

Town of Cornwall
Capital Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 18, 2015

Present: Magna Dodge, Ben Wood, Mary Conlon, Stu Johnson, Sue Johnson, Jake Chapline

Absent/Excused: Denny Rheaume

Guests: Ashar Nelson, Lealoni Coathup

The meeting was called to order at 6 PM by Sue Johnson.

Ashar Nelson and Lealoni Coathup of Vermont Integrated Architecture presented two new design options for renovations to the town office building. Both options keep within the footprint of the existing building, making full use of existing space and requiring no additions. Both provide additional space for the town clerk's office, a lift giving handicapped access to the upstairs meeting area, and more space for the town library. Both also eliminate the need for two sets of outside stairs that are now on the building.

A key element in both design options is making major improvements to the basement level of the building. Although this would involve a significant amount of work on the foundation, Mr. Nelson pointed out that it would cost much less than building an addition and would improve both the structural integrity and the energy efficiency of the entire building. The downstairs area would provide secure storage for town records that do not have to be kept in the vault and would be accessed by a door to the outside and by an inside stairway.

The major difference between the two design options is the location of the lift. One design, labeled Option C1 on Mr. Nelson's drawings, has the lift on the north side of the building at the rear of the first-floor meeting room. On the second floor, it would be to the rear of the main open space, next to the stage. This option has the disadvantage that people using the lift would have to cross the meeting room to get to it. On the other hand, the design allows better use of space for the town clerk's office and the library. It also retains most of the historic character of the kitchen area.

The second design, labeled Option C2, places the lift immediately inside the front door, opposite the stairway to the second floor. Mr. Nelson noted that this would be the most convenient location in terms of access, but it has several significant drawbacks. On the first floor, the lift would take space away from the town clerk's office and make the layout of the office less functional. It would also affect the layout of other first-floor rooms, so the space available for the library would be less desirable. And on the second floor, the lift would occupy a large block of space between the windows at the front of the room, seriously encroaching on the open area.

After studying the designs and taking a look at the upstairs space to see how it would be impacted by a lift at the front of the building, the committee members unanimously favored Option C1. They made several suggestions concerning the location of doorways, storage space on the first floor, and space for a kitchenette.

Mr. Nelson said that he would revise his design to incorporate those suggestions and would come up with a ballpark estimate of the cost of the project for the next meeting of the committee, as yet unscheduled.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.