

MINUTES OF THE MILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING 5TH MONDAY FORUM

Monday, September 30, 2024

PRESENT: Tim Finan, Chairman Lincoln Daley, Town Administrator
Paul Dargie, Vice Chairman
David Freel, Member
Chris Labonte, Member
Tina Philbrick, Member

1. CALL TO ORDER, BOARD OF SELECTMEN INTRODUCTIONS & PUBLIC SPEAKING INSTRUCTIONS:

Chairman Finan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance and introduction of the Board.

2. 6:00 p.m. OPEN FORUM

Mr. Scott Kimball, asked what metrics exist to prevent conflict of interest, specifically with the EDAC

Mr. Mike Thornton, questioned the application process for the EDAC. He noted he applied 3 or 4 times and was told new members would be considered with preference to prior members, he feels that all members should be chosen by the same criteria.

Mr. Gary Daniels, regarding the EDAC touring the High School, he noted he heard the public was not able to go, but he notes that according to 91A you cannot prevent the public from attending public meeting. He is confirming that the public is allowed to attend. TA Daley confirmed that they are. Selectwoman Philbrick noted there was no discussion and questions until after the tour when they are done with tour to eliminate distraction to the classes

3. DISCUSSION

127 Elm Street Building was discussed. Chair Finan noted the goal of meeting is for discussion among the board they will entertain public comment but ask that it be kept brief.

Chair Finan suggested they go around the table and each state their opinions. He feels the building is deteriorating and is open to whatever ideas that make sense. He notes we can't do nothing at risk of the building to continue to deteriorate.

Selectman Freel feels that the Town should not have purchased the property; he doesn't see a real need for it. He said it's not always the Towns responsibility, and that the Town should offer police, fire, and other essentials like that. He might even be on board with selling the property to recoup some of the expenses incurred to buy it. He feels the public should have a say in what is done with the building. He also suggested selling the building as is and recoup some of the investment. He said besides raze it or renovate it, there is also an option to just sell it as is. He feels the structure has a value and didn't see the state of disrepair that has been discussed, he feels the 'bones' of the building are good even if some minor repairs are needed.

Selectman Dargie buys into the Turnstone plan, he feels we need a long-term plan for Keyes field. He likes the plan with regulation softball fields, our current ones are not regulation sized. He'd like to see long term, Keyes field be a recreation area that really works, it needs to be changed around. He feels renovation will be expensive and it's not in a format for what we need, it's not a good layout and is in the wrong area. He feels it should be more centralized. He is in favor of tearing it down, but notes we should at least fence it all off for safety.

Selectman Labonte it would be easier for him to get on board with one plan. Not tear down and see what's next. He noted the courts and flood plain, but said he doesn't think they need to be moved around. He doesn't see it being self-supporting for a long time. If we chose to rent out space, he feels we are then competing with local businesses. He asked if we are concerned with crime, why not fix the doors and windows to prevent

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access. He is a believer in “fix what we have”. He is not in favor of selling the building at this point, he believes it is an asset to the Town. He feels we have more important things to focus on than this.

Selectwoman Philbrick, there are a lot of deficiencies in both reports, she is concerned with cost of renovating the building, and would rather see it torn down. She would like the fields to be expanded. The Town is growing and the park needs to grow with it. She isn’t sure we need a recreation building at all in there. She would rather what we have down there be fixed, including parking.

Chair Finan said he is not sold on the end product, and is open to considering any suggestions that make sense but no use is really standing out to him just yet. He ran thru some ideas of what could work, and feels the best is to tear down the building.

Selectman Labonte feels we lose more by tearing down the building and it can’t be undone.

Selectman Dargie is in favor of the plan to do the work in stages, and mentioned fields are too close together and moving things around would help the layout.

Mr. Mike Thornton, suggested small businesses such as a Makers Space, Auto Shop, could be done in the building.

Selectman Freel is not in favor of using the building in that way. The Town should not be in the business of being a landlord.

Mr. Thornton said we can’t meet the demand at the school to do this, and this would be an adjunct to the school, where you pay as you go to support it.

Selectman Dargie said the change in use also will require it be brought up to code and that it would be expensive to renovate.

TA Daley said it’s ok for the Board to have more questions in this process.

Arene Berry, Recreation Director noted that the Facilities manager could use workshop space over there, but it was not to use as storage for out of season equipment.

Selectman Labonte suggested could we take a department such as Community Development and put it over in the building as they are crowded here in Town Hall.

Gary Daniels, suggests we charge the EDAC committee to look into a public/private partnership with an option to buy. This allows the Town to do work incrementally, and not cost the citizens.

TA Daley said he agrees and we should look into places that are recreational such as climbing walls, laser tag.

Selectwoman Philbrick was concerned we are not going to recoup the cost if we are renovating for a year.

TA Daley said it doesn’t have to be a partnership to use old building but could be to do a new building as well.

Chair Finan asked TA Daley if he has the cycles to look further into this.

Janet Langdell noted we were approached about 6 years ago about public / private partnership. She feels this opportunity should be geared to recreational activities. The intent of the purchase was to make sure we had continual access to the park during clean up.

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Selectwoman Philbrick reminded everyone that the building was obtained for recreational use.

Selectman Labonte made a motion to do nothing with the building. Seconded by Selectman Freel. The motion failed 2/3. With Selectmen Labonte and Freel in favor.

Selectman Dargie made a motion to put on the warrant to tear the building down. Seconded by Selectwoman Philbrick. The motion passed 3/2, with Selectmen Freel and Labonte opposed.

4. DECISIONS

a. **CONSENT CALENDAR – N/A**

b. **OTHER DECISIONS – N/A**

5. APPROVAL OF FINAL MINUTES – n/a

6. NOTICES –

- **Milford Pumpkin Festival October 11th to 13th.** For Festival information including hours and parking information please visit the Milford Pumpkin Festival website at www.milfordpumpkinfestival.org Please note that there will be no through traffic North and South through the Oval are as in years past. Detours will be set up around the oval for through traffic. From North side of the Oval, Mont Vernon St, North River Rd, Amherst St, Merrimack St, to Route 122. From the South side of the Oval Route 101 or follow the detours around off of Nashua Street and Elm St.
- The next Select Board meeting will be held on October 14, 2024 at 5:30pm. This will be a hybrid meeting, information to access ZOOM will be posted on the Town's website on or before October 11, 2024.

7. ADJOURNMENT – **Selectman Labonte made a motion to adjourn at 8:10. Seconded by Selectman Philbrick. All were in favor. The motion passed 5/0.**

Tim Finan, Chairman

Chris Labonte, Member

Paul Dargie, Vice Chairman

Tina Philbrick, Member

David Freel, Member