

Meeting of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee held on December 21, 2017 beginning at 6:00 pm at the Ludlow Town Hall.

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Members present: Derek DeBarge, Chairman; Darlene Cincone, Eri Gregoire, Raymond Phoenix; Ellie Villano; Luis Vitorino; Kimberly Collins

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The Committee met with the Senior Center Building Committee with the following members present: Fred Lafayette, Jodi Zepke, Matt Goncalves, Steve Santos, Richard Moskal and William Rooney.

Mr. Lafayette thanked the Committee for allowing them to present their project. Mr. Lafayette presented and read the article and the motion that will be on the warrant for the Special Town Meeting. He stated that they are asking for \$9,800,000. He presented estimated projections of what the cost to the taxpayers could be. He stated the information was provided to them by Bond Counsel, the Town Accountant and the Town Treasurer. He stated they have looked at all kinds of property all over town. Their criteria for the location of the new Center includes: proximity to the senior population; is the property utilities ready; traffic flow; is it shovel ready – meaning it doesn't need to be cleared and/or backfilled; accessibility; and sufficient parking. They have been in contact with Eric Nelson from Westmass Development regarding property available for purchase at the corner of State Street and First Avenue; the asking price is \$435,000. We know we are taking a risk of losing that property if it sells before we receive approval of this project in the March election.

Ms. Zepke gave an overview of what the Senior Center is. She stated they are in the basement of a 110 year old building and they offer all types of services and programs, everything from exercise to nutrition to transportation and everything in between. They do everything from hugs to crisis management. They work very hard to ensure that seniors are provided for by connecting them with other services when needed. She stated that almost 1 in 3 people in the Town of Ludlow are over the age of 60. She stated their building is very old and many aspects of it are not safe. The building is not ADA compliant in many ways. She stated the toilets don't flush, the windows don't open, they lack parking, it's 170 feet from the front door to the dining room with a ramp, so it's really difficult for those with a walker or in a wheelchair. She gave a timeline of what the Building Committee has already done on this project. It really started about 4 years ago. The Friends of the Ludlow Senior Center voted to undertake a feasibility study, they hired an architect who came in and did a building assessment and future needs assessment. We have looked at property, we looked at the feasibility study, we have toured Vets Park and we have done our due diligence to make sure that we have looked at every possible issue going forward.

Mr. Moskal presented the proposed construction budget for the project. It is based on a 20,000 square foot building.

Site work (including utilities, surveys)	\$450,000
Building Construction @ \$250/sf	\$5,000,000
Design/Construction Escalator	\$1,632,275
Total Construction Cost	\$7,082,275

Development Expenses
Land Acquisition and Preparation
Total

\$2,117,725
\$600,000
\$9,800,000

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The timeline is based on the March election approval by the Townspeople. A construction committee will be appointed. Advertisement and a contract for an OPM will be mid-May. Advertisement, interview, and contract for the Architectural Engineer will bring us to the end of October of 2018. The project bidding process will bring us to the end of the calendar year and hopefully awarding the contract and beginning the construction in 2019 with a completion date of mid to late 2020.

Mr. Lafayette stated that the purchase price of the property is not solid at this point. There could be negotiations on that.

Ms. Zepke stated that the Town does not own the building that the Senior Center is currently in. If we were to renovate the current Center the entire building would have to be brought up to code, which includes the Exit 7 Theater and the Ludlow Housing Authority upstairs. Ms. Zepke stated the Town pays approximately \$100,000 a year to operate and maintain the Center which includes the utilities, heating and air repairs, plumbing and electrical.

Ms. Villano stated the lease agreement between the Town and the State is for a Senior Center. If this project moves forward and the Town vacates the building, it would then be up to the Ludlow Housing Authority to decide what to do with the building. The lease agreement is a non-monetary agreement and is a 99 year lease.

Mr. Lafayette asked what the impact of this Committee's vote would mean. Ms. Villano stated that the bylaws state that the Capital Planning Committee must vote on all capital projects and provide that report to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen then accept that report. This is one step in the process.

The Committee met with the Chapin Street Core Building Committee. Members present were Dr. Todd Gazda, Superintendent of Schools and Chairman; OPM Evan Werner; and Chris LeBlanc, Project Manager and Rafal Toczko representing Mount Vernon Group Architects.

Dr. Gazda thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present their project. He stated that they submitted Statements of Interest 5 or 6 times to the MSBA before it was approved and put into the pipeline for a new school. He feels that the reason it was accepted this time was because two schools that need to be replaced are being combined into one new building. He stated that the current buildings were built in 1959 – 1964 and were designed to meet the needs of that time period. The educational needs today are very different than those in 1960. Not only are these schools, these are community buildings and will serve a function and role for our community. There is significant crowding in our current schools, the classrooms are much smaller than what is typically recommended in this day and age. One of the issues is the stress on the electrical system, we are now a 1 to 1 district, grades 2 through 12, that means every student has a device and those devices need to be charged and plugged in, all of this is a drain on our electrical

infrastructure. The academic spaces fail to comply with current district programs and MSBA guidelines. The modular classrooms were added due to these guidelines. Chapin Street School is 58 years old, Veterans Park Elementary is 51; they've reached the end of their life expectancy. None of our buildings are in compliance with ADA requirements. The maintenance of these obsolete buildings is becoming a drain on our operating budgets. We've had to upgrade heating systems, upgrade boilers, we have solved minor roof problems and leaks. We have a sump pump that is continually running at Veterans Park due to wetlands issues. There is an opportunity here to enhance these facilities and spaces to conserve not only our student population but our community. The new building will be set up where the educational spaces can be shut off so that community spaces can be accessed after hours for community events. Our goals for the project are to achieve educational equity across schools and buildings for all children in the Ludlow school system, maximize sustainability, maximize energy efficiency, minimize transportation costs, minimize operational costs, develop a fiscally responsible solution and foster the use of a community resource. One of the things, by combining these two schools, we're gonna eliminate a transition for our students, which is educationally sound. We took a hard look at a whole spectrum of options and there were 10 in total and they went from upgrading our current buildings, bringing them completely up to code all the way to the new building at the Chapin Street site. We also looked at add-reno's where we would basically gut the old building, keep what we could, and then add to it, but the cost was pretty close to a new build and there would be a substantial disruption to the educational process because you have to move kids around and you have to bring in modular units to house them during construction. The District Offices are part of the project. Our current offices are tied very closely to the Senior Center, the buildings share a heating system. Those two buildings are reaching a point where it is no longer sustainable. They need a new roof which is slate and because of the historical district, it has to be replaced with something slate-like. The boiler system and heating system need major upgrades; that is going to trigger those ADA questions. The building right next door houses the Headstart program and the Adult Learning Center, that building has an elevator, the Central office does not, which means adding an elevator. Moving the Central office to the new school building is the most cost effective way to take care of those building issues. The School Department would turn those two buildings over to the Town and it would be up to the Board of Selectmen to decide what to do with them.

Mr. Gazda gave a presentation of the proposed concept design of the building and explained what each floor and room looks like. He stated the new school construction costs are as follows:

New School Construction	\$46,004,312
Fees and Contingencies	\$9,047,109
FF&E	\$850,000
Technology	\$850,000
District Office	\$3,200,000
Total Cost	\$59,951,421

That is our top; that is our cap. The only way it's gonna go from there is down. We are working to maximize every single penny in order to satisfy our fiscal duty to the Town. This building will be solar-ready so in the future the Town can pursue solar options. At this point, we are anticipating a 58.37% return from the State. We think we can get that rate a little higher for

energy efficiency and we are developing a maintenance plan. Now that's on approved costs, there are always costs that are not going to be approved by the MSBA, so the actual rate of return is more likely to be somewhere in the vicinity of 50%.

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Mr. DeBarge stated that Town Counsel was asked for an opinion regarding the fact that Mr. DeBarge, Ms. Villano and Ms. Cincone are also on the Chapin Street Core Building Committee and he stated that Town Counsel stated there is no conflict of them voting on this issue as members of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. Ms. Cincone made a motion, seconded by Mr. Phoenix, to attach these to the minutes of this meeting. Vote 6-0 all in favor.

The Committee met with Steve Santos, Chairman of the Board of Public Works. He stated that he had come before the Committee several months prior to ask for monies to repair the street sweeper. At that time, \$55,000 was approved by the Committee. There was only one bid received and it is \$95,000. After negotiations with the vendor, repairs can be made for \$55,000. Any additional unforeseen parts and labor will come from the DPW's budget. He stated that the Board of Public Works would like to ask the Committee to consider approving a 3 year lease for a new sweeper. Ms. Cincone stated that once they voted on this issue, which was last year, it is already set, it can't be changed. Ms. Villano stated that they would have to come back to the Committee for the next fiscal year to ask for additional funding and then it would have to go to Town Meeting for approval.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the financial/tax impact worksheets for the new school and the new senior center. Ms. Villano stated that the Town meeting on January 22 is the appropriation. The ballot question, the Selectmen have initially voted to put on for March for both projects, pending approval at Town Meeting. She stated that the land acquisition for the senior center will be going under the determination of uniqueness to comply with the procurement process. The Senior Center Building Committee, with the Board of Selectmen, will have to designate and determine that this particular parcel is the only parcel that can be utilized for the Senior Center and why. And then that will have to be advertised in the Central Register for no more than 30 days; that you've determined this uniqueness, what parcel you're going to buy, cost of the parcel and give everyone an opportunity to express any issues with it.

Ms. Collins asked how the information for these projects will get to the voters, specifically if it will be on social media. Ms. Cincone stated that the school has all of their information on their website and there will be public informational meetings held. Ms. Zepke stated that there is a grass roots committee that has set up a website for the Senior Center. Ms. Villano stated that each Building Committee will be responsible for that.

Mr. Phoenix stated he thinks they are both very worthy causes, he thinks they're both necessary projects and both of them offer us long term savings as far as the infrastructure, the energy costs, all those types of things.

Ms. Cincone stated if you think about it too, to bring people into the community, we're looking for the younger, the new families, the families that have been here for a long time, we'd like to

offer them something and to get the new families into the big developments, they're gonna have kids.

Mr. DeBarge stated that he thinks the senior center is more necessary than he's ever seen a building needing to be either renovated or gotten out of. He has been in the Senior Center many times and he doesn't feel it can be renovated. Our schools are ready to go, it needs to be done, there is no doubt about that.

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Ms. Villano stated we need a new school, we need a new senior center, in my mind, and I think the only way that this can be accomplished is by letting the Town people vote. That's where it needs to go, in the hands of the Town's people. She feels that both Committees have done very diligent work on coming up with their construction costs. They are both very important projects.

Mr. Vitorino stated he agrees with Ellie's sentiment, he agrees with the needs for both from a Capital perspective, the needs for both of these projects, and the presentations and the thoughtfulness that's been put into both projects he thinks is important and bringing it to the voters is the most important thing. And that's the action he will support. From the Finance Committee perspective and from his own personal perspective, he thinks that folks need to be fully aware of the financial picture that's in the community and not sugarcoat that in any way, shape or form.

Ms. Cincone asked what type of vote do we have to do tonight. Ms. Villano read a portion of the Town Bylaw clarifying what the Committee is tasked with in regards to these projects. Bond Counsel has advised that we need to go by the letter of our bylaw. She stated her interpretation is we have to vote on whether we would recommend or approve this project.

Mr. Phoenix made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cincone, that we formulate a report to the Board of Selectmen indicating that we recommend approval of both of the projects that came in front of us tonight regarding the school and the Senior Center. Vote 6-0 all in favor.

Ms. Cincone made a motion, seconded by Ms. Villano, to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2017 Capital Improvement Committee, members present at that meeting were Luis Vitorino, Ellie Villano, Derek DeBarge, and Dolly Cincone. Vote 4-0 in favor with Mr. Gregoire and Mr. Phoenix abstaining.

Ms. Cincone made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vitorino, that we sign the minutes of March 20, 2017 which contained a typographical error indicating the minutes were March 30th, members present at that meeting were Luis Vitorino, Ellie Villano, Heidi Fogg, Kim Collins, Derek DeBarge, and Dolly Cincone. Vote 4-0 in favor with Mr. Gregoire and Mr. Phoenix abstaining.

Ms. Cincone made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vitorino, to adjourn at 8:26 pm. Vote 6-0 all in favor.

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