

Building and Facilities Committee
Minutes of 1-30-20
Syd Crook Room; 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Bowers, Bianchi, Cardillo, Beasley, Lewis, Hoglund, Cross, Sherman, Cannon

Others present: Chief Jay Lyon; Stan Morono; and Peter Stanley

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. *Approval of Minutes*

The minutes of the previous meeting of January 16, 2020 were reviewed by the Committee and were then approved unanimously.

2. *Discussion building inspector*

The Chair noted that several individuals were present to discuss various aspects of the Committee's review of the pros and cons of retaining a Town building inspector. The Committee will hear from them after a short presentation by Mr. Sherman regarding the issue. He then called on Mr. Sherman, who gave a short overview of the statute establishing a State building code (RSA 155-A), and some of the issues involved.

The Chair then called on Fire Chief Lyon, and said he would then call on Mr. Morono, and Mr. Stanley subsequent to Chief Lyon's presentation.

Chief Lyon outlined the issues dealt with in the State building code related to fire safety and prevention issues. He also informed the Committee that Bill Degan, retired State Fire Marshal could not attend this meeting, but would be happy to assist the Committee on this issue in any way it deemed helpful. His main priority in his role as Chief of the Fire Department in inspecting properties is life safety – issues related to fire related or other potential catastrophes. He does not inspect single or two-family homes. A building inspector must be certified, but within the governmental structure does not report to a superior position. Dissatisfaction with any decisions would be to an appeal board.

Mr. Morono noted that his father had been the building inspector for the City of Concord, and that, as a result, he had learned a lot about what the job

required. First, he noted that a good building inspector would have to have extensive background and education, and have taken numerous higher level courses on the subject. Second, he noted that a good building inspector must have broad knowledge in a number of areas, and the ability to interpret codes & regulations; and could not simply be a carpenter or builder who had experience in the trades. It is a professional position and requires professional expertise, training, and background, as well as the ability to interact with department heads. He also noted that it requires an individual who has the capabilities to be responsible for enacting the codes in a positive, proactive manner in order to protect the people of the community; and the ability to deal with difficult, strenuous, and possible confrontation, as there are occasions when individuals are unhappy with the building inspector's conclusions. Finally, he noted that it would require enlisting qualified people to form an appeals board.

Mr. Stanley offered that the first step should be to determine why the Town would need or want a building inspector. That should be developed with a complete understanding of what a building inspector could or could not do, and what the expectations are. A building inspector is not a quality control person – if the Code is adhered to, the inspector will not be dealing with the quality, or lack of quality, of the work itself. He noted that the Code would apply only to new construction, including new major renovations, but not to existing structures. He also pointed out that the major check on commercial projects is that the Planning Board, through the site plan review process, can require third party verification of the requirements for commercial projects. Because of this, the Committee should give thought to what a Town building inspector would add to the control factor in ensuring Code compliance. He also noted, and Chief Lyon agreed, that the Town issues “building permits,” which lends a sense that they are certifying compliance with the Code, when, in fact, they are really “zoning compliance” certificates, certifying only that the plans submitted are consistent with the Zoning Ordinance. Both suggested that the Town should re-name the document being used to be clear that it relates to zoning, and not to the building Code.

Mr. Stanley then stated that the Committee should determine “what is the problem? What is it that needs to be done?” The Town should be concerned

with catastrophes – fire and collapse. And having a building inspector, beyond what Chief Lyon already does, would not prevent catastrophes. Chief Lyon disagreed in part, noting that a building inspector would review such things as whether the appropriate number of nails were being used for structural soundness.

The Committee thanked Chief Lyon and Messrs. Morono and Stanley for taking the time to discuss these issues with the Committee. Mr. Beasley suggested that a next step should be to gather the data on building permits issued by the Town, and examine what that might mean to further discussions. Mr. Bianchi noted that the data on “building permits” is included in the Town Report each year. The Chair stated that he would contact Ms. Hallquist to see if the Committee could have a chart of this information for the last several years, to share with the Committee. He also asked Mr. Bianchi to take a look at some Town Reports and let the Chair know what was contained in those Reports on this issue.

The Chair then informed the Committee that he had discussed the building inspector question with Nicole Gage, Zoning Administrator, and Kim Hallquist, and that Ms. Gage had given him several documents that might be helpful to the Committee. He, Ms. Gage and Ms. Hallquist concluded in that conversation that it would probably be more productive for the Committee to first determine if it would be informative to meet with Ms. Gage after it has had the opportunity to review what Ms. Gage has provided, and get a sense of what information it might need, subsequent to talking with other interested parties, and reviewing other information available to it.

3. *Reports*

The Chair reported that in addition to his meeting with Ms. Gage, five members of the Committee, along with Kim Hallquist, Chief Andersen, Lt. Cobb, and P.D. Administrative Assistant Donna Larrow, toured the Sunapee, Newport, and Claremont police stations on Tuesday, January 28, and found the tour to be informative and helpful. He has sent a thank you to Chief Andersen for putting it all together, and has asked the Chief to extend the sincere thanks of the

Committee to those three departments. He also noted that he and Mr. Sherman had met with the Selectmen on Monday, January 27 with regard to (1) the Committee's recommendation as to the hiring of an architect, and (2) the Selectmen's rationale for requesting the Committee to review the subject of a Town building inspector. He reported that the Selectmen stated they did not have a specific concern to be addressed with regard to a building inspector, but that the subject comes up with some frequency, more recently with regard to the proposed construction by Continuum on the former New London Hospital property. The Selectmen felt that a more thorough analysis was warranted on the subject. The Chair then called on Mr. Sherman to report on the status of that Vote related to the architect and the next steps to take.

Mr. Sherman reported that the tour had been very informative and productive, and that he had gleaned a lot from the trip. He also reported that he had attended the Selectmen's meeting on January 27, and had addressed to the Selectmen the Committee's recommendation. The Selectmen voted at that meeting to authorize the hiring of Dennis Mires, PA, and he subsequently conversed with Ms. Hallquist on procedures to follow. He has notified Mr. Mires of his firm's selection, and has notified the other applicants that they have not been selected for this project. He then reported on the status and next steps of the Police Station Subcommittee, and that he would be meeting with Mr. Mires on Tuesday, February 4 to begin discussions related to the forming of a contract.

4. Other items to come before the Committee

The Chair noted that the Committee would continue its discussion of this issue at its next meeting on February 6.

The meeting of the Committee following that will be on Thursday, February 13, at 2:00 p.m. in the Whipple Hall Conference Room with Scott Blewitt, Director, Recreation Department; followed by a ride to the sewer plant to look at the storage used by the Department at that location. The present plan is to then meet with Louis Botta, Emergency Management Director on February 20, to discuss Emergency Management building and space issues.

5. Action Items.

- a. The Chair will contact Ms. Hallquist to request a chart of the building permits issued by the Town over the last few years.
- b. The Chair will confirm with Mr. Blewitt meeting with the Committee on February 13, 2020; he has already forward to him a questionnaire for that purpose, and will check on its status.
- c. The Police Station Subcommittee will determine the timing and process for carrying out the next steps with regard to the hiring of the architect.

The next meeting is in the Syd Crook Room, on Thursday, February 6, at 6:30 p.m.
The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Bowers, Chair