

Village of Canton
Joint Town/Village Board Meeting
Wednesday, October 25, 2023
In Person and Video Conferencing
Minutes

TOWN MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mary Ann Ashley	----	Town Supervisor
Jim Smith	----	Council Member
Bob Santamoor	----	Council Member
John Taillon	----	Council Member
Randy Brown	----	Council Member

VILLAGE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mike Dalton	----	Mayor
Anna Sorensen	----	Trustee
Barbara Beekman	----	Trustee
Beth Larrabee	----	Trustee

Also Present: Village Clerk Sally Noble, Economic Developer Leigh Rodriguez

Absent: Village Trustee Klaus Proemm

Public Attendance: Tom Graser-Watertown Daily Times, Paul Mitchell-North County This Week, Toby Irven

Zoom Attendance: Chuck Voss, John Casserly, WWNY

Mayor Dalton called the Joint Town/Village board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. Old Business

1. 64 Main Street Site Plan Bids

Mayor Dalton stated the Town/Village received two bids for the 64 Main Street Site Plan. The building committee reviewed them and discussed it at length.

Village Trustee Sorensen reported from the Building Committee, the two bids received were from BCA Architects Engineers for \$5,400 and Barton & Loguidice for \$9,700. Sorensen added that the committee agreed that the lower bid did not meet the requirements of the RFP or at the very least didn't demonstrate how it did. If there was a recommendation it would be for the \$9,700. Sorensen added that the committee stopped short of a recommendation because after an extensive discussion the committee was unable to identify how we would use the building if we were able to repurpose it. The Village doesn't see a good staffing configuration that would be a good fit for that location. On the Village side we can't identify departments that would go in that direction. The committee discussed sending the Police Department to that building. It would provide additional space, but the 64 Main St. location would still need to be demolished. The building would not be suitable for the police department. Even with moving the Police department all it would address is the space issue but not the larger issues that have to do with the health and safety of the employees in the building.

Another discussion was moving the court but the location is not satisfactory with that

existing footprint. Again, by moving the court it only addresses the space issue and nothing else. Moving the historian was also a discussion but it didn't seem realistic or a cost savings.

The committee doesn't have a sense of how to utilize the space and doesn't know how to move forward. The committee doesn't feel good about recommending spending \$10,000 going forward.

Town Council Member Randy Brown asked what is being recommended for this building at 60 Main.

Mayor Dalton stated that the current municipal building was also looked at for remodel/reconstruction and that is why we were looking to move to a new space because of the amount of work that would need to be done here. The committee's opinion is by reusing the other building, we would only gain space but there are still problems here with this building. No matter what goes to 64 Main Street you still aren't addressing the issues at 60 Main St.

Council Member Brown stated that we still haven't resolved the issues here at the municipal building. Brown asked \$25,000,000 isn't realistic, correct?

Mayor Dalton stated it doesn't appear to be. Dalton also added that no matter what goes over there (64 Main) we are still not addressing any problems here at the municipal building. Dalton stated that if the police department was moved over there the building would still need to be demolished. The footprint could work but it wouldn't meet the needs on what has to happen. The other area that was looked at for the police department was by the fire station. From the Village's perspective the PD was the one department that was the most flexible. Everything else needs to be together. Council Member Brown asked what the \$9,700 would do.

Village Trustee Sorensen stated that the \$9,700 would tell the boards what the deficiencies of the buildings are. It would tell us what needs to be fixed, a structural assessment, architectural assessment, looking for improvement that can lengthen the life span of the building, and planning level cost considerations. It would be the board's decision on what goes in it or what to use it for.

Town Council Member Santamoor stated after listening to everything it sounds like the building is ineffective for what we need it to do. Santamoor asked can we pare down the \$25,000,000 down to something more manageable?

Mayor Dalton stated that could be a possibility. We haven't gone down the path in engineering it in that way.

Supervisor Ashley stated when the study was done everything was looked at. It had good

integrity in the process. There was department input, and the committee reviewed a few different sets of plans and tried to pare it down a little but with the large needs of the Police Department and Court. To renovate 64 Main Street would be millions of dollars and to gut 60 Main Street would be millions of dollars.

Village Trustee Larabee stated when the study was done it was only the interior of 60 Main Street and not 64 Main Street because the Town/Village did not own 64 Main St. at that time. What is the cost benefit of taking 64 Main St down and dealing with the information that we have for this building.

Supervisor Ashley stated that she believes the study was done with incongruence with the seven extensions of our offer to purchase.

Mayor Dalton added that the committee grapples with what are we going to put there. Until you know what you are going to put there how are you going to know how to design or think about how it would be used. Then you still have to deal with this building.

Town Council Member Brown stated that his problem is that we are trying to piece this together without a long-term plan. Brown doesn't believe \$25,000,000 is affordable. Brown asked when the research was done on this building was it going to house everyone that is in here now?

Mayor Dalton stated that we were just going to redo the building by trying to figure out how to put in an elevator and make it more handicap assessable. Mayor Dalton stated that the issue at hand is, do we just let the building sit there, or do we spend the money and take it down?

Supervisor Ashley stated to go back to tearing it down. There was discussion about possibly leaving the Historian downtown. There is an agreement where we can extend the lease for two more years with the same amount of monthly rent and snow removal was agreed upon. Ashley stated that it is her opinion that it will cost roughly ten to fifteen million dollars to rehab that building and gut this building to meet the needs of the Town/Village. Ashley feels that the path that we were on should be the path that we continue for the 30 some people that work in this building. They deserve the best.

Town Council Member Taillon added the committee did not come up with a recommendation because they couldn't justify spending \$10,000 to tell us if the building is usable without knowing what we are going to put over there that could cost millions of dollars. The committee couldn't justify the costs. It is opened up to both boards for recommendations on what to do with the building.

Council Member Brown is uncomfortable moving forward with no recommendation.

Mayor Dalton's personally believes 64 Main Street should come down.

The building committee could not come up with what to put at 64 Main Street. That is why they are stuck on making a recommendation on how to move forward.

Town Council Member Santamoor stated that a lot of good points were made but it sounds like the building is not suitable for what the Town/Village needs it to do. Then it is ridiculous to spend \$10,000 to just spend another \$64,000. Santamoor's opinion is to tear the building down, so we are not spending \$74,000.

Town Council Member Brown asked where do we go from there?

Village Trustee Sorensen said that is a far question. If the plan is to take 64 Main Street down, then it would go back to the building committee to try and figure out what to do with this building. Then there would be a clean slate to configure the space at 64 Main Street.

Village Trustee Beekman stated, it isn't the plan, it is the money. We need to know what kind of resources we can apply to this and that is what will drive the scope of the project. The focus should be more on the financing at this point.

Supervisor Ashley stated that in the past the municipal building has been part of the DRI application.

Town Council Member Santamoor stated that after listening to everything why don't we keep the building there now, don't spend the money and put our collective heads together. Figure out the space that is needed, size wise. Then at that point make a determination if something is going to move out of this building, where they are going to go, are they going to go to 64 Main Street and there needs to be a timeline.

Town Council Member Brown stated if the boards are not willing to spend the \$10,000 to find out if it is usable or not then we would have to go under the assumption that the building is not usable and tear it down. The longer it sits there with no heat, the more it's going to fall down.

Supervisor Ashley also stated that 64 Main Street is a public safety issue.

The Town/Village agreed not to move forward on the bids. Mayor Dalton will contact the low bidder about taking 64 Main Street down and see if the bid still stands. If not, then a new RFP would need to be sent out. Then bring this discussion back up at our next individual monthly meetings.

B. New Business

1. Pro-Housing Community Program Resolution -

Economic Developer Rodriguez stated that the Governor signed an executive order

recognizing the housing shortage in New York State and created a program to encourage communities to join her in taking action to address the shortage housing needs which is the pro-housing community program.

A motion was made by Town Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley and seconded by Town Council Member Bob Santamoor to pass the pro-housing community pledge resolution. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made Village Trustee Anna Sorensen and seconded by Village Trustee Barb Beekman to pass the pro-housing community pledge resolution. All in favor. Motion carried.

2. Stiles Ave Strategic Plan Update -

Supervisor Ashley gave an update on the Stiles Ave Strategic Plan stating that the contract has been reviewed by the Town Attorney. There is an agreement between Barton & Loguidice and the Town Attorney regarding the contract. One final read needs to be done, then signed and a kickoff meeting held. There are grant requirements. Leigh will be the point with Barton & Loguidice to start that study. Once signed the Town and Village will get a copy and then we can move forward. Trustee Sorensen verified there were no changes to the scope of the project or the timeline.

3. Web Site Update -

Village Trustee Sorensen gave an update on the website. The website design is ongoing in the background. Now the task is to address the sitemap. We are creating what will be on the website and how it will be organized. The more difficult task is identifying and aligning what is on our existing website with the new design. Why it is difficult is because there are roughly 1,000 pages on our current website and many of them are not connected to anything. The clerks have been corresponding with the current provider to get sitemap information. The process that the committee has come up with is the committee will try and identify as many of those pages as possible. We will give department heads a list of pages and the links to those pages. The department heads need to tell us what they want to keep, what they want to go, how they want it organized. The committee will take on the non-department pages and make those decisions. The clerks will reach out to the department heads. The new website will have contact forms. The committee is creating a directory to have set up in the backend.

4. Comprehensive Plan Oversight Project -

Mayor Dalton stated that the first meeting with department heads will be November 28th. The core team which consists of Mayor Dalton, Deputy Mayor Sorensen, Supervisor Ashley, Deputy Supervisor Smith met on October 16th. There will be a lot of opportunity for input.

Village Only

Mayor Dalton stated there are two items for Village only.

1. Authorize Towing Bids -

A motion was made by Village Trustee Beth Larabee and seconded by Village Trustee Barb Beekman authorizing Mayor Dalton to advertise for towing bids.
All in favor. Motion carried.

2. Resolution to award bid for Willow Island project -

A motion was made by Village Trustee Barb Beekman and seconded by Village Trustee Anna Sorensen to award the bid to the low bidder, T.J. Fiacco in the amount of \$252,700. All in favor. Motion carried.

Supervisor Ashley added the Town is the lead on this project.

A motion was made by Village Trustee Barb Beekman and seconded by Village Trustee Beth Larabee to adjourn the Village portion of Joint Town/Village board meeting at 6:53 PM.
All in favor. Motion carried.

Executive Session: Upon a majority vote upon a motion that identifies the subject to be considered, the Council may conduct an executive session to discuss any of the issues identified as proper by Public Officers Law 105(1)

A motion was made by Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley and seconded by Town Council Member Bob Santamoor to go into executive session for the purpose of [D] litigation. Highway Superintendent Steven Smith is invited into executive session at 6:53 PM.

All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Highway Superintendent Steven Smith left executive session at 8:24 p.m. A motion was made by Council Member Jim Smith and seconded by Supervisor Mary Ann Ashley to come out of executive session at 8:35 p.m.
All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Council Member Bob Santamoor and seconded by Council Member Randy Brown to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.
All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally Noble

Village Clerk