

Building Needs Committee Annual Report for 1997

During 1997, the Building Needs Committee continued working on its three major projects:

Adaptive Re-use of the Town Hall:

In Feb. 1997, the town offices moved to the newly renovated Butterick Building. In February, Harvey & Tracy Associates was hired to conduct a structural analysis of the Town Hall to determine its load capacity. As a result of this study, Harvey concluded that the first floor of the Town hall could support a load capacity of 50 pounds per square foot, or approximately 100 people. The second floor, except for the first two bays, had a load capacity of 100 pounds per square foot. A structural defect in a carrying beam over the former Select Board meeting room would need to be repaired to provide any carrying capacity for the first two bays.

Suzanne Carlson, Architect, was hired to conduct an adaptive re-use study for the newly vacated building, and to identify potential new uses for the Town Hall. Carlson presented measured drawings, took pictures, and presented preliminary plans at a meeting with several town boards present. The combined input will be reflected in her final report to be completed in January 1998.

In November, the Committee met with other town boards to obtain input on building and septic code requirements necessary to renovate the Town Hall for public use. The necessary code requirements will be incorporated in the final use plan.

Fire and Police Station

The Committee continued working on a solution to the fire and police departments' space needs. To help with the project, the Committee contracted with a team of students from WPI, who, for their Senior Qualifying Project, would do a comprehensive study of the Public Safety Departments space needs at the current site. Initially, the students proposed three possible options:

- expand the present facility to accommodate both departments,
- build a new police station at another site,
- locate the police station to the old town hall.

Realizing it was necessary to fully answer the feasibility of enlarging the present station to meet the requirements of both the fire and police departments, the Committee voted that the students focus their project to the present site. The students researched public safety needs and requirements, visited other facilities, met with both fire and police chiefs and drew preliminary architectural plans of an expanded station.

The students continually with the Committee to report progress, to receive input and to further refine their plans. In February 1998, the students will complete their project and make a full presentation with preliminary architectural plans to the Building Needs Committee. Their plans, though not signed by an engineer, present a possible framework for any future expanded facility and provide data for alternative solutions to the public safety needs of the town.

In September/October the expanded Committee also included exploration of possible sites for an independent structure to house the police department. Nearby comparable localities were visited to obtain a better understanding of police department operations and requirements. Both newly-constructed and renovated older facilities were evaluated for application in this Committee's deliberations.

Butterick Recreation Land:

The Committee met several times with the Recreation Committee to discuss possible uses of the Town Hall for recreation activities for both youth and adult programs. The Recreation Committee also discussed usage of the land behind the Butterick Building which Mary Ellen Butterick left to the town, specifying in her will, that it be used for public recreation purposes. The Recreation Committee would like to construct activity pods on this land, such as a tennis court, a playground, etc. for town use. The Building Committee voted to endorse and support such plans.

The Building Needs Committee met twenty times during 1997. Its regular meeting is held on the fourth Monday of every month in the Butterick Building. The public is urged to attend these meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Fitch, Chair
Building Needs Committee

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Jack Chandler
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