



“Informing citizens, enhancing direct democracy and supporting the will of the voters”

Memo To: Board of Selectmen
From: Rye Civic League
Date: September 23, 2016
Subject: Facilities Master Planning and NH Listens

In 2013, Rye voters approved Article 4, which provided funds to further Town Hall design as well as to prepare a Rye Town Facilities Master Plan. SMP’s January 2014 Facilities Master Plan, entitled “Existing Building Assessment” (copy enclosed) was only a starting point and fell short of what Article 4 was intended to produce.

The town would benefit from creating a cohesive long-term plan (at least 10 years) which:

- considers both new construction and the potential to reuse town facilities and land assets,
- takes into account demographic and economic trends, and
- incorporates full voter participation in defining such a plan.

Steven Borne recently attended a presentation by NH Listens (<https://carsey.unh.edu/nhlistens>), a group that works with communities to reach consensus on difficult decisions, and NH Listens confirmed that they could help Rye. Another group, Plan New Hampshire, has met with the Parsonage Committee to explore use of a Charrette for planning. These two groups could be available to assist Rye in developing a Facilities Master Plan and proposed actions.

The voters of Rye now face a number of facility issues, including Town Hall, the Transfer Station, Recreation facilities, the Parsonage, the Old Police Station (Trolley Barn) and School buildings in the face of declining enrollments. Consensus is needed on how to proceed with each of these.

The RCL is **not** taking any position on any particular option, but suggests that the BOS consider the following steps to move the process forward:

1. Update and expand the 2014 inventory and condition assessment of existing buildings.
2. Estimate future requirements and space needs, and identify options, particularly for Town Hall, Public Works, Recreation, the Rye Schools and Senior Housing.
3. Using CIP information for the entire town, estimate the debt burden of various options and determine what phasing and sizes of investment will produce an acceptable tax rate.
4. Allow NH Listens and Plan NH to lead the public discussion process.
5. Develop a priority and sequence of investments.
6. Communicate the short- and long-term plans to voters.
7. Implement the projects.

We are providing electronic, as well as paper, copies of the 2014 SMP Assessment, as well as an updated 2016 RCL informational presentation on Rye facilities. We request that an agenda item be added for the next Board of Selectmen meeting to discuss the issues in this letter, and that the provided materials be attached to the minutes, or provided on the Town website.

Steven Borne, President