

Meeting Minutes
Cornwall Capital Budget and Planning Committee
April 30, 2015

The committee met at the town office at 7 p.m. to discuss next steps in the long-range plan to renovate and possibly expand the town office building. Attending were five members of the committee (committee chair Sue Johnson, Stu Johnson, Ben Wood, Mary Conlon, and Jake Chapline), Cornwall energy coordinator Gary Barnett, and Ashar Nelson and Lealoni Coathup of Vermont Integrated Architecture, the firm enlisted to develop a preliminary schematic design for the project.

The group began the meeting with a tour of the nearby Daughters of the American Revolution building. There has been some discussion of the possibility of using that building at some point in the future for certain town functions and activities that now take place in the town office building. The committee wanted to look at the condition and layout of the building to get a better sense of how it might be used and whether it would be practical to use it.

Following that tour, the group returned to the town office for the remainder of the meeting. Agenda items included: reviewing comments and suggestions made by members of the public attending the April 8 meeting on the proposed renovation and expansion; considering anticipated space requirements for various uses of the town office building in the future; and determining the next steps to be taken in developing the plan for renovating the building.

Several questions discussed at the April 8 public meeting were reviewed by the committee:

1. *Would be possible to avoid the need for a lift to the second floor if that floor were used only for storage or other purposes that would not ordinarily require public access?*

Sue Johnson noted that the second floor has the only space large enough for some public meetings. Meetings on the gas pipeline issue sometimes drew 40 or more members of the public, she said, and the downstairs meeting space would not have accommodated them. Mr. Nelson said that, even if the upstairs were not used for public offices or meetings, the state would still require a lift. The town will have to spend 20 percent of its renovation budget on accessibility improvements until the building meets current standards, he explained.

2. *Can space within the existing building envelope be rearranged to meet the town's future needs without adding on?*

Possibly. This would mean putting a lift inside the existing building and maybe moving some things to another location. For example, the Historical Society collection, now stored in the back of the town office building, could perhaps be moved to the DAR building. Mr. Nelson said that he would draw up two preliminary design schemes: one keeping within the existing building envelope and another including an addition.

3. *Do all of the town's records have to be stored in the vault, or could some be moved someplace else?*

Not all records require the same level of security. Some could be stored in a different fireproof space. However, they would still have to be accessible to the public, and the town clerk would have to be able to monitor their use.

4. *Is it feasible to use solar panels to provide some or all of the building's electricity?*

Mr. Barnett recalled that people at the public meeting were positive about using photovoltaic panels, although some expressed concern about the visual impact of a pole-mounted array. He observed that the south-facing slope of the roof is ideally oriented for solar power. A standing-seam metal roof is to be put on the building this summer, and panels could be attached to that roof with clips that eliminate the need for any screws going through the metal. He volunteered to assist the committee in determining the cost and benefit of installing photovoltaic panels.

Mr. Nelson said that his preliminary designs for the renovation will include added capacity for the vault, a more functional office for the town clerk, an office for the listers, a small meeting room for committees, a larger public meeting room, restrooms, a kitchenette/coffee area, storage, and space for the library. He noted that some spaces might be shared. For example, a listers' office might also serve as a small meeting space, and circulation areas (such as the entrance hall) might also be used to display Historical Society artifacts. He noted that the layout will be kept as flexible as possible in the expectation that needs will change over time. He will proceed with a couple of alternative designs and then meet with the committee to discuss them.

Sue Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:45.