

Monday, February 7, 2011  
CIAB Meeting Minutes

Present at the meeting: Joel Favazza, Donald Fryklund, Roland Hadley, Bill Kyrouz, Kersten Lanes, Janet Rice, Jeff Towne, Interim Police Chief Lane, Interim Fire Chief Dench, Phil Turpose, Mike Carrigan.

Mr. Hadley: Call to order at 6:34pm.

The CIAB: Unanimously approves the minutes for the January 24, 2011 meeting as amended.

The interim chief of the police department (“Chief Lane”) and the interim chief of the fire department (“Chief Dench”) (collectively, “The Chiefs”) spoke on their proposals for the construction of a new joint fire and police station.

Chief Lane: In 2008/2009 the city commissioned consultants to audit the police and fire departments; the report contained approximately 300 recommendations for the police department and 250 recommendations for the fire department.

Of these recommendations, one of the most significant was that the city not spend money trying to renovate the existing police and fire station facilities but rather better utilize funds by constructing a new facility.

Ms. Lanes: What was the scope/range of the study?

The Chiefs: Everything—staffing, training, work-load, buildings, equipment, etc.

Chief Lane: The current police station was constructed in 1973 and has received piece-meal upgrades over the past four decades.

Currently, there are major leaks in the roof and near windows.

Suggests that the average building’s useful expectancy is only roughly 25 years.

Chief Dench: Current fire department HQ was built in 1925.

Audit commissioned in 1992 said the top priority was a new station. Proposed locations for a new station were Blackburn Circle and I4-C2.

Mr. Fryklund: Recalls the 1992 fire chief didn’t want any fire station in Blackburn Circle.

Chief Dench: I think Blackburn Circle is currently a very good spot—there is no space in the downtown area.

Additionally, the School Board gave us the use of the baseball field for this purpose.

Building at Blackburn Circle allows fire trucks to access East Gloucester and Route 128 faster, although puts HQ further from Main Street.

Still, given the totality of the situation, Blackburn Circle is the best choice for a new HQ for 2011 and the foreseeable future.

Chief Lane: I think Gloucester Crossing is the new “downtown” and as Main Street continues to shrink, a combination emergency operations center housing the police and fire stations at Blackburn Circle will be the most beneficial option.

The Chiefs: A combined station also allows for a combined civilian dispatch center. Currently, 3 of the 7 officers on duty at a time are working in dispatch at the current police station and 1 firefighter per shift works as a dispatcher. These officers / firefighters are trained as officers and firefighters—not dispatchers.

Mr. Favazza: Notes that the proposed I4-C2 and Blackburn Circle locations proposed by Chief Dench are different types of properties. What, if resources were unlimited, would be the best location for a new fire station and why?

Chief Dench: I4-C2 type locations are good because they access a large main road (Rogers Street in this case) and are close to downtown.

However, given the reality of the situation, Blackburn Circle is the best viable option.

Mr. Favazza: We have many satellite fire stations that sit under-utilized for most if not all of the year—is it possible a large central station will replace the need for satellite stations?

Chief Dench: No. As it is, our response times are not compliant and could never be from a single central HQ.

Mr. Hadley: How many bays will the new station need?

Chief Dench: Five—maybe six—one will be needed as a mechanic bay.

All of the bays will be drive-through.

Mr. Hadley: Have you had any architects work on this?

Chief Lane then introduced Phil Turpose

Mr. Turpose: I have spoken with an architect and although the structure is not specified, we are told the new facility will likely be about 30,000 square feet, with about 19,000 used by the police department.

It will cost \$50,000 for a consultant study, followed by a design phase.

Due to necessary procedures for building public buildings in Massachusetts, this will be a multi-year project.

Mr. Fryklund: You're only leaving 10,000 square feet to the fire department in your scenario.

Mr. Tupos: The study may reveal a larger building is needed.

Mr. Frkylund: 30,000 square feet is a pretty large building already—does the police department need 2/3 of the space?

Mr. Hadley: There's a chance the building will be multiple stories.

What is the estimated price of the 30,000 square foot facility?

Mr. Turpose: \$12,000,000.

Mr. Fryklund: I think the fire department is going to need at least as much if not more space than the police department.

Chief Lane: We'll be satisfied with whatever the national standards suggest is appropriate for a police force and city of our size.

Mr. Fryklund: Don't you think police officers would know best how much space they need?

Chief Lane: I have confidence in the established national standards.

Ms. Lanes: Can you talk about the biggest benefits such a building will provide?

The Chiefs: We assume it will be a long-run money saver.

It will also boost morale of the officers and firefighters—the current rundown conditions at the present stations are depressing and inadequate for training.

Ms. Lanes: Is there another department that could join in?

The Chiefs: It is possible, if not in the same building, on the same campus, that all the inspectional service departments, etc. be located together so citizens don't need to go to four different locations in the city to get permits finalized.

Ms. Lanes: What about Gloucester District Court?

Chief Lane: It's almost certainly going to Salem.

Mr. Hadley: There are requests from both departments for other equipment / upgrades besides this building request—we shouldn't be spending money on repairs / upgrades that can't be transferred.

Chief Dench: New dispatch equipment could be transported to a new facility when built.

Mr. Hadley: Why is this process going to take so long?

Mr. Towne: School releasing the field was a big step—and it's done—but now we still need the analysis proposed by Mr. Turpose, the formation of a building committee, and it isn't until FY 2015, 2016, 2017 that enough debt comes offline to allow the city to spend \$12,000,000.

Chief Lane: Police department is expecting seizure money and I am willing to put \$500,000 toward feasibility studies, design work, etc.

Mr. Fryklund and Mr. Hadley: Suggest that The Chiefs get plans from architects who worked on similar combination stations for other cities.

Ms. Rice: This is a big project that will require the citizens to be behind it—how do you plan on generating the necessary PR?

Mr. Kyrouz: Could you get a feasibility study done in FY 2012?

Mr. Towne: Yes.

Mike Carrigan: This is a good time to get architect pricing and design work done as well due to the economy.

Mr. Kyrouz: I suggest you think of possible questions those in Gloucester will have for you and prepare answers thereto—the more you can answer at public hearings, the better chance you'll get the support needed to pull this off.

Mike Carrigan of the Newell Renewal project then spoke about Newell Stadium.

Mr. Fryklund: I'm concerned about the geotechnical study—are the surveyors willing to guarantee only 1/2 inch of settling?

Mr. Carrigan: Yes, if we surcharge the field—pile heavy dirt to pre-sink it—over the course of four to ten months.

Ms. Rice: What do you do for sports, etc. while the field is being surcharged?

Mr. Carrigan: Use other fields around the city.

Mr. Hadley: Any other potential sites besides the current Newell Stadium—which sits below sea-level, floods regularly, and is build on dynamic and shifting peat?

Mr. Carrigan: We still think Newell is the best spot.

Mr. Fryklund: Is this turf field a stretched membrane? What about drainage? What about the current retention pond?

Mr. Favazza: Is the party making these assertions for feasibility and suitability a disinterested third party?

Mr. Carrigan: No, they were picked by the designers.

Mr. Hadley: In that case, what would the retention/withhold be for the contractor?

Mr. Fryklund: Why not just grind the current track and replace it? Why this huge stadium project?

Mr. Carrigan: The facility doesn't currently meet requirements for many sports or regulations.

Ms. Lanes: What is the proposal for exactly?

Mr. Towne: \$3,500,000—\$1,500,000 from the city and \$2,000,000 from private donors.

There has already been a \$500,000 field grant and \$150,000 privately raised.

- Mr. Carrigan: There is also a large donor ready to come onboard.
- Ms. Lanes: Why this partnership with the city?
- Mr. Towne: The city wasn't going to fund the entire project.
- Ms. Lanes: How did we get to the 1.5/2.0 split?
- Mr. Towne: The city can't go beyond \$1,500,000 in long-term debt with all of the other projects coming down the pike.
- Mr. Favazza: If you can raise \$2 million and have one large donor—can't you go for the entire \$3.5 million and find additional large donors? Alternatively, if you can raise \$2 million, is there a sufficient, slightly scaled-down, design that could be constructed for \$2 million?
- Mr. Carrigan: Without the city commitment, it becomes harder to attract large donors.
- Mr. Fryklund: Can we trust the contractors? I remember what happened the last time the city hired people to do major renovations at the high school.
- Mr. Towne: There should be a bond in place.
- Mr. Carrigan: I agree—we want this done right.
- Mr. Fryklund: Why turf?
- Mr. Carrigan: 10x more usage, less injury, life expectancy of 15-20 years.
- Mr. Kyrouz: Any increased income?
- Mr. Carrigan: Yes, we can host more games and events.
- Ms. Rice: Have you seen similar fields a few years after construction? Are they in good shape? Also, how long has this company been installing these types of fields? Is there a backup if turf is not a good choice for Gloucester?
- Mr. Carrigan: The use of soil is off the table as far as my group is concerned.

The CIAB:

We like this project; specifically we like the grant funding and private donations carrying a large portion of the financial burden. We cannot rank it currently as we have not yet reviewed all projects submitted but support it and the use of bonding to see it accomplished.

Meeting adjourned.