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Freetown Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 14, 2021 – 5:00pm
Meeting Held Virtually

****Open Session will be livestreamed at freetownma.gov/FREECAM****

5:00pm Call to Order

Selectmen Matthews called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. Selectmen Grunwald, Selectmen Zager, Town Administrator Peter Jankowski, Executive Assistant Lu-Ann Souza, Lisa Pacheco Building Committee Chair, Barbara Place Council on Aging Director, Marion Rylands, Council on Aging Chair, Andy DiGiammo Compass Group, Council on Aging Board of Directors, and Building Committee were also in attendance.

Board of Selectmen

Discussion/possible action on the following topics:

- 1 Presentation from Compass Group Architects on Council on Aging Study
- 2 Discussion with Building Committee, Council on Aging Board of Directors, and Compass Architects regarding the study done for the Council on Aging building.

Andy DiGiammo from Compass group presented a PowerPoint presentation on the details of the study conducted on the Council on Aging. He began with the current status of the Council on Aging building noting that the building was made from three modular sections and has public use areas including kitchen, meeting room and two bathrooms in the lower level and upstairs bathroom, kitchenette that serves as small breakroom and office area. He continued with the existing the current elevations of the building, noting entrances to reception and existing recreation room. He also noted existing elevation that leads to freezer cooler area. On February 23, 2021 he met with several members of the Council on Aging Board and Building Commissioner Jeffrey Chandler to discuss their current program and what they would like to do and their limitations in achieving those goals. Mr. DiGiammo showed a chart that detailed the existing areas square footage of the area with a total gross existing area of 4,120 square feet. The chart also noted the proposed space including elevator, storage rooms, gathering/function/day room, food pantry, toilets, recreation room and office space this proposed Gross area is 6,709 square feet. With this addition of space, they would keep the existing kitchen and hall the same it would require some plumbing codes which would require one more female toilet on the first level which would be a handicap facility. The storage room would remain the same and added a 527 sq room and 348 sq for an added area for the food

pantry are with more storage and easier food distribution. If we were to do a project that was 30% of existing structure in the cost of \$100,000 or more, they would have to upgrade to all handicap codes which would be the addition of elevator, accessible bathrooms. What became evident with meeting with the Board of Directors there is a lack of private meeting space or an area for things like when the podiatrist comes in or someone to do residents taxes. They also added a breakroom. They kept 3 offices however replaced two and made it larger. Upstairs even with the additions there is no need to add additional toilets. They improved the reception waiting room that is currently not functioning as it is being shared with clerk's desk. So, they made it larger and made a solution for that. They added vestibules to the two entries as an airlock to keep cold air out. Total gross proposed area would be 6,709 square feet. It would go from 4,120 square feet and go to 6,709 square feet. Selectmen Matthews noted there are still two entrances from both levels even though you can get to both levels do we have to do an elevator. Mr. DiGiammo said if there is an interior stair, and each level is not a separate function so we would need to upgrade with an elevator.

Mr. DiGiammo proceeded to the next slide which gave an overview of the major points on existing code compliance and any code upgrades needed. He noted that this is a mixed-use building with level 2 being a B (Business) A3 which is assembly 3 (hall) with the occupant load being more than 50 it would make these two distinct use groups which by code the floor and ceiling assembly and walls would need to be upgraded to meet fire codes. They recommend a fire alarm upgrade for the building. He also recommends ramp and stairs need some updating. Existing plumbing fixtures does not meet standards and need a drinking fountain and mop sink on each level. The current HVAC and Accessibility do not meet codes if the building is upgraded and would need improvements. Then next slide was on existing building height classifying the upper level at B (Business) and Lower-Level A-3 (Assembly) the current height meets code and have no issues with the size of the building and construction type. The next slide detailed the Fire resistance rated requirement of building elements does not meet the existing code compliance. The next slide was on occupancy load – The A-3 which is 1,1100 sq can hold 79 occupants the B (upper level) can have 19 occupants for a total of 98 occupants in the building. Mr. DiGiammo recommends a fire alarm upgrade. If building is under 7500 gross square feet a sprinkler system will not be needed. The next slide was on existing means of egress, this makes sure doors are big enough and the current structure complies. He noted the existing stairwell is a bit shy on the width but is not considered part of the egress as you have two means of egress at each level without using the stairs.

Mr. DiGiammo showed a slide for the upper level on how many fixtures, drinking fountains, service sinks, bathrooms, were needed per person. We currently do not have the service sinks. He showed this same type of slide for the lower level we were in compliance with all categories excluding the service sink and drinking fountain.

He continued the discussion on the existing accessibility of the space. The slide shown noted the assessed value of existing building is \$227,500. The estimated cost of additions &

renovations were noted at \$500 per square foot X 2,820 square feet and would have a cost of \$1,410,000 project cost. With an addition at this cost the COA Building would need to be upgraded to full MAAB Compliance. He noted that things are tough to estimate now due to costs of materials and current software not being able to calculate it but he can get more information after doing some more research.

He noted that his recommendation for an elevator would be to provide a 2-stop elevator with a pit and a machine room and upgrades to existing ramps and stairs.

He showed a floor plan of Option 1 – coming 20 feet added to the front of the building. He noted it makes the most sense to add on to the front as it will not affect parking and you would gain space on both levels. This option would add the elevator, food storage/distribution room. On the upper level would clear out half wall at reception area to make more open and accommodate more people, add a window to the clerks office so they could see residents coming in. Recreation room would get expanded by 20 feet, make a number 4 shaped corridor with a break/meeting room and add a private consult room and two offices that would be enlarged, and there would be another room that could be a computer commons room. Square footage on lower level with addition without freezer/cooler is 3,418 sf. Upper level would be 3,291 gross sf which would be total 6,709 gross square feet.

He showed a quick sketch of the exterior of the building expanding twenty feet. He suggested two gable roof additions. He also suggested defining the entryway a bit better. You would also see elevator shaft on the roof line.

Option 2: A New COA Building – Mr. DiGiammo stated a new building would be about 7,000 sq and the cost would be estimated about \$3,150,000 Total Project Cost. He showed an aerial shot

Option 3: A New Combined COA/Library Building – He showed an aerial shot showing he location with a 17,000 sq ft library and 7,000 sf COA for a total project cost of \$12,000,000

Mr. DiGiammo noted all of these cost numbers are estimates and they will look at them closer over the next month.

Mr. DiGiammo asked if anyone had questions. Lisa Pacheco asked the new building for the COA at the price point of \$3.1 million is that take under consideration site work? Mr. DiGiammo said the numbers are fluctuating like crazy so looking at this high level your plus or minus \$50/sf. Mr. DiGiammo said he needs more time to confirm. Ms. Pacheco asked option 3 with combined you noted there could be combined spaces did you talk to the library commissioners on what they would need and what spaces would be combined? Mr. DiGiammo said he has designed a library and worked with the Massachusetts Library Board and gone through a whole grant process with them. He stated that he used his knowledge to determine what would be needed. He noted the grants do not seem to favor combined buildings. Ms. Pacheco on option 3 how much would just the library be – would be about 17,000 x \$500 sq foot to be a total of

\$8,500,000. For option 1 Ms. Pacheco suggested the food storage/distribution be moved to the other side of the building. Paul LIBRARY PLANNING COMMITTEE we have investigated this before and we've been rated 1 as our current libraries are small, no facilities and other reasons and he believes they will give waivers on the size. He feels where libraries are going, they will need less room for books and shelves and may not need 17,000 sf an noted combination COA/Libraries have been approved in Massachusetts. Selectmen Matthews asked what type of a timeline from day 1, breaking ground and getting COA back into the building for option 1. Mr. DiGiammo estimated about a year once you start the design process. He also noted depending on where the money was coming from it may be longer if it required a Town Meeting vote. Selectmen Matthews asked if we went to Option 2 how long would that take. Mr. DiGiammo said it would be two-three years. Paul Sadeck he doesn't think we need a library that large. The concern they have the Hathaway Library across from Town Hall doesn't even have running water and the library in East Freetown is a nice library but we do not own the building and cannot expand it. He noted a lot of people, and seniors use the library. He noted Hanson has a join Senior Center/Library. He asked do we have to wait for a grant from the state? Mr. DiGiammo said he agrees with Mr. Sadek on the size for a library and noted private space, community room are more important than stack spaces for book storage. He said he would like to meet with the library committee to discuss the options and he can reflect their views in this report. Peter Jankowski noted procurement for design and construction can take three-four months as well. Selectmen Matthews wanted to know what the COA will do while construction is going on. Mr. DiGiammo said that they could be in it for some of it but not all of it. Selectmen Matthews asked if the roof line has to change do we need a whole new roof and do we have to reside the whole building and is that part of the cost estimates. Mr. DiGiammo said you would have to reroof at least the front of the building which would encompass in the numbers provided. Paul Sadeck asked would not we be better off building a new senior center and make the existing senior center with a bit of tweaking turn that into a library. Selectmen Matthews thinks Mr. Sadeck is right we need a public space. Peter Jankowski noted that books could not be stored on the second floor. Mr. Sullivan from the building committee asked on the present design on the COA have you done any program study outside of the discussion with the committee and what their needs were in a similar sized community. Mr. DiGiammo said the demographics are not showing that much growth, he was given the numbers of visitors in the year and how many families currently use it. Right now we are sending citizens over to Dighton for adult day care but if we build it would we take that programming back to town?

Mr. DiGiammo would like to meet with more Boards to make sure we are planning at least a 50 year plan. If we have any demographics and information on whether or not we can expand programming and get more people. Lisa Pacheco said she will check on demographic information. She noted that if we go with option 1 there probably is not an option to go back to the well and get more. She noted the building committee will review the information and will meet at some point over the next couple of weeks and would like Andy DiGiammo would like to attend. Lisa Pacheco asked what does the COA think? Bruce Wilbur said they are a bit overwhelmed and think their intention of putting on a 20 X 24 addition on with the \$550,000.

He did not expect this study, they are not dissatisfied with it and if they want to go to Town Meeting for \$3million project they are fine with that, but it wasn't what they asked for. He would like Andy to do up a study on what they originally asked for so they can see that separately. If we added food storage to first and second floor what does that do? Mr. DiGiammo said if you went with a smaller project you would need to reach out to the MA Building Board you can spend \$68,000 to work with without any of the other compliance needed. Bruce Wilbur noted all they intended was to extend the front section out and that is what they were looking for. Mr. DiGiammo noted if you spend \$500,000 you need to come into full compliance. Mr. DiGiammo is saying he is not presenting the final report today, this meeting was for feedback, he will meet with any committee and then will take it to the next level. This study was to make him familiar with existing structure and programmatic needs. Mr. Wilbur said if the Board of Selectmen want to go ahead with this project they are not going to be upset. He noted that it was not what they went to Town Meeting to do. He thinks there are two different thoughts of school the COA wants one thing, and the other group wants a much larger project. He would like to see an open space addition and what that would cost and look like. Selectmen Matthews 500 sq would be \$250,000 but that would automatically kick in the requirement for the elevator which is another \$250,000. He feels we should be looking towards the future. Mr. Wilbur expressed that if the Selectmen want to go to Town Meeting to get \$3 million for something larger that is fine but that is not what the COA had asked for. Mr. DiGiammo said he will build out the information as Mr. Wilbur presented it and add that to the study. Mr. Sadeck asked if Mr. Wilbur and the COA spend the \$500,000 that makes the building must become fully compliant. Mr. DiGiammo said yes that is the case. Mr. Wilbur said if we did 500 square feet would there be all the compliance needing to be done. Mr. DiGiammo said you could do the 500 square feet and your biggest challenge would be the architectural access board. Selectmen Matthews would like to see what can be done with the \$550,000. Ms. Pacheco said if you spend the \$550,000 it kicks in the compliance. Mr. DiGiammo said if you are trying to avoid full compliance start with an agreed upon number on the cash value of the building and get that number up as high as you can. If you can come up with a project that does not make you have to fully comply you will not need the elevator saving a lot of money, but his opinion is it is not a good idea to have a non-compliant COA. Ms. Pacheco asked Mr. Wilbur are you looking at option 1 and could take it out of capital stabilization, this would be a whole new building at \$3.1 million or are you happy with option 1, renovation with addition for \$1.4 million. Ms. Pacheco suggested the COA they look at option 1 and could potentially use the Freetown Elementary school for the summer months to do the programs. Mr. Wilbur would like a copy of the drawings and meet with the COA next week to review and discuss. He asked if they go back to Town Meeting for \$1million more they do not want to lose the \$550,00 they already received. Ms. Pacheco said you would not lose that money as it was already approved at Town Meeting. Mr. DiGiammo noted if you spend over \$100,000 you need to come up to code on all ADA requirements. Paul Newman asked if estimates included furniture. Mr. DiGiammo said these estimates do not include that information. This includes chapter 149 costs are included.

Mike McCue adjourned the building committee meeting for lack of a quorum

Selectmen Matthews motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:23pm, Paul Newman seconded the motion.

- Vote was approved in a unanimous roll call vote
- Vote Selectmen Zager – yes, Selectmen Grunwald – yes, Selectmen Matthews – yes

DiAnne Saxe