



Fire Station Building Review Committee

INFORMATION SESSION - Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

APPROVED

Committee members in attendance: Allan Brown - Chairman, Kimberley Edelmann, David Hartman, Howard Kirchner, Peter Ladd, Janice Loz, Ed Raymond, Peter Wyman

Others present: Selectmen John Dabuliewicz & Clyde Carson, Anthony Mento from SMP Architects, Ken Holmes & Bruce Blazon of North Branch Construction, and approximately 75 residents.

1. Introduction

Selectman Allan Brown, chair of the Fire Station Building Review Committee (FSBRC), opened the information session shortly after 7 pm. He summarized how the FSBRC had reviewed 9 proposals from architect firms, interviewed 4 firms, narrowed the list down to 2 from which the Board of Selectmen hired SMP Architects. Using the same process, the Town also hired North Branch Construction as the Construction Manager.

2. Presentation

Anthony Mento, SMP Architects Project Manager, started the presentation about the future fire station project with help from a member of the FSBRC, Warner Firefighter Peter Wyman.

Peter spoke about issues at the current fire station.

Simply No Room:

- ◆ Apparatus barely fits
- ◆ Equipment in 3 buildings
- ◆ Garage doors too small
- ◆ Can not open truck cabs to do maintenance
- ◆ Difficult to access side hatches
- ◆ Limited parking

Functionality:

- ◆ Not code compliant
- ◆ Not ADA accessible
- ◆ Non-compliant stair & egress issues
- ◆ Crew unable to fit in training room
- ◆ Inadequate bathrooms
- ◆ No offices
- ◆ No Emergency Management Office
- ◆ Moisture issues and rain streams into the building



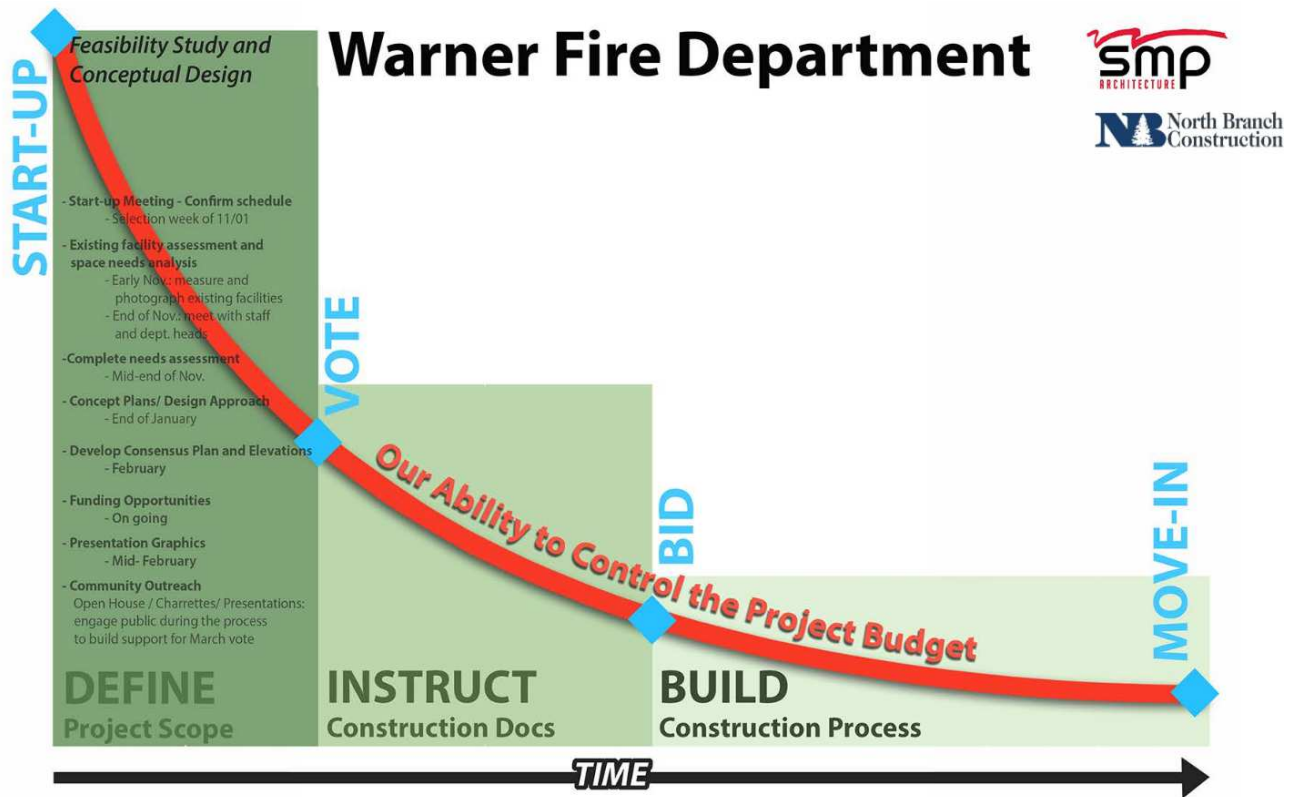
Anthony noted that the current fire station has served Warner since 1963. However, as apparatus and gear has evolved, there simply isn't enough space. Also, the building codes for fire stations have changed. Warner is not up to code.

Anthony recalled the recent work of the FSBRC. This included a listening session in November. The building plan and conceptions images were shared at that meeting. The public had asked questions and provided their input.

Since then, the FSBRC, working with Ken Holmes and Bruce Blazon of North Branch Construction, had discussions comparing the costs and benefits of various aspects of the project. Most recently, with an eye towards reaching a reasonable budget goal, the committee reached some informed key decisions. The final choices are shown here in **bold face**.

- ◆ Flat roof vs. **sloped roof at the bays**
- ◆ **Limited basement** vs. no basement
- ◆ Mechanical system location: **Basement** vs. ground floor vs. attic
- ◆ **Cold attic** vs. mechanical, storage or supporting space in attic
- ◆ 12' wide vs. 14' wide vs. **combination 12'/14' wide overhead doors**
- ◆ Wall / thermal envelope infill vs. **overhead doors @ all bays**
- ◆ Fire Dept. personnel paved parking vs. **hardpack parking in rear of building**

Anthony shared a graphic which explained that key decisions that have big impact and must be made early in the project time line. The 2017 Town Meeting was shown as "VOTE". January 2018 was when "BID" work would begin. This would be followed by another vote at 2018 Town Meeting to approve construction. "MOVE-IN" on the chart would be in December 2018.



Anthony said the FSBRC heard and collected a lot of feedback in listening sessions and prior meetings. These included specific concerns that had been raised; some by the abutters, some by other citizens and taxpayers. These included :

Direct impact on the neighbors:

- ◆ Light pollution
- ◆ Drainage / water retention - Water must be kept onsite according to code
- ◆ Parking area: Paved vs. pervious
- ◆ Traffic
- ◆ Sound pollution
- ◆ The future of the house

Energy efficiency & conservation:

- ◆ Heating system
- ◆ Plan for 30, 40, 50 years out
- ◆ Upfront costs vs. long term costs (Pay now or pay later?)
- ◆ Building insulation

Affordable - How to control the costs:

- ◆ Construction Manager (North Branch Construction) on the team
- ◆ Making the big decisions now that effect project cost
- ◆ Construction industry is booming / Costs are increasing
- ◆ Grant opportunities
- ◆ Number of floors

Anthony shared the results of a survey taken both at the November listening session and at the Town Hall during the November elections. Analysis of the data resulted in the following Top 10 priorities:

- 1) Meets the needs of the Fire Department
- 2) Energy efficient
- 3) Durable over 25 years
- 4) Low maintenance and operational costs
- 5) Safety of daily operations
- 6) Not ugly
- 7) Efficient design
- 8) Fits visually into the neighborhood
- 9) Expandable for future growth
- 10) Low impact on the neighbors

Anthony showed photos of the location where the future fire station would be built; Map 34, Lot 15.

Allan Brown provided some history about how Warner came to acquire the property. It had been identified as a very desirable site by the Fire Station Alternate Sites Committee a few years earlier, however, it was not available for sale at the time. Later, Gordon Smith's family made the property available to the Town.

Allan said that it was fully understood that it was a residential neighborhood. Therefore, it was important to him that the the fire department be good neighbors. All of the work being done was with that in mind.

The site identified was on the corner of Main Street and Split Rock Road. The lot was relatively flat in the buildable area. Then it raised up to a wooded area.

Allan added that the lot across on the other corner of Main and Split Rock was another preferred site.

Anthony showed where the nearest abutters were located and where additional visual buffering would be added.



Anthony described how he and his partners worked on various conceptual designs. Anthony presented Options A, E, and X to the FSBRC. From that, the committee discussed strengths and weaknesses of each. They discussed features. The architects took the feedback, went back to their offices in Concord and designed Option Y.

Option Y has the apparatus bay facing Main Street. The administration area has a smaller profile with the gable end pointing to the road. It had a small basement and a small attic area. However, in discussions with North Branch Construction, additional suggestions were made. Square footage was reduced.

Option Z-14 was the next revision. It included 14 foot apparatus bay doors. The square footage for Z-14 was 12,105; more than what the committee was comfortable with.

Option Z-12 was next, with 12 foot apparatus doors. That reduced the square footage to 11,500.

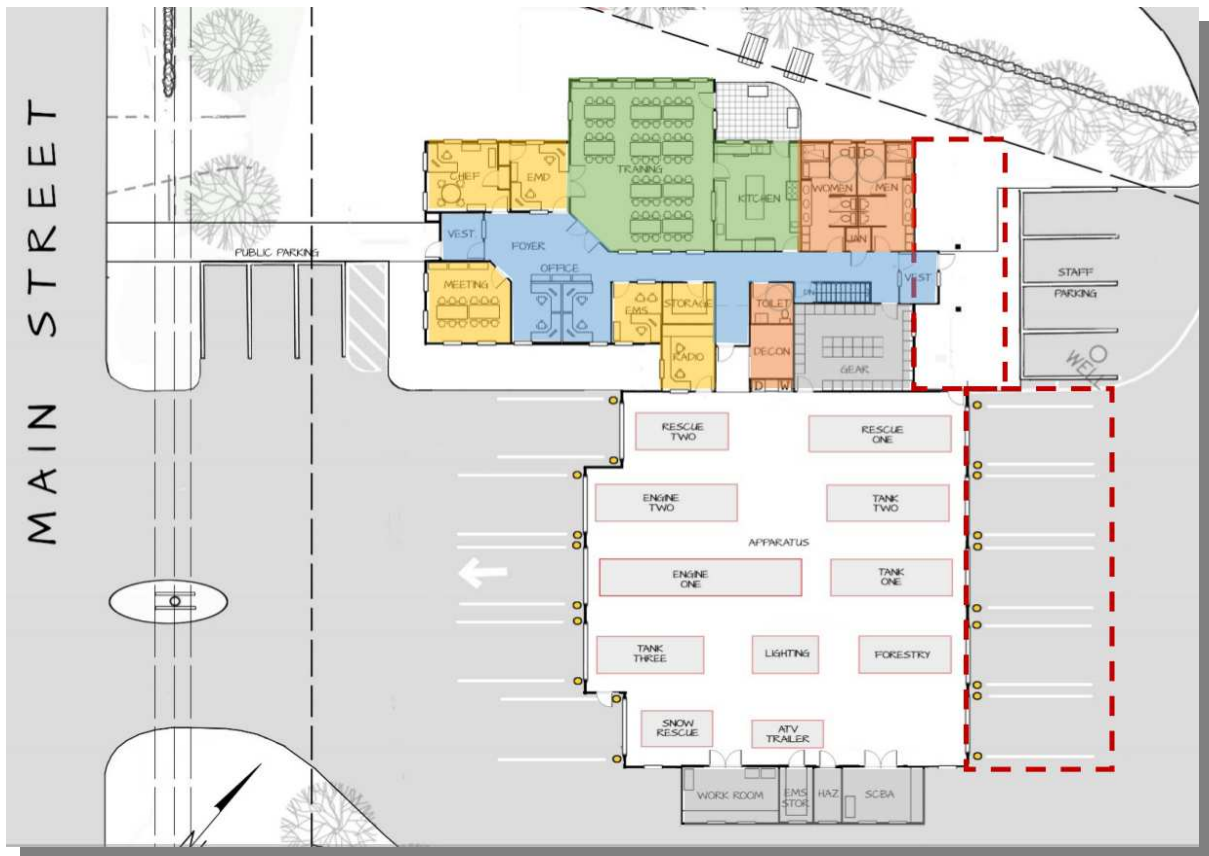
Anthony noted that at that point, the committee and architects were comfortable with the conceptual design. Additional work would be done, but the major decisions looked good.

In response to a question, Anthony noted that the mechanical, electrical, phone systems, data would all be in a small basement.

Anthony walked citizens through the conceptual drawing of Option Z-12. It included offices, a meeting room, a training room, a kitchen, large bathroom, a gear room and more. He showed the path firefighters would take to go from the parking lot, into the building, through the gear room to suit up and then directly into the apparatus bay. The apparatus area showed 5 double bays. In the drawing were Rescue 1 & 2; Engine 1 & 2; Tank 1, 2 and 3; the lighting

system; the forestry vehicle, the snow rescue equipment, and the ATV trailer. Anthony noted that the equipment was located in multiple locations. With the new fire station, it would be in one place.

The diagram also showed (in dotted red lines) where future expansion would be possible if needed sometime down the line. Both areas had gable ends, easily extended.



A question was asked about the need to have offices and kitchen space in a volunteer fire station. Fire Chief Ed Raymond answered, explaining that the current station has a kitchen. It allows for food to be prepared when there are large fires and events. The Chief added that unfortunately, in prior years, they have had to have fire fighters spend the night in the station. Having space means they don't have to sleep in a truck. The offices will provide space for paperwork. He said having offices will mean that the officers won't have to maintain paperwork at their homes.

Someone else asked if the training room will also be used as an Emergency Operations Center. Ed said it would. The citizen noted that when the EOC is active, it has to be manned throughout the event. Ed said that was true. Another good reason to have a kitchen and office space.

Anthony added that training rooms, Emergency Offices, kitchens are expected in fire stations. There was sometimes grant money available to help fund those spaces.

Someone asked if the facility will also house rescue equipment. Anthony noted it would, but not an ambulance. The Town of Warner contracts with Contoocook / Hopkinton for ambulance service.

Ed Mical, Warner's Emergency Management Director, stepped up and addressed the audience. He noted that when the project started, he told the Board of Selectmen he would pursue an emergency management grant. That may included funding assistance up to \$100,000 and would cover office space, the training room, bathrooms and the kitchen. All of those spaces would be used in an emergency. He added that when there is an emergency event and other organizations come into Warner, the current fire station gets very crowded very quickly.

Anthony noted that one area of the site would have a water retention pond. Anthony pointed out where there could be a memorial garden and flag. He added that there was discussion about providing space for a sidewalk.

Conceptual images of the exterior of the building were shown, including this one as viewed from Main Street.



A conceptual drawing of the building, sans roof, was also shown.



An abutter asked if the size of the fire station was standard for a town the size of Warner. Anthony answered that it was the right size considering the area the department covers, which includes I-89, the amount of apparatus the Town owns, and the number of firefighters.

Someone asked why there were doors on both sides of the apparatus area, if fire engines would be parked back to back. Anthony said the engines would be parked front to back. They would leave directly onto Main Street. Returning, they would come back slowly from the back.

Chief Raymond noted that it was always easier and safer to drive forward instead of backing into the station. However, there was a recent experience when an engine wouldn't start when it was time to go to a fire in Webster. With doors on both sides, that kind of experience would not limit the department's ability to use another vehicle.

Was it cost effective to have so many doors? Yes. As it turned out, it would cost more to have solid walls than doors. Also, having doors on both sides would make traffic on the site itself flow more efficiently. Kimberley Edelman added that by having doors in the back, the drivers would not have to stop traffic on Rt 103 while they back into the station.

A Split Rock Road resident asked how the fire fighters would be arriving into the station before getting into the fire vehicles? He noted that residents were asked to sign a release so that the Split Rock Road driveway could be put in place. He understood the road would be used for returning fire trucks. But he was not comfortable with speeding fire fighters arriving at the station via Split Rock Road.

Fire Chief Raymond believed first responders would more likely go straight into the driveway at the front of the building, using the driveway on the south side of the building. If an incoming engine from another department arrives, they would also use Split Rock Road.

The Chief said the Split Rock Road driveway was being built to allow for return trips; when the fire vehicles return from a fire.

The citizen asked the Chief if he would make it policy to keep firefighters from using the Split Rock Road drive. The Chief said he would speak with his firefighters about it, most of whom actually would be coming from the center of town. Another resident of Split Rock Road noted that he was a firefighter and he would be using the Split Road Road driveway.

Chief Raymond said the intent was to use the larger driveway in front of the building for incoming responders.

Someone asked about how wide the apron in front of the building would be. Anthony said it was about 60 feet. Discussion would need to be done with the State regarding the curb cut.

Selectman John Dabuliewicz said that in regards to policy, it makes sense, but he would let the Fire Chief address that. He added that they did want to minimize the impact on the neighborhood. They would do their best to accommodate, but nothing was perfect.

Abutter John McGilvray asked for assurance that his living room would not be flooded with light every time a fire truck returns to the station. Anthony responded, noting that an 8 foot high fence will be erected as well as additional greenery. Selectman Clyde Carson added that the Board of Selectmen were committed to making sure the station works well for the neighbors, including buffering.

Anthony showed a birds' eye flyby video of the conceptual drawings. While it played, he noted that he had heard mixed opinions about whether the buildings should have cupolas.

Anthony noted that there was a lot of fine detail that needed to be done. The goal at this phase was to show a conceptual view of the building.

Anthony shared the next steps:

- ◆ Process tonight's comments
- ◆ Presentation at 2017 Town Meeting on March 15 - Seek funds for Phase 2
- ◆ If approved - Start engineering & design drawings for construction
- ◆ Investigate heating systems / options
- ◆ Hard bid January 2018
- ◆ 2018 Town Meeting - Seek funds for Phase 3
- ◆ If approved - Begin construction in April; aim for a December Grand Opening

Someone asked about the Gordon's house. Allan Brown said there was someone interested in the house, which he felt was ideal. It was a nice solid house. Ideally, the house would be moved to a new location. However, it can't be touched until the FEMA grant work is completed.

Someone asked when taxpayers would know the impact of the construction cost. Allan said that would be presented at the 2018 Town Meeting.

Pat DeAngelis referred to the time line presented earlier. She was concerned about the ability to reduce the budget as time passes. She asked if there was a number in mind for construction. Allan said that was where Ken and Bruce would be important, identifying costs and helping to manage the costs. Anthony added that the FSBRC had set a range to aim for, however he noted that construction costs continue to increase. There would be some things reduced; some things cut. The design of the building would include alternate options.

Pat asked if square footage would be considered. Kimberley said she was the Budget Committee's representative on the FSBRC. She said that in the past few months was resizing the building due to square footage. Other decisions regarding highly costly aspects of the building such as a flat roof vs. a peak roof were made. Having North Branch involved in the early phase helped make those decisions possible.

Barbara Annis said she was a visual person. She wanted to know what other buildings in Warner were 11,500 square feet. Peter Wyman said the liquor store was 10,900 square feet. Kimberley added that her indoor riding arena was 11,200 square feet.

Anthony said that the first new fire station what was designed for Warner was 13,500. Z-12 was 11,500 sq ft. Anthony said he expected it to reduce a bit more as the work continued.

Peter Ladd said that the fire department was being called to serve the community over 400 times a year. Anthony added that it would be housing millions of dollars worth of equipment.

Someone in the audience said she thought the design of the building looked very good; and not too big, not too small.

Someone else said he was in favor of spending money on a structure that could easily expand over time. The building would not be for this generation, but the next.

Someone asked if the committee had given thought to using solar. Peter Ladd, the Energy Committee's representative on the FSBRC, answered. The Energy Committee would like to see the building be energy efficient and heated with sustainable energy. Solar had not been discussed yet, but it was his preference to see a small array on the property. Allan Brown noted that the nuts and bolts had not been discussed yet.

Cathy Creed asked if the plan was to add a second story on the administrative side of the building. Anthony said the building would not be built with a second floor anticipated. The attic space would be inaccessible and cold. Investing in a second floor rarely results in a second floor; a waste of money.

John Dabuliewicz added that sometimes investing early on is the smart way to go. He encouraged the FSBRC to look closely at the heating & electrical options.

3. Adjournment

Before closing at 8:18 pm, Kimberley said she wanted to publicly thank Anthony who had been doing a great job listening to citizens and working with the committee. She thanked North Branch for joining the team. (*Applause!*)

Allan Brown reminded citizens that on February 23, MainStreet BookEnds of Warner would be hosting another listening session about both the solar array and the fire station project.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberley Brown Edelmann
Recording Secretary