUILDING COMMISSION
281 Main Street South
Woodbury, CT 06798-0369
Wednesday, September 8, 2021 @ 7:00 PM
Special Joint Meeting – Parks and Recreation Building**

Those Present: Board of Selectman – First Selectman Perkinson, Selectman Karen Reddington-Hughes and George Hale, Public Building Commission – Chairman Stan Love and Commissioner Bob DeLuca, Board of Finance - Chairman Alex DeSorbo, Commissioners Mike Cunningham, Karen McWirt and Bill Monti, Parks and Recreation - Chairman Michelle Ecsedy, Commissioner Tim Drakeley, Vice Chairman Kelly Packett and Director Jenifer Miller, Historic District Commission - Chairman Sue Cheatham, Commissioners Marc Kroll, Bob Kolesnik, Lois Fiftal, Judy Kelz, Frank Sherer and Maureen Donnarumma.

Also, present: Residents Mary Terrell, Ruth Melchiori, Andrew Sherman, Wayne Anderson, Claudette Volage, Edward Kelz and Kathy Doyle.

1) Call to Order:

Selectman George Hale called the Special Joint Meeting to order at 7:00 PM

2) Discussion of Building Conditions Assessment Provided by James Vance & Associates:

Chairman of the Public Building Commission Love spoke first saying that he had read a copy of the James Vance and Associates Report and felt that it was fairly extensive. One thing that struck him in looking at the Report, other than historical value to the Town, was what one would end up with when a full restoration is conducted. The second floor would not be ADA compliant the lower floor would be compliant only to a certain degree and you would end up with something like 1,800 sq. ft. assuming not much is done to the second floor. Chairman Love passed out a copy of the Survey Monkey that was split 50% to 50% when residents responded to the question of whether to use the building "as is" or something else. The question that was brought up is what would the Town end up with if a restoration of the Parks and Recreation building were to take place. It was felt that there was nothing to conclude from the survey on what to do with the building. Chairman of the Historic District Commission Cheatham said the question was what to do with the House and the most important things to do first and second and so on and an overall look at the building and what shape it is in. The outside of the building has been let go for a long time and needs to be refurbished. She feels an engineering study is the first step. She recommends keeping the building and then go from there. Selectman Reddington-Hughes said that after reading the report the most important part was the neglect in the last 15 years and unless the repairs are done the building will ultimately be unusable. The most important thing to decide is what the building will be used for. Public Building Commissioner DeLuca feels that the cost to restore the building of a million dollars mentioned in the report would be an outrageous amount and was overstated. He feels it could be done for much less. Commissioner DeLuca spoke about having an engineered septic system on the property as both the Old Town Hall and the Park and Recreation Building use the same system. There is no grant money available now and if the repairs to the building are not done the building is unusable. Selectman Hale said the three main points suggested on what to do with the building are 1) Renovate and continue to use the building, 2) Sell the building and 3) Tear the building down and build something new or use the space for parking. The question is, are we restoring or bringing things back to what is an acceptable building. Board of Finance Commissioner Cunningham said that he thought Historic District Chairman Cheatham's concern is on the outside of the building. He further feels that the building could be used as a support building for the Old Town Hall and all different options should be considered for the inside of the building. He is in favor of keeping the building and finding an option that is viable for the Town and the Historic District. Commissioner Kolesnik suggest that because of the different ideas for the building of sell, restore or knock down he feels that it is susceptible to a referendum. Parks and Recreation Commissioner Drakeley said that there have already been several engineering reports done over the years and that the building should be torn down. He feels it does not make sense to spend a million dollars or more on the building as other Town buildings also need major renovations. Commissioner Fiftal of the Historic District Commission mentioned she was part of writing the grant to get the engineer's study. The value of the Parks and Recreation building is the historic and the ancillary value of the building. Historic District Commissioner Keltz is concerned about preserving the building and wondered why in the last twenty-five years it had not been fixed up instead of putting a bandage on it. She feels that if the Town is going to keep the building it should be properly restored and not just half way. She would like to see it restored. Chairman Cheatham said that Woodbury is well known in the State for its historical aspect and she feels that the Town should restore the building. Finance Board Commissioner Monti said that there is Grant money available from the State and because this has an engineering report and because the building is in the Historic District the Town should be able to get a Grant. Finance Board Chairman DeSorbo feels that if the property is sold it will jeopardize what can be done with the Old Town Hall. He feels that the problem is how to manage the triangle of property for the Town's benefit. He suggested making the property into an event property. Chairman DeSorbo further said that he has been to ten meetings over the year on what to do with the property and he strongly feels that a decision needs to be made now. Selectman Hale said that no matter what option is chosen some people will not be happy. He feels that the Old Town Hall is a jewel and he leans toward taking the Parks and Recreation building down and putting something up that enhances the Old Town Hall. He also feels that the Town has undeveloped office space downstairs at the Senior Community Center and developing that would be money well spent.

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3) Discussion of the Future of the Parks and Recreation House:

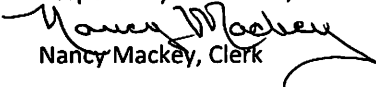
Selectman Remington-Hughes mentioned that the Parks and Recreation kitchen was operational at one time and she would like to see real numbers on fixing up the Parks and Recreation building. She also suggested looking into Grants to fix up the building. Board of Finance Commissioner Cunningham said that he feels that the first step should be to see what Grants are available and make a determination from there. He feels that the decisions are now down to two – Keep the Building and renovate and continue to use the building or tear the building down and build something new or use the space for parking. Board of Finance Chairman DeSorbo again mentioned using the Old Town Hall as an event building and that the Parks and Recreation Department could be in a part of the building. Historic District Commission Chairman Cheatham said that there is an obligation to change ideas of what the Town is all about and how to make it economically viable. Historic District Commissioner Fital said she is worried about what happens next if the Parks and Recreation building, which is a beautiful building, is torn down. Parks and Recreation Director Miller said that in order to get a Grant a plan needs to be made first as the money must be used in the same way as the Grant states. Selectman Hale said that ideas from all that have been said are valuable but things need to be made more specific. Commissioner Drakeley feels that times have changed and route six is not like it was when the Parks and Recreation Building was built. He feels that the focus should be on other buildings and properties and not on the Parks and Rec building that is in rough shape. Chairman Love asked how many months before the Parks and Recreation Building is condemned. First Selectman Perkinson said that the porches on the building are the first priority and she has Mr. Vance looking into it as this is a safety issue. She will check with Mr. Vance to see how much that will cost. Finance Chairman DeSorbo wondered why the Parks and Recreation building has not been a topic of conversation at Board and Commission meetings. Finance Commissioner Cunningham feels that the Town needs to take responsibility for keeping the Town buildings up and stop blaming the past administrations and do something about the buildings now. He would like the Town to look at the five-year Building Plan and make sure the plan goes forward. First Selectman Perkinson said since there are so many different opinions on how, when and where a decision will be made on the Parks and Recreation Building, she would like the Historic District Commission, before the deadline for this Grant, to start looking into the amount of money that the Parks and Recreation building can acquire as ancillary to the Old Town Hall. Also, what events are held in the Old Town Hall and how the Parks and Recreation building will be fixed up if it is decided to do that, based on Grant money. The Budget does not allow for one million dollars to fix up the Parks and Recreation Building and neither does the ALFA money so it will have to be taken out of every one's pocket. First Selectman Perkinson needs everyone at the meeting, especially the Historic District, to try to come up with some sort of idea of how much all of this will cost the Town and exactly what the building will be used for. The Parks and Recreation Department will have to be moved out of the building when the building is fixed up and a place needs to be found for them until they can come back into the building. First Selectman Perkinson said that if the group would like Mr. Vance to come and talk to everyone and explain some of his report, she will ask him when she talks to him tomorrow. Some one has to come up with an idea of how the Parks and Recreation building is going to be used and what form it is going to take. The Historic District has been asked to find out how much money is available and what are the stipulations of the Grant. If it is a matching Grant the Town does not have that much money in the Budget right now to do that. First Selectman Perkinson said that the decision that has to be made is whether the building is going to be renovated or sold. She feels that the Town would not put money into a building for storage. She does not want the Town to be a landlord either. She did not expect a decision to come from the meeting tonight but a decision has to be made on the building very soon as the porch is a safety problem. Chairman Love said that there is only 1,800 sq. ft. of building that can be used at the Parks and Recreation Building as the second floor is not usable and the rest of the building is the basement and the attic. He feels that the building is depressing and is a nightmare. All that is really being talked about is 1800 sq. ft. of useable space.

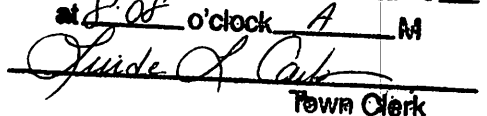
First Selectman Perkinson thanked everyone for coming and for their opinions. She hopes that she will have information back shortly and she will see when Mr. Vance can come to another meeting.

4) Adjournment

First Selectman Perkinson adjourned the meeting at 8:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Nancy Mackey, Clerk

RECEIVED & FILED
IN WOODBURY, CT
This 14th day of Sept 2021
at 8:08 o'clock A M

Town Clerk