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**MEETING MINUTES**

**To:** Town of Merrimac MA Public Safety Complex Building Committee  
**Date:** November 12, 2014  
**From:** Janet M. Slemenda  
**Project:** Merrimac Public Safety Complex Study  
 Nancy J. Joyce  
**Subject:** Visioning / Kick-Off Meeting  
**Job No:** 21512

**Attending:** Andrew Conner, Board of Selectmen (BoS), Fire Dept., [selectman2@townofmerrimac.com](mailto:selectman2@townofmerrimac.com)  
 Chief Eric Shears, Chief of Police, [eshears@merrimacpolice.org](mailto:eshears@merrimacpolice.org)  
 Chief Ralph Spencer, Fire Chief, [ralph.spencer@merrimacfire.com](mailto:ralph.spencer@merrimacfire.com)  
 Robert Sinibaldi, DPW Director, [dpwdir@townofmerrimac.com](mailto:dpwdir@townofmerrimac.com)  
 Larry Fisher, Fire Dept. Deputy Chief, [lsfisher.electric@comcast.net](mailto:lsfisher.electric@comcast.net)  
 Richard Holcroft, Police Dept. Patrolman, [rholfcroft@merrimacpolice.org](mailto:rholfcroft@merrimacpolice.org)  
 Richard LeSavoy, Finance Committee Chairman, [lesavoy@comcast.net](mailto:lesavoy@comcast.net)  
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 Nancy Joyce (NJJ), HKT Architects, [njoyce@hktarchitects.com](mailto:njoyce@hktarchitects.com)

**Item:**

1.01 JMS reviewed agenda for this Visioning / Kick - Off Meeting, which included reintroducing the HKT design team, our approach to managing the study, the process and the goals for the visioning session.

A quick overview the process for the study included a discussion on the assessment phase including gathering input and ideas from the Committee and defining the limitations of the existing building and site, and the Design phase which included conceptual development of an operationally sound option.

The Process will also include:

- Programming
- Building Assessment
- Site Assessment

1.02 The Visioning Session included and overview of the session process, questions, a review of responses and open discussion. The following items 1.03 through 1.06 document the questions asked and the responses attendees wrote on individual post-it notes. Responses have been recorded as they were written with the exception that abbreviated words have been written out for the readers' understanding.

1.03 Question 1: What do you see as the best outcome for this study?

- Professional training center
- Become educated on what the possibilities are: Technology, and what works

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and what does not.

- Personal space for staff
- A public safety building that works well for the Police, Fire and Community
- Community space for all to use
- Useable space that is easy to keep / maintain long term
- Come up with plan that ensure our operations are safe and secure for staff and customers
- Accessibility to I-495
- Location
- Finding a location(s)
- Parking away from Apparatus Bays
- Create a concept for how we can solve the problems we identify by analyzing the current site
- Clearly identifying the inadequacies of the current site
- Identify a realistic alternate site presuming we cannot solve all the issues on the current site
- Storm-proof building
- Preliminary design
- Prove to the community that our existing facilities are inadequate and come up with a plan for the future
- Discuss and explain options for our facilities
- Convince the community of the need
- A good understanding of what the needs of the Town are and if project will be possible

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1.04 Question 2: What do you see as the biggest challenge(s) for the study?

- Finding a site
  - Location
  - Location
  - Limitations of what we can do on the current site
  - Lack of availability of an alternate site in an ideal location
  - Access to highway
  - Evaluating future sites because we do not own an land large enough to support a new facility
  - Repurposing the existing facility
  - Ease of use
  - Wrapping my head around a large project
  - Building size
  - Keeping the departments in one building
  - Deciding who goes where
  - Not over building the project but planning for the future at the same time
  - Putting too much in the overall plan
  - Number of uses
  - Cost
  - Cost and selling to the community
  - Participation of key people who have been part of the team off and on
  - Selling it to the community
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1.05 Question 3: How does the current layout of the site impact the three functions on the site?

- All outdated
- It works, but is dated
- Some parking issues at times
- Parking
- Traffic / Parking
- Not enough space for parking
- Traffic
- No traffic lights
- Entry for public
- Best location in Town
- It is a center piece in Town and centrally located
- Great location within Town
- Existing building is in the ideal location
- Police Department needs more interior space for interview room, locker room and sally port, etc.
- More vehicle bays
- I originally did not even know the DPW was in the building
- Not a lot of room to expand
- Police facility is inadequate and unwelcoming
- Police station seems very unfriendly to the public
- All three departments are separate with little shared place
- Flooding

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1.06 Question 4: What are one or two critical details that we need to know about this project?

- Easy accessibility to main roads
  - Separation of entering and exiting Police / Fire vehicles
  - Parking
  - Site options are limited
  - The site...
  - Who the owners are of possible other sites and the possibilities of securing / procuring them
  - Location
  - Location
  - Location is key to overall operations
  - This current site is an ideal geographical location
  - Keeping the DPW onsite is not as critical as Police & Fire Departments
  - To keep Police and Fire Departments with a common area so that there is regular interaction (Common entrance, etc.)
  - Operation of Police and Fire departments need to remain together
  - Facility's layout makes it difficult to provide quality professional services to our community
  - Lack of space
  - Importance of finding an optimum use for the current site as a selling feature for the project
  - May not be easily accepted by the community
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**1.07 Open discussion questions included:**

- There are items coming off of the Town tax base
- Pentucket Regional School District, 50% of the Town Budget goes to school district. Three Towns: Merrimac, Groveland and West Newbury
- A new high school is needed. Last time it came up to a vote (1994) it failed by a single vote.
- Town growth is not expected to be large. Infrastructure like schools, water and sewer are more or less at maximum capacity.
- Town Hall – potential ongoing projects. They have not done a study yet.
- Three departments on one site?
  - Police & Fire really want to have a shared site. So public safety items could have shared resources.
  - DPW site could be a different site
- There are two other properties that are known potential sites.
  - Waterhouse: ~4.5 Acre site. Known zoning,
  - Across from Edgemont: 9 acres, not ideal location for Fire Department.
- Other possible secondary locations mentioned:
  - Emery (behind soccer fields)?
  - Federal Way? Behind the Salt Shed. There is a swamp vs. hill situation on that site. Although the Light & Sewer departments already there which potentially convenient.
- A phased approach to the project? Would they need funding all at the same time? Salisbury projects were phased, but not funded at the same time.
- What are the rates of escalation these days?
- Neighbor to the existing site, a historic property. Where is the property line between the two?
- Community
  - Seems to be slightly indifferent to project
  - School numbers are going down
  - New development seems for 55+
  - Taxes in Town have gone up quite a bit
  - Last Town meeting there were no questions and everything was unanimous.
  - Departments host community events which are very positively reviewed.
- Community involvement and engaging in the getting the project moving.
  - Using local television, giving tour
  - Social Media
  - Work on a 3-minute elevator pitch
  - Transparency of the process
- Town Meeting is 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in April.

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**Next Meeting to be held: TBD**

Please contact HKT Architects within three business days if these minutes do not accurately reflect discussions.

Cc: All attendees