

**Town of Chester
Police Department Space Needs Working Group Meeting
Tuesday, February 19th, 2019
Municipal Complex
Approved Minutes**

I Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order
Roll Call
Approval of Minutes
Project Update & Next Steps – Will Gatchell of Harriman
Discussion of Potential Design
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

This sixth meeting of the Police Department Space Needs Working Group (PDSNWG) was called to order at 9:12am.

1.2 Roll Call

Members Present:

Aaron Berube, Police
Myrick Bunker, Building (departed 9:58am, returned 11:23am)
Andrew Hadik, Planning
Stephen Landau, Selectman
Corinna Reishus, Recreation
Herb Rowell, Resident (departed 11:26am)

Members Absent:

Cass Buckley, Selectman
Karl Knudsen, Resident
Rhonda Lamphere
Michael Oleson, Road Agent
Debbie O'Sullivan, Resident

Others Present at Various Times:

Will Gatchell, Harriman

II. Old Business

2.1 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 11/1/18, 11/27/18, 11/29/18, and 1/22/19 were previously approved verbally and / or via email by Messrs. Knudsen, Berube, Bunker, Rowell, and Reishus. Selectman Landau and Planning Coordinator Hadik will review these minutes. It was noted that this group is a steering committee only, whose decisions are non-binding. The main point of approving these minutes is so they may be published on the webpage for the public to view.

III. New Business

3.1 Project Update & Next Steps - Will Gatchell of Harriman

Architect Will Gatchell gave each attendee a packet with preliminary site assessments (graphics), facility assessment (chart), existing area assessment (plans), space needs assessment (chart) and next steps.

Mr. Gatchell reviewed the data page-by-page with the group and recounted his recent site visit. Mr. Gatchell (accompanied by Harriman's electrical and mechanical engineers) was led on a tour of the premises by Police Chief Berube and Road Agent Oleson to gain understanding of existing conditions and create a benchmark. Select plans from the Building Department were lent to Mr. Gatchell and a few preliminary areas of potential development were suggested. Existing infrastructure, including site utilities, electrical, and septic was examined. Police Chief Berube noted that Road Agent Oleson provided invaluable information to Mr. Gatchell and his team.

PDSNWG discussion with Mr. Gatchell:

- There is a steep slope behind the annex so if that area is to be built, filling / regrading would be required and could be costly.
- Mr. Gatchell believes that the police department is small enough to remain single-story; this could save money on elevator(s) and other features required of a multi-story building.
- Automobile storage needs to be considered; Mr. Gatchell assured that with proper site development, the fleet will be behind-the-scenes and secure.
- Mr. Gatchell hasn't gotten so far as to look at other potential sites. However, the group agreed that maximum cost savings would be achieved by keeping the facility at 84 Chester Street -- the existing site allows for many symbiotic benefits.
- The facility assessment shows that the current PD is a 2.5 on a scale of 1 to 5; which is "fair". Mr. Gatchell was struck at how inventive the department has been in making the most out of their space over the years. Mr. Gatchell felt that the facility itself isn't "terrible", but that everything is in the wrong place.
- The square footage study shows that the PD is roughly half as large as current & future needs require -- space certainly needs to be reallocated.
- Mr. Gatchell's first impulse is to keep the PD connected to the current building, but place it in the back. Either heavily renovate the annex or demolish it; and demolish the modulares. Add to or replace annex footprint; move all annex functions to current PD space.
- There was much discussion on where the current annex functions (Clothes Closet, food pantry overflow area, fitness room, Scouts storage area) could be moved; as well as what reconfiguration could be done to current Town Offices, meeting rooms, parking, and more. Could the Clothes Closet move to the Wason Pond Community Center, Spring Hill Farm or Stevens Hall while the new facility is under construction? The group wants to minimize displacing any of the groups.
- Mr. Gatchell noted that he has not yet investigated the attic / trusses in the annex as there

is not a good access point. There is a large span, and the walls are likely load bearing. The annex is wood-framed and the roof is in poor condition. It would probably be easier to demolish and build to suit.

- Perhaps a new hybrid meeting room (PD & Town Hall) could be situated in the new PD, and the current Town Hall meeting room (room 4) could be repurposed.
- Mr. Gatchell urged the group to be mindful in avoiding sprawl.
- Police Chief Berube noted that many law enforcement agencies are creating one-way-in & one-way-out facilities; perhaps this could be done here.

3.2 Next Steps

- Planning Coordinator Hadik suggested that today's packet be placed on the webpage along with detailed narratives to help the public understand what is being discussed; it was agreed that any such information be clearly marked "Draft".
- After meeting again with Police Chief Berube, Mr. Gatchell will formalize the space needs study and create initial blocking diagrams to show possible footprint.
- Planning Coordinator Hadik suggested Mr. Gatchell visit Murphy Drive to verify that it is not suitable for this project.
- Mr. Gatchell will appear before the BOS at their meeting this Thursday (2/21/19) to provide a brief (10-15 minute) project update.

Mr. Gatchell departed the meeting at 11:02am.

3.3 PDSNWG Discussion of Potential Designs

The group continued to discuss possible placement and features of a new police facility, as well as where other town offices and functions may be situated. Police Chief Berube reminded that during construction, the PD must remain fully functional. It will be important to fully consider all aspects of the current building, parking, etc.; the group strives to reach the most efficient and effective solutions to make this project most palatable to voters. The needs of the town today, and in 25-50 years must be seriously considered.

A design including a new PD facility to the rear of the MPR was discussed. Moving and expanding parking and ingress/egress and bringing certain town offices to the current PD was discussed.

IV. Adjournment

The next meeting of the Chester Police Department Space Needs Working Group is scheduled for Monday, March 11th at 9am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Caroline Wilson, Recording Secretary