

## Sudbury Town Hall

PBC Meeting December 5, 2019

Attendees:     HDC – Frank Riepe (also served on BRC), Bill Andreas, Fred Taylor, D Warren,  
                            Lee Swanson  
                    Comm on Disability – Pat Guthy, Lisa Kouchakdjian, Caroline Santangelo, Kay Bell,  
                            Doug Frey,  
                    Historic Commission – Chris Hagger, Diana Warren, Jan Costa, Taryn Trexler,  
                            Diana Cebra  
                    Town Hall Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) – Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi  
  
                    Town of Sudbury – Facilities Director Bill Barletta, Town Historian Chris Morely,  
  
                    PBC – Mike Melnick, Craig Blake, John Porter, Jennifer Pincus  
  
                    BH+A – Steve Shetler  
  
                    CMS – Neil Joyce

Call to Order – 7:08 PM – Open Committees / Posted Meetings for PBC, Commission on Disability, Historic Districts Commission. HC is not a posted meeting. Meeting open to Public (approximately 10-12 persons) present, in addition to attendees noted above.

Noted this meeting is intended to be informational only, without deliberations. Reconvene at a future date with HDC Meeting for deliberation and hopefully resolution. This meeting will be recorded for Sudbury Cable Television for future broadcast.

Introductions of all present: (See List of Attendees above)

Objectives – Direction to PBC and Design Discussion – Front Entrance & Accessibility, Associated Variance and Guidance. Subsequently, take project and final design to multiple public boards and committees prior to construction.

1. Presentation of Design Starting Point - BRC presentation & introduction given by Frank Riepe.
  - a. BRC created to advance preliminary study (2013) of Town Hall by BH+A
  - b. BRC work completed 2014 – 2016.
  - c. Reviewed aspects of BHA report – existing conditions and expansion possibilities
  - d. Primary goals should be restoration and rehab to original functions.
  - e. Existing Floor Plans (all levels – basement (Fire dept), First Floor (Clerk's Office), Upper level (Hall). Existing floor plans also show multiple existing floor levels through bldg.
  - f. Challenge is how to make accessible to all, with solution to create new circulation patterns.
  - g. New entrance with elevator and lobby at NE corner would provide accessibility at all levels. Portico entrance (similar to front), adjacent to primary existing parking area. Visible communication from front of building to new rear entrance. Improvements to garage doors on lower level and added wall and landscape features at south elevation.

- h. First Floor added Lobby, Restrooms and expanded Clerks office as well as core stair and elevator. Elevator provide stops at all floor levels.
  - i. Main Lobby (front) included renovated restrooms (not HP accessible) and restore main lobby to original detail, or better. Preservation of front lobby was goal
  - j. Landscape and sidewalk development between TH and Grange Bldg.
  - k. Consistent with other prominent buildings located around the historical center (parsonage, churches, grange, etc.)
- 2. Presentation of Mission Statements (Craig Blake): refer to slides:
  - a. HDC
  - b. HC
  - c. COD
  - d. PBC
- 3. Applicable Regulations (Blake / Bill Barletta): Refer to Slides
  - a. Bldg Inspector / Permit Review by Local Authorities to confirm compliance
    - i. Bldg Codes, MAAB, ADA
      - 1. Noted MAAB requires all entrances to be accessible unless variance granted
    - ii. Local Boards / Authorities having review:
      - 1. HDC
      - 2. HC
      - 3. COD
      - 4. DRB
      - 5. PB
- 4. Front Entrance Options:
  - a. No variance from MAAB:
    - i. Front Entrance Closed to all & Shift to Rear entrance
    - ii. Make Entrance MAAB Compliant
    - iii. Close to all & utilize Rear Entrance / Only Open selectively and use Temp Ramp for events
    - iv. Close to all and enhance existing side entrance as MAAB compliant
    - v. Regrade Front entrance to eliminate steps to portico & raise to front door threshold elevation
  - b. With Variance to MAAB
    - i. Front Entrance to Remain as-is – Open to public but not MAAB Compliant
    - ii. Maintain front entrance and make entrance MAAB compliant for scheduled meetings and special events through temp ramp.
  - c. Discussion
    - i. Inclusiveness of Options
    - ii. Additional Options:
      - 1. Riepe Comments:
        - a. Front Doors do not provide accessible route to second level.
        - b. Existing entrance on North side of lower level could be enhanced

2. Clarification – two ramps needed: one from driveway to portico and one from portico to threshold. Very difficult to be temporary (likely a metal option)
3. Taryn Comment – not first town to face this challenge. Combination of solutions – ramps, variances, etc. – are available
4. Framingham Town Hall – take a look at this. HP access not visible at front of building / very similar to this building.
  - a. Metrowest Group (?) used in Framingham project to consult with accessibility solutions.
5. Morely Comment – BRC committee traveled around looked at many similar projects / variances are common. Shifted entrances to rear of building similar situations.
6. Mike Melnick offered perspectives from recently completed Loring Parsonage PBC project. Similar issues, with no variance requested. Craig noted that PBC has not been able to confirm (or refute) that other Sudbury center buildings have successfully obtained variances.

#### 5. MAAB Variance Criteria

- a. Three Criteria to Evaluate:
    - i. Creates Financial Hardship
    - ii. Not Technically Feasible
      1. due to physical or structural limitations
      2. due to substantial impact historical significance to Bldg
        - a. HDC / HC Feedback & Letters are applicable to these criteria
    - iii. Will not provide significant benefit to disabled public
      1. COD input relative to this criteria
      2. Clarified that lift will provide access to lower meeting room from front lobby under accessible front entrance
  - b. Riepe – Variance process should not be viewed as onerous – it exists for this purpose. Routine to grant variances, as long as applicant has made building generally accessible.
- #### 6. Discussion on Front Entrance Options
- a. HC Perspective
    - i. Chris Hager – HC Chair
      1. Historical Significance of Town Hall – protection of historical assets.
        - a. Historical district established in 70's – encompasses multiple buildings (federally and locally recognized as historically significant)
        - b. Contributing Building to both districts in center of town
        - c. Award winning building at time of construction
        - d. HC has interest in exterior (as does HDC) as well as interior
        - e. Pertinent to Criteria #2 of MAAB variance
        - f. HC Letter to MHC to support Town's intentions
      2. Taryn – MAAB variance noted for local district, state and federal requirements (3 of 5 requirements for MHC consideration)
    - ii. COD perspective (Pat)

- i. Noted that COD was not formed at time of BRC
- ii. CPC Funds identified as funding of design article
  - 1. Funding article Noted upper levels were closed to public for 26 years due to non compliance with access requirements
- iii. COD formed to allow full integration and eliminate barriers to people living with disabilities
- iv. Reviewed history of Town Hall (1639 – Present), identified several instances where Town Hall was moved or relocated to allow access to all during history of building
- v. ADA Act enacted 1990 – civil rights law, not building code.
- vi. Preservation Briefs 2016 – Passage of ADA is civil right, with details and photographs to historical properties being brought into compliance with proper planning and design. Includes references that rear or service entrances should be avoided.
- vii. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- viii. Accessibility is a core value of the community and is the right thing to do
- c. HDC Commentary will be heard / further discussed at HDC meeting 12/12/19
- d. Invitation for Discussion of Differing Perspectives
  - i. Right people are present to make this a reality
  - ii. Question from COD – What was original concept of travel through lower meeting room? Orientation of room brings people into front of room, which is not common or comfortable.
    - 1. BRC Comment (Riepe) – no perfect solution. Comparison to First Parish Church – enter sanctuary from NW corner – front doors/stairs are currently non-compliant. Noted that it is unknown if variance is in place currently for this building.
    - 2. BHA – Steve Shetler – as design progressed, front of building considered functional, accessible and remained used as currently is.
    - 3. Blake confirmed use of lower meeting room (multiple town boards):
      - a. If front entrance is closed, entrance would be from NW corner via new lobby
      - b. COD commented that people should be free to utilize any entrance, for reasons of convenience.
      - c. Use of space for Town Elections. Polling purposes, Clerk would like to use separate entrance / exit to control access and egress from polling. Elimination of Front entrance would affect this function.
    - 4. Blake confirmed intent was to maximize all areas of the building and made accessible. Town investment will be significant.
  - iii. HDC – reminder that side entrance also in play. Blake noted PBC tries to solicit opinions from majority, with initial input to remove side entrance (consistent with BRC recommendations) in favor restoring condition to that of a window. Conclusion may be to affect in that way, but PBC needs to confirm that is preferred method by majority of boards.

- iv. COD Ramp depicted – clarification on additional changes to front lobby would include a lift to lower level meeting space. Blake noted concurrent use of first floor meeting space and upper level creates other circulation issues. COD clarified also that multiple accessible entrances helps to address this.
- v. HDC – Side entrance drive is not an overly friendly area with traffic flow. Were south elevations of building considered for ramp? BHA noted it is a narrow space, and further that south side is prominent side / view of building and is further complicated with lower grades on the south side.
- vi. HDC noted addition of another level of granite to address step into door threshold. Changes to steps on front facade and addition of railing are not desirable to HDC. COD noted added railings are believed to be required.
- vii. Blake provided examples of other Town Halls and how they addressed accessibility:
  - 1. Sandwich – regrading of site / raised grade to level of front entrances to eliminate steps
  - 2. Westborough – added ramp (one side)
  - 3. Harvard – Ramp on one side
  - 4. Needham – Added Ramp
  - 5. Sherborne – Added switch-back ramp
  - 6. Lexington – Added Brick Ramp
- viii. New Options
  - 1. Morely – patrons using front entrance are assumed to be parking at common. Consider using stone walls to bring up to front entrance elevation from south side to portico. HP parking at lower level (south side driveway). Conceptual design (perspective from road, south side),
    - i. BHA noted issue with last 3' of ramp, but can be further investigated.
    - ii. Prominent from southern view.
    - iii. Would include raised landing at portico
    - iv. Consideration of cesspool on south side should be acknowledged / confirmed PBC is aware.
- ix. Clarification of Historic Fabric and Historic Sensitivity: Use of appropriate materials and consistent with period construction (e.g., stone walls)
- x. Blake reconfirmed intent of meeting this evening is to confirm accessibility of front door, or variance – not necessarily to present or confirm a solution. HDC would like information on what impact of closing front would be? How much use is anticipated under renovated scenario.
- xi. COD question – other buildings not being used (churches, grange, etc.) – distinction between municipal vs non-municipal building.
- xii. COD Perspective – start from places of agreement – mutual admiration of this building and Town of Sudbury. Noted the building is the heart of Sudbury – center of Town, Town Government, etc. Should be open and accessible to all. Consider best interests of all – aging population, etc. Front entrance should be accessible to all – elderly, baby carriages, etc.

- xiii. COD perspective – seal and time capsule sensitive. Go back in time and ask the gentlemen that set it if it would be okay to reset 6” higher? They built bldg. for future of Sudbury, and today we find ourselves in same position.
- xiv. HC will require multiple meetings to discuss and deliberate. Premature to move on this issue too quickly. Methodical and thorough thought and action would be necessary. COD supports similar thoughtful action.
- xv. Blake comments that all boards have had ample time to plan meetings. Reclarified that we are asking HDC and HC to listen to COD, and provide opinions on making entrance accessible and MAAB compliant. Once such clarification is provided, options will be explored and developed. Blake noted OPM and Architect are on fixed fee agreements and “time is money”.
- xvi. COD noted they have posted meeting and can/will deliberate. Perception is some information COD has presented may have allowed others to have a different perspective.
- xvii. COD – Is variance binding? Answer – No. Even if variance is provided and approved, Town can opt not to proceed and make entrance accessible.
- xviii. COD – Perceived adversarial relationship between commissions –
- xix. Riepe – question directed to COD – is it your strong feeling that front entrance be accessible, and it only be connected to lower meeting space, acknowledging that front entrance alone does not improve accessibility to second floor?
- xx. HC – Does COD care about appearance or only accessibility? Suggested COD should be specific about what they are asking for.
- xxi. Blake asked for commitment from HDC, HC and COD for commentary from each as board or by individual at meeting on 12/12?
- xxii. HC suggested circulation and flow of whole building should be further reviewed.
- xxiii. HC stated will not have formal meeting until 12/17, and feel rushed to make judgement or decision / opinion by Dec 12<sup>th</sup>. Craig noted that sufficient notice has been given to each board to schedule meetings and make recommendations to PBC. Concern is delay will take us through into Jan or February. HDC noted they could meet in early Jan to deliberate. Suggested Meeting on Jan 9<sup>th</sup> (on or about / date to be confirmed). HP Ramp from south area requested asap.
- xxiv. BOS representative – some luxury of time with Town Hall project. Encourage to allow sufficient time, while not drawing out resolution, and continue positive conversation toward a unified front to make project successful.
- xxv. Riepe – suggested lowering lobby floor; eliminating front lobby elevation by 1 step, and providing ramp access between lobby and lower meeting level. Blake noted consensus from committees are sought, rather than individual perspectives as committee vote is needed.

Meeting Adjourned – COD, HDC, PBC - 10:25 PM

Prepared by CMS Project Manager Neil Joyce