## Town of Stow

# Town Hall Restoration Committee

# Meeting Minutes

August 13, 2020

1. Call to order

Doug Hyde called to order the regular meeting of the Town Hall Restoration Committee at 6:31 pm on August 13, 2020 via a video conference call and in person at the Town Building.

1. Roll call

The following people were present:

Committee Members: Doug Hyde and Cortni Frecha attended the meeting in person at the Town Building; Andy Crosby, Megan Birch-McMichael, Ed Deluca Arnold Epstein, and Atli Thorarensen (joined at 6:24pm) attended the meeting via Zoom.

Others Attending: Tom Ryan attending in person at the Town Building

Others Attending
For LLB (joined at 6:43 via Zoom): Drayton Fair, Brian Valentine, Bethany Robertson, Bethany Burns, Steve Karan From Building Engineering Resources

For Mills Whitaker (joined at 8:00 pm in person at the Town Building): Don Mills and Craig Whitaker

1. LLB Interview
	1. The LLB team spent 15 minutes introducing their firm, projects and preliminary thoughts on the Town Hall. After the presentation, each Committee member took turns asking questions. Committee members focused reducing the cost of the project, HVAC systems and efficiency improvements, accessibility and how to best build town support for and get town input on the project. In response to LLB’s process for defining the project and milestones for this project, LLB explained how they work with their clients to meet the defined milestones. In response to a question on how the project could get broken into separate subprojects so they can be considered separately, LLB responded that it is difficult to phase projects due to State regulations and that it is often most cost effective to do the complete project instead of spreading the project over several years. LLB did mention that they work with their clients to define must-haves and optional projects to cost out the basic project and other work as add-ons.
	2. The LLB team noted that the cost of the project depended on intended use and building support for the project within the town was depended on working with stakeholders to define desired use and creating a plan that supports that vision of use for the building. They noted that the current proposed plan use level to 100 people due to the fact the building has only 2 bathrooms.
	3. The LLB team left the meeting at 7:49pm
2. Post Interview Discussion
	1. The Committee members discussed their impression of the interview. The general consensus was that the LLB did not communicate a vision for the project and seemed to circle around the questions. The Committee was disappointed that there was not a lot of details on how LLB would complete the design project and move into construction.
3. Mills Whitaker Interview
	1. The Mills Whitaker team spent 15 minutes introducing their preliminary thoughts on the Town Hall. In their presentation, they included their vision of the Town Hall restored to its 1895 appearances, removing many awkward features of the landscaping and creating a cleaner design. Mill Whitaker also discussed the possibility of accessibility and the possibility of removing the stage and whether the stairs must be replaced. They also noted that they are planning to the project completed by the May Town Meeting.
	2. In response to Committee member questions, Mills Whitaker noted that some costs were unavoidable but it is useful to itemize costs into the core project and alternatives. The first step is to understand town expectations. Need to do more education but focus on doing the project right the first time. The town could delay some items but would miss out on the saving associated with doing it as one project. In a discussion of the HVAC system, Mills Whitaker said that the VRS may be the best option but had concerns on the size and noise of the system. They would review costs and benefits of the various options to determine the best system for the Town Hall.
	3. The majority of the questions and answers dealt with how to build town support for the project. Mills Whitaker spoke about reaching out to stakeholders and building a consensus and support for a specific vision of the Town Hall. In response to concerns on the overall cost of the project and the high square foot cost, Mills Whitaker noted that all projects have a base level of fixed costs. This causes a smaller building to be more expensive on a square foot basis than some larger projects. This needs to be properly communicated to the shareholders to increase the public’s understanding of the cause of the high cost.
	4. Mills Whitaker leaves at 9:13 pm.
4. Post Interview Discussion
	1. The Committee members liked Mills Whitaker’s presentation and clear vision for the Town Hall. The consensus of the Members was that Mills Whitaker had come prepared and had addressed the Committees concerns.
5. Next Meeting
	1. The next meeting will be August 19, 2020 at 6:00 pm via Zoom to discuss next steps.
6. Adjournment

Ed Deluca made, and Cortni Frecha seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm

Minutes submitted by: Andrew B. Crosby

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Minutes Approved on: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Design Project Phase 30 Reference Questions**

1. Was [Name of Firm] collaborative in their effort?
2. Did they listen to you and were they responsive to the needs of the town and committee?
3. Did the town try to get variances from the building code and ADA? If so, how helpful/successful was the architect firm in articulating the reasons for a variance and getting approval for the variances?
4. Were the construction drawings and other documents completely and correctly done? Were they useful for their intended purpose?
5. How accurate was their estimation of the project cost to the actual cost? If the actual cost was greater than the original, was it due to changes in the project or an inaccurate budget?
6. What did you like the most about working with this firm and their subcontractors?
7. What did you like the least about working with this firm and their subcontractors?
8. Would you use this firm again?
9. Is there anything I have not asked you that you think I should consider when deciding on whether to hire this firm?