

CONCERNED CITIZENS POSITION ON RYE TOWN HALL SPACE NEEDS

After participating in the various meetings over the past year, it is clear to the Concerned Citizens (“CC”) that the Town needs to develop a Facilities Master Plan. This needs to be created and updated in conjunction with the Master Plan’s broader vision and detail gathered in the Capital Improvement Program (“CIP”) process. There also needs to be a process to ensure implementation of these plans.

Significant work was conducted by the building committee and by AG Architects. This work culminated with the valuable information assembled through the hard work of the Town Hall Space Needs team (the “Committee”). However, there are still many critical questions that the Town must address before our next large capital investment in one or more buildings. Some of these questions are:

What are the future requirements and plans for Rye Recreation?

What does Rye Recreation need for administration, storage, and program space?

If a new Rye Recreation facility is built, how much of the space need will be addressed there?

CC Opinion: The answer to the Rye Recreation questions could have significant impact on the design and costs associated with meeting our space needs. The issues relating to Rye Recreation should be addressed in conjunction with the approval of renovated or new office space.

How can the Town better utilize the Public Safety Building?

What can be done to make the basement level training room easily available for Town or public use?

CC Opinion: It appears that access could easily be reconfigured, providing security while also making this room accessible for public use. This could be accomplished at minimal cost and would take some of the pressure off of other Town meeting space.

What will the Town do with the Old Police Station building and lot?

CC Opinion: A definitive decision should be made as to what the Town will do with this asset. The Committee’s consensus appeared to be that, with climate control, it could be a highly suitable storage area due to its proximity to Town Hall. An investigation of possible contamination is needed, followed by a decision to either use or tear down the existing building.

Considering 21st technology and future requirements, what are the storage and record retention needs of the Town, and what is the strategy for meeting those needs?

CC Opinion: Formation of a Records Retention Committee, further study and a plan are needed. This plan will affect the design and costs of meeting our space needs.

What is the recommended Town Office Space requirement from the Committee?

For each department, including Rye Recreation, what is the estimated space need and how much is needed for offices versus storage? How many total square feet are required? What is the percentage circulation assumed in arriving at that requirement and how was it determined? Can some storage needs be met in remote buildings?

CC Opinion: The CC understand the assumptions that might lead to the higher end of the 9,500 to 11,500 sq. ft. range, but we strongly feel that the lower number of 9,500 sq. ft. is more than adequate and should be the design goal. In particular, minimizing the requirement would lead to a less costly and more aesthetically acceptable solution.

In addition to the above, not all of the potential sites listed in 2012 Warrant Article 27 were reviewed in detail. The decision to restore the Great Hall to meeting space, not opposed after the early Committee meetings, needs to be explained. Addressing the above questions will be required to complete a Facilities Master Plan for Rye. While some work by a professional firm may be appropriate in parallel with the development of such a plan, only after answering the above questions will it be possible to determine the appropriate size and configuration of any building(s) proposed. At least two, and possibly more, paths will need to be pursued while answering the questions and achieving consensus among the voters. The Rye citizens defeated 2012 Warrant Article 10 by a wide margin, apparently because comprehensive plans for moving forward were not presented. Unless this is done, it appears that consensus will not be reached and the project will, again, be delayed.