

September 15, 2016

## **Police Station Update**

For the last couple of years the Town Council has had a focal point of building a new Police Station to replace the “temporary” quarters that they have been using since the late 1980’s. This area in the basement of the Town Hall is not only way too small but subjects the officers and staff to safety issues in the handling of evidence, processing of cases and persons arrested.

The Town Council knew in advance that this would be a process that could take time but set 2019 as a goal to be ready for construction. A number of steps have taken place already including:

1. Conducted a space needs assessment which analyzed the desires and needs of the department as well as looked at the space needs of comparable departments with similar sized departments and populations. Assessment included look forward to accommodate 20 plus year growth potential.
2. Assessed available space to build a police station: Town owned properties were looked at including the following properties
  - a. Community Center
  - b. Town Hall rebuild
  - c. Town Hall Parking Lot
  - d. Railroad Avenue
  - e. Goodwin Street open space
  - f. Power House Hill / Day Property
  - g. Willow Drive
3. Analyzed each spot for potential use. Prime analysis issues included:
  - a. Community Center is too small an area and would displace the Senior Activities in place there now.
  - b. Town Hall rebuild would be costly and includes moving Town Hall functions to a new addition. Logistics of moving both Police and Town Offices difficult during construction process.
  - c. A Tier 1 permit from DEP was applied for and denied. In order to build at the Town Hall parking lot, a full blown permit process would have to take place involving both state and federal agencies due to proximity of a stream bed.
  - d. The Railroad Avenue Parking Lot was not large enough to accommodate the footprint of needed space
  - e. The Goodwin Street Lot brought resistance from the local residents of Goodwin and Spring Streets. The Town Council removed the location from the list after conversations pertaining to the value of the Open Space and Playground areas to the Community

- f. The Powder House Hill/Day property area was a tight footprint but would accommodate the Police Station as a site. Additional land purchases might be needed.
  - g. The Willow Drive area was designated as a recreation area only in the subdivision plan.
- 4. The Town Council, after review of the potential spots narrowed the choices to two locations being the Community Building / Fire Station Lot on Norton Street and the Powder House / Day Property located on Agamenticus Street. The Norton Street Lot was chosen as the primary spot to continue exploration of placement.
- 5. The Town Council authorized the Town Manager to work with Lassel Architects to provide possible placement locations at the Norton Street Lot and report out at an upcoming Workshop
- 6. A Police Station Placement Workshop was held prior to the regular Town Council meeting on September 13, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. Mike Lassel presented four placements of the building footprint.
  - a. Concept # 1 would take up all the space presently housing the Community Center and Senior events. The 7,000 square foot space would not allow adequate space for all activities needed and would discontinue other uses of the space now used by the community.
  - b. Concept #2 would put the entire Police Station in front of the present building. It would include a cellar area to allow for space needs usage. Parking spaces would be lost as would easy access to the Community Center for seniors and the community events
  - c. Concept #3 places the Police Station at the back of the parking lot in front of the Fire Station. This scenario includes a basement but is longer and narrow which from a logistics standpoint would not be the best choice for operations. It also centers all activity of the Fire and Police Departments to a central location of the parking lot.
  - d. Concept #4 places the Police Station at the opposite end of the Fire Department parking lot and adjacent to the Playground and Tennis Court areas. This structure would include a basement area and logistically is the best proposal of all the scenarios. It will not impact parking and will in fact increase parking spots in the lot as new spaces are added.

A PUBLIC HEARING to discuss Concept Options for the placement of the Police Station at the Norton Street property will be held on October 04, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Residents will be asked to speak in favor of or against moving forward with developing plans for this location.

7. NEXT MOVES AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING:

- a. The Town Council will decide whether or not to move on to the next stages of building at the Norton Street location at their regularly scheduled meeting on October 11, 2016 or to continue looking at other potential locations.
- b. Should the location be approved the Town Council will then authorize detailed design and construction plans to be produced in order to prepare for estimated costs, a town vote to authorize funding, and to bid out for construction.

Concept document layouts are available at the Town Office and on line. Hearing from the general public at the Public Hearing is important to the Town Council as they have a desire to move forward on this long needed project. Safety and roads have been the primary concern in past surveys. We have a plan in motion for repairing all Town roads. Let's move forward with your other desire to have a safe work environment for our police force as supported in your annual funding thus far.

Respectfully,

Perry Ellsworth