



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES July 31, 2015

PRESENT:

Nancy Rollins, Chairman
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Emilio Cancio-Bello and Andrew Pinard – School Board Ad Hoc Committee on the 1941 Building

The meeting convened at 9:00am at the SAU Office meeting room.

The Selectmen met with the ad hoc committee on the 1941 building to discuss a memo from the New London CIP Subcommittee that urged the Selectmen to investigate acquiring the 1941 building and site for use by the Town of New London. The 1941 building has been empty since 2008 when the new Kearsarge Regional Middle School opened in Sutton. The CIP subcommittee recommendation, dated June 15, 2015, is attached.

Mr. Cancio-Bello and Mr. Pinard, members of the ad hoc committee, explained that the School Board is very interested in making decisions about what will be done with the 1941 building as the cost to maintain the building is excessive, and is not a good use of district funds. They explained that currently there are no plans to lease or sell the building to any group or to renovate the building for district uses. The location of the building on the school campus; attached to the SAU Offices, classrooms and gymnasium, make it difficult to separate the building and property from the campus. The challenges of the traffic pattern on the campus was also discussed as it related to any future uses of the 1941 building separate from the school district use. It was noted that if the building and land were to be sold to the Town of New London it would require a vote of the district as the School Board does not have the authority to sell the building and property.

The Selectmen noted that the town does not currently have any definite plans for the building and property, rather, the town's CIP Subcommittee has indicated, based on its review of town facilities and the needs of the various departments and groups in town, that the town should acquire the property for the future use by the Town. The Selectmen explained that the purpose of the meeting was to get a better understanding of what the School Board is thinking with regard to the future of the building to see if acquiring the building and site for the town's use is possible. The ad hoc committee's position at this time is that the athletic fields and cafeteria remain important to meeting the needs of the children on the campus, but the 1941 building in its current state is not needed. Thus if a group that is compatible with being on the campus (a use that meets the requirements for being so close to a school) is not found in the near future with a definite plan to use and maintain the 1941 building, it will likely be razed.

A discussion was held on ways the town and the school district could collaborate on the use of the land and facilities (the cafeteria and attached classrooms) in the future, once the 1941 building is removed

from the property. It was noted that currently the town does not own any athletic fields, basketball or tennis courts or other recreation areas besides the two beaches. Additionally, a large meeting space has been identified as a need of the town. Mr. Pinard noted that the cafeteria would be an effective space for the town, possibly used for elections in March that currently are held in the school gymnasium that is also used by the outing Club. A collaboration would mean the school district would retain ownership of the site and the town would potentially contribute financially to upgrade the cafeteria and attached classrooms, athletic fields and parking and then share use of the improved facilities. The concept of collaboration was seen by all in attendance as a positive way that both the school district and town could benefit from a valuable resource.

The ad hoc committee will bring this matter before the School Board at its next meeting and will get back to the Selectmen with the School Board's position on the matter.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Hallquist
Town Administrator