

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 17, 2004

Present: Selectman Buttrick, Maxfield, and Kardaseski.

Chairman Buttrick called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

- I. The Board met with David Rice of the Highway Department.
 - a. Chairman Buttrick thanked Mr. Rice for his hard work while he is filling in as acting Road Agent.
 - b. Mr. Rice stated that the Highway crew had been working on dealing with ice buildup issues.
 - c. Selectman Maxfield asked approximately how much time is spent on plowing the Loudon Elementary School, the route road, out back, and upper parking lot. Mr. Rice stated approximately 1 ½ hours per 6 inches of snow, which does not include the filling of the buckets at school. Selectman Maxfield stated that he was in attendance at the MVSD budget hearing and Loudon is the only contributing Town that supplies the plowing service to the school district. Merrimack Valley School District pays contractors to plow the schools in the remaining 4 towns.

- II. The Board began their review of weekly correspondence.
 - a. Chairman Buttrick stated for the record that one pistol permit was submitted for signature and approval.
 - b. The Board received copies of the ESMI Host Community Fee payment for the 3rd quarter.
 - c. Selectman Maxfield moved to approve the Selectmen's Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, February 10, 2004 as present. Seconded by Selectman Kardaseski. All in favor. Motion carried.
 - d. Selectman Kardaseski moved to approve the warrant for the 2004 Town Meeting along with the Budget for 2004 Town Meeting in the amount of \$3,054,468.00. Seconded by Selectman Maxfield. All in favor. Motion carried.

- III. Chairman Buttrick opened the Public Hearing for the proposed bond to purchase land and construct a building for the purpose of a Town Office Building.
 - a. Chairman Buttrick thanked the members of the building study committee.

- b. Selectman Kardaseski thanked Bob Bollinger and Rodney Phillips for their help with this project. She gave an overview of the progress and information the committee has gathered. She stated that committee members had toured 5 other Town Office Buildings in Towns with comparable size to Loudon and have used the information gathered to assist with the development of a new building plan. Selectman Kardaseski stated that the committee members had toured the property at 7 Cooper Street and at first sight it appeared to be the perfect situation for the Town Office. After meeting with Building Inspector Bob Fiske and Architect Pete Tennant, it was decided that in order to bring the building up to commercial codes and with the purchase price and renovation the cost was too great. The committee discussed the current office building and renovations. It was agreed that due to the costs associated with renovations/expansion, the installation of an elevator, limited parking, and septic issues, the best choice would be to build a new building on a new site. Selectman Kardaseski explained that currently there are 3 site locations that the committee is looking at, two of which are in the Village. The building would be a wood frame structure with truss roof similar to the Church of the Nazarene located on Staniels Road. It would be built on a slab, one level, no need for an elevator, include a fireproof vault, and the interior walls could be changed as needed. There would be ample parking and room for future expansion. Selectman Kardaseski discussed the advantage of moving forward with this project now, with interest rates the way they are, the chances of them increasing soon is there; the safety issues with the current building; the limited accessibility to all portions of the building; the deterioration of Town records due to poor storage conditions; as well as the costs for heating/cooling the building. Selectman Kardaseski asked for comments from the current office staff. Bonnie Theriault discussed the issues with the pipes freezing, the heating issues with the lobby and behind the service windows, the lack of space for storage, and the difficulty hearing people in the lobby when there is more than 1 or 2 people. Helen McNeil discussed the issue of storage of vital records, tax records, and privacy issues. Jean Lee discussed issues regarding not having a private area to meet with welfare applicants. Currently the employee break area is where these meetings are held. If an employee needs to use the restroom or move through this area of the building, the meeting is interrupted which then becomes a privacy issue for the applicant. Brenda Pearl discussed the problem with the Planning/Zoning service window. She stated that since the counter space is so small, there is not enough room to open up the plans that are submitted with an application, as well as the problem of blocking the hallway when someone is at the service window and another employee needs to pass by this area or come down the stairs. There is only approximately 2 feet from the service window to the stairwell through the main hallway. It is a continual

problem as there is always movement in this area. Bonnie Theriault stated that the current office equipment and furniture will be utilized, that although there may be a need for additional items, the current items will be used for the new building.

- c. Selectman Maxfield stated that the Town purchased the Symons property mainly for the land for the recreational area, however, the house became the Town Office Building because there were no buyers for the house and barn. The Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and Office Manager were working out of the Highway Garage at the time, and there were safety/health issues that occurred due to exhaust fumes from the highway vehicles. Because of the health/safety issues and the building being available it was renovated for use as the Town Office building. Selectman Maxfield stated that although it has served the Town for the last 17 years, it was never meant to be the Town Office.
- d. Mrs. McNeil addressed the issue with the license plates for the Town Clerk. She stated that with the lack of storage space to securely store license plates, the Town Clerk is only able to dispense passenger plates. If there was more secure storage, then more than likely people could get trailer plates, motor cycle plates, etc.
- e. John Plummer asked if there was a timeline for when the building would be complete. Selectman Kardaseski stated that since this is a relatively simple building, a builder which the committee has spoken with stated it would not take very long and would probably be complete by fall. She stated that this building will be very basic, with sheetrock, no paneling, commercial grade carpet throughout with the exception of tile in the public areas. The people who work there have volunteered to paint, paper, plant flowers, or anything they can to help keep costs down. She stated that it would look like the building utilized by the Church of the Nazarene on Staniels Road.
- f. Tom McCue stresses the need to look towards the future needs of the Town and stated that with this project that issue has been addresses.
- g. A question regarding the life expectancy of the building was asked. Selectman Kardaseski said that the proposed building would be able to support the offices for 20+ years as the possibility for interior expansion as well as exterior expansion is there with a building of this type and the site that is being considered.
- h. Gary Tasker stated he felt that the Master Plan and Village Plan have looked at the need for a new office building and that these plans have recommended that the Town Office building stay as close to the current municipal buildings as possible. Selectman Kardaseski stated that the committee has looked very closely at the properties within the Village and it is the committee's intent to keep it within the Village area. Mr. Tasker stated that he highly recommends that this project comes before the Planning Board for their comments. Selectman Kardaseski stated that the committee had already planned on doing that. Chairman Buttrick asked Mr. Tasker to clarify what he

- considered the Village area to be. Mr. Tasker said the Village District from out to Route 106 to Route 129 up to Oak Hill Road.
- i. Ray Cummings discussed the information of preliminary figures for the bond and stated that there would be one payment per year of approximately \$90,000 for ten years.
 - j. Peter Pittman asked about what plans have been discussed for the existing building if this bond passes. Selectman Kardaseski stated that there has been a lot of discussion as to what to do with the current building. One idea is to subdivide the house from the barn and land and sell it as is. However, there is no well with this property. Another idea is to tear off the wooden portion and renovate the stone portion of the building, which could then be used as a recreation center, senior center, meeting area or historical society. Selectman Maxfield said he felt that selling it was not in the Town's best interest.
 - k. Tom McCue discussed issues that had been talked about with the Village Plan and LEDC and stated that parking in this area is limited and one idea is to use this area for parking.
 - l. Peter Pittman discussed the issues that had happened in the past when the Selectmen renovated the current building to be the Town Office Building. Selectman Maxfield stated the building has served its purpose for approximately 15 years.
 - m. Selectman Kardaseski discussed the proposed building and stated that it is her hope that there will be a meeting room which could be divided up into smaller meeting rooms so that more than one committee could meet at one time.
 - n. Peter Pittman asked if the Offices would be opened 5 days per week. Tax Collector Helen McNeil stated that the issue of expanding office hours has been discussed, but as of yet there is nothing definite. The Selectmen explained that the Tax Collector and Town Clerk are elected positions and the Selectmen do not have the authority to mandate their hours.
 - o. Chairman Buttrick stated that the office staff has been working in cramped conditions for a long time and he feels it is time to move forward with this project.
 - p. Peter Pittman inquired about the sprinkler system if the building was ever expanded. He asked what would happen if the building was required to install a sprinkler system. Chairman Buttrick said that a new building could be placed next to the existing one.
 - q. Selectman Kardaseski discussed a preliminary report from the Fire Chief and Fire Marshall's inspection. Some items of concern were the number of extension cords, including the one that runs to the heater in the crawl space to try and keep the pipes from freezing. The upstairs back fire escape cannot be used as an official emergency escape route, as it does not meet the requirements. It also either has to be sheetrocked or be eliminated. She said the only way that the Town can get around this issue is that, technically, the Office Manager's desk is

within a certain number of feet from the front door. There are electrical covers and switches missing, etc. She stated that Harry of Harry O's Electrical went through the building and gave his opinion. Although there is no evidence of immediate danger with the electrical system, a complete upgrade of the electrical system is recommended for any future needs.

- r. Selectman Kardaseski stated that elevational drawings would be available and when this project is passed it would go out to bid.
- s. Peter Pittman questioned the use of volunteers for this project to save money. Discussion ensued regarding the need to have this issue pass prior to obtaining volunteers; however, every effort will be made to utilize volunteers to help keep the cost down.
- t. Tim Landry asked if the Highway Crew would be required to work on this project which would pull them away from their scheduled work. The Board said no, the Highway Crew would be concentrating on taking care of the roads and such. Mr. Landry also inquired where the locations are that the committee is considering. Selectman Kardaseski said that at this point, with no money to offer any of the land owners who have given the committee proposals, she is not comfortable disclosing the exact properties that are being considered. She said that if the information is given out and the bond does not pass, the landowner could decide to sell the land at a different price. Discussion now could affect the land sale at a later date for the property owner, and she does not want to compromise their options.
- u. Selectman Maxfield discussed the fire suppression system issues regarding the new building. Selectman Kardaseski explained the requirements for a sprinkler system.
- v. Melanie Kiley stated that people should be made aware that Loudon pays \$585,000.00 per month every month for 10 months per year to the school district. This bond for \$750,000.00 would be spread over 10 years, with one annual payment of approximately \$90,000.00 per year, which is substantially smaller than the \$585,000.00 per month to the school.
- w. Bob Ordway discussed the bond issue relative to if the money is not all needed what happens to it.
- x. Dustin Bowles encouraged anyone to tour the building and talk with the office staff if anyone has any questions about the current conditions.

Selectman Maxfield moved to adjourn at 8:00 PM. Seconded by Selectman Kardaseski. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

THE LOUDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

C. R. Buttrick, Chairman

Roger A. Maxfield, Selectman

Deborah A. Kardaseski, Selectman