

At a Special meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on March 6, 2024

I. Call to Order

The meeting was Called to Order at 7:00 P.M. by Councilor W. Worthy, Town Council President.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Cheryl A. Greathouse; Walter M. O. Steere, III; Stephen W. Arnold, Vice President; William A. Worthy, Jr., President

Members absent: Jonathan E. Burlingame

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Chief Delprete, Police Chief; G. Mosca, EMA Director; G. Treml, Director Public Works

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor W. Worthy asked if everyone would please stand and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Police Station replacement and/or renovation- Update, Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Worthy thanked all for coming and stated that they all would be finding out a lot of information at the same time. Councilor W. Worthy stated that the public will have a time to ask questions and make comments after the presentation.

Discussion:

M. Saccoccio, Saccoccio and Associates, Architects, stated that he was before the Council in December to present a proposed renovation to the existing building. M. Saccoccio stated that the Council asked in December if he could design a proposed new building on a different site in town.

M. Saccoccio gave a detailed description of both the proposed renovation to the existing building and the proposed new station. M. Saccoccio stated that the proposed renovation to the existing 4800 sf building would be to add a 9200 sf addition, redo the garage, acquire the land in back and expand the parking area.

M. Saccoccio stated that the goal of the new proposed building was efficiency.

M. Saccoccio stated that the proposed building would be 13,000 sf, and have a better utilization of space in keeping the public, semi public and private spaces separate. M. Saccoccio stated that the proposal of the new building is still conceptual but feels it has a strong layout and a good organization of space.

M. Saccoccio stated that the renovation has a lack of organization in the secure and non secure spaces but that the plan still works. M. Saccoccio stated that the advantage to the proposed new building is that the secure, semi secure and public places are very delineated, more functional and there is less square footage by 1000 sf. M. Saccoccio stated that there are some compromises in the proposed renovation in terms of the arrangement of space and size. M. Saccoccio stated that both plans work and the decision would be about the town's long term goals.

M. Saccoccio stated that cost is difficult to predict and has been for the last few years. M. Saccoccio stated that he did have two estimates for the proposed building without site work. M. Saccoccio stated that one estimate was at \$725 per square foot and the other was at \$750 per square foot. M. Saccoccio stated that there is a 2.3 million delta between the proposed renovation (\$15 million approximate) and the proposed new building (\$17.3 million).

Councilor W. Worthy asked the pros and cons to renovating or building. M. Saccoccio stated that renovation would result in no room for any more expansion at the existing building in the future. M. Saccoccio stated that the renovation, if chosen, would work and work for a number of years but that if any expansion were needed in the future then that parcel is maxed out.

M. Saccoccio stated that the proposed site is a large pristine site with room for expansion. M. Saccoccio stated that the new building affords a better utilization of space and offers more options in terms of any future needs and developments.

Chief Delprete described the issues encountered in the existing station over the last six years which included the following; a sinkhole, black mold, records storage is not centralized, locker room is too small, no bathroom or locker for women and a lot of space is for emergency operations. Chief Delprete stated that the proposed renovation would provide better and separate storage for emergency operations center, records storage, locker rooms, more parking .

Chief Delprete stated that the goal for the proposed new station was for efficiency. Councilor W. Worthy asked about the grant money. Chief Delprete stated that there are two grants. Chief Delprete stated that one grant is for \$490,000 and is dedicated to the dispatch center. Chief Delprete described the current dispatch center. Chief Delprete stated that the second grant is a FEMA grant for one million dollars and would be dedicated to the emergency operations center.

Captain M. Fague described additional issues at the police station which include the various temperatures due to trying to keep the server and computers cool, the mold in the garage that is an issue when seized property needs to be stored, water issues due to the area around the station, the smell of marijuana due to issues with ventilation in the evidence room, the juvenile holding cell is an office for an administrative clerk and the limited number of cells.

Chief Delprete stated that the size of the force has increased as have the number of calls. Chief Delprete stated that there were 2500 calls last year. Chief Delprete stated that he has not asked for any capital projects over the last few years. Chief Delprete stated that if neither plan is approved that he will need to ask for capitol projects to correct issues at the station. Chief Delprete stated that the cost would be about 3 million dollars.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that public safety is a priority but the cost is a concern as to deciding what is best for the town. M. Saccoccio described the several options available in terms of renovating or constructing a new building as to a project manager type position. M. Saccoccio stated that jobs always come in under budget except for the current few years as costs have increased so quickly. M. Saccoccio stated that the cost per square foot in December for the renovation was a lot lower than the projected cost tonight. M. Saccoccio stated that it is very frustrating but it is very difficult to predict what the costs will be.

M. Saccoccio that if the renovation was chosen that it would be accomplished to minimize disruption to daily operations in response to Councilor S. Arnold's question about disruption. M. Saccoccio stated that either project is workable and it will take time to analyze what is the best decision for the town. Councilor S. Arnold stated the renovation is crazy to do if it is going to last only 10 years but if it were to last for decades then that would be a different story. M. Saccoccio stated again that the renovation locks the town into a site without any further room for any expansion if it is needed in the future. M. Saccoccio stated that costs on a new construction can be

more easily controlled than a renovation because in renovations you don't always know all the issues that may be in the building. Councilor W. Worthy asked if the current building could go up in terms of stories. M. Saccoccio stated that anything can be done but he would not advise it as it is extremely difficult and would require an exoskeleton, taking the roof off, and adding elevators among other aspects .

Councilor W. Worthy asked if anyone wanted to speak and if so to come up to the microphone and state your name.

W. Steere, resident, asked if the proposed new building could be a two story to lessen the footprint and take advantage of the slope. M. Saccoccio stated that it could be designed as a two story. M. Saccoccio stated that a single level building is cheaper to build. W. Steere stated that if price were not a factor then it makes sense to build new . W. Steere stated he does not see the value in putting money into the old building. W. Steere stated that he does not believe the cost numbers quoted and feels additional money would be required. W. Steere stated he has worries about the financing costs as it is not good time to borrow.

W. Wyatt, resident Adelaide Road, asked if the proposed building would effect the residents of Adelaide Road in terms of their wells , cell towers, etc. W. Wyatt stated that he agreed with W. Steere in not fixing the old building if a new one can be built. M. Saccoccio stated that the plans purposely stayed away from Adelaide Road for access and all access is coming off of Route 44. M. Saccoccio stated that the residents should not be effected.

G.Treml, resident & DPW Director, stated that the police station in 1980 was in the basement of the library. G. Treml stated that as the town grew the decision was made not to renovate the police station but to build a new one. G.Treml stated that the current police station was built in 1990. G.Treml stated that history is repeating itself. G.Treml stated that the current facility and the land it is on have outlived its ability to support a modern police compound. G.Treml stated that the new proposed site is centrally located and could support a police department for many years in the future. G.Treml stated that money is an important part but that the town should not lose sight of what is needed in a facility. G.Treml stated his opinion to consider a greater cost per square foot closer to 900 per square foot and to include a realistic contingency fund. G. Treml stated that the components chosen now will follow through the life of the facility therefore we should get what is needed now because it is a one shot deal.

G. Kain, resident, asked about the possible price for the sale of the current station, especially if the zone was changed to commercial, as a consideration to offset the building cost.

D.Laplante, resident, stated he is a former Gloucester police officer having retired 18 years ago. D. Laplante described the conditions of the police station in the library basement. D. Laplante described the current police station when he worked when it was opened. D. Laplante stated that as time as passed, evidence that is required to be stored has increased but the space in the current station has not . D. Laplante stated that people need to know why the renovation or the new building is necessary. D. Laplante stated the department has grown as well as the changes in the law .D. Laplante stated that for the future of law enforcement and public safety in Gloucester that something needs to be done whether it is a renovation or a new build. D.Laplante also stated that EMS is critical to Gloucester and that it runs differently from a full time paid department. D. Laplante stated that there are times when there is no rescue service available . D.Laplante stated this information as a former board member of the fire department. D.Laplante asked if there was a contingency plan to add EMS facility to the police complex. M.Saccoccio stated that has not been discussed but that the advantage to the proposed new building site is that it is large enough to add on. D.Laplante stated that there are grants available for public safety complexes that include EMS and police so that may be a good idea to consider.

R.Nadeau, resident, stated a suggestion to overbuild the new building so the next generation will not have to do . R.Nadeau stated the suggestion that the structure could be built larger but the interior not finished until needed.

G.Mosca, EMA director and resident, stated that a state infrastructure grant of up to 5 million dollars was submitted this spring and the awards are to be made in mid March. G. Mosca stated that the town has a chance to receive up to 5 million dollars because the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be the only and largest center in north western RI. G. Mosca stated that the state likes this center because it becomes a nexus for response to major disasters. G.Mosca stated that the EOC would handle the State, Foster, Burrillville and be a nexus to the town getting a response so instead of the town being the end of the line for a response the town would be the forefront. G. Mosca stated that if it is a public safety building alone such as a police station or a fire station then the grant could be up to one million dollars. G. Mosca stated that if the town can show a regional benefit then the grant could be up to the

five million dollars. G. Mosca stated that there is a one million dollar grant from Congress that can be used to build the EOC. G. Mosca stated that he felt there was a way to renovate without having to rent trailers. Chief Delprete stated that the mobile command center can be used so that there may not need to rent trailers.

G. Steere, resident, asked why the renovation was going to be so large. Chief Delprete stated that the renovation includes the garage. M. Saccoccio stated that the renovation is 14,000 square feet and the new building 13,000 square feet. M. Saccoccio stated that the size of the spaces in both is virtually identical but it is the efficiency of the configuration that makes the new building smaller. Chief Delprete asked about the height of the ceilings and width of the corridors in commercial buildings. M. Saccoccio stated that the height and width can vary depending upon what is practical. G. Steere asked what the plan was for the old building and if it would be re zoned. Councilor W. Worthy made several suggestions for use. G. Steere stated his opinion is that the problems are not that bad at the station but that the department has out grown it.

Councilor W. Worthy thanked all for coming and that they are trying to think of the years to come. Councilor W. Steere stated that this meeting was for information and it is important to get public feedback to make decisions on where the town needs to go. Councilor W. Worthy asked about the time line. Chief Delprete stated that the C.O.P. grant can be used right away once a decision is made. Chief Delprete stated that the FEMA grant has not been awarded yet because the Town has not made its decision. G. Mosca stated that it is a 3 year grant that started in June 2023. G. Mosca stated that it cannot be awarded unless there is a decision as to which direction the town is going. G. Mosca stated that the one million dollar grant goes away if the EOC is not built.

Councilor S. Arnold stated his thanks for the information and great feedback. Councilor S. Arnold stated it was helpful to see the conditions at the police station and wanted to let people know that the police may be open to letting public see.

Maureen McNamara, resident and Budget Board member, stated that the Budget Board walked through last year and it was eye opening. M. McNamara stated it was frightening to see the conditions and gives great credit to the department for working there. M. McNamara stated her opinion that the building is unsafe.

Councilor W. Worthy stated that it takes a village to make things happen. Councilor W. Worthy stated that this item is on the town council agenda for tomorrow night and that it will take everyone in town to make the right decision.

No Action Taken by Council

V. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor W. Steere to Adjourn at 8:25 PM ; seconded by Councilor S. Arnold

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- C. Greathouse, W. Steere, S. Arnold , W. Worthy

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED