

**PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE
OUR LADY OF HOPE CHURCH
JANUARY 29, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Robert Weatherall called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with the following members present: Chief A. Theriault, H. Schwartz, L. Alexson, T. Jones, K. Carlson, C. Surpitski, Chief P. Nikas, R. Donahue, P. Polonsky, J. Fay, P. Dziadose, and J. Emerson. Absent was: R. McShera.

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Bob introduced himself and expressed his and the Committee's gratitude for being welcomed and for making the parcel across the street available to the Town. The PSFC is very pleased with the site--even the shape of the land is an asset and seems to meet all of the needs of a public safety facility. He introduced Janet Slemenda, HKT architect, followed by the rest of the Committee and Town Manager Tony Marino and spoke of the new website.

Janet explained the process that she has been going through, the touring and studying the two antiquated public safety buildings that are beyond their useful lives, the programming with the Chiefs and staff, and the site selection with civil engineers on two possible sites, the Pine Swamp Road site being the best. She displayed a pictorial rendition of the site for the approximately 75 attendees and commented that the wetlands are being taken into consideration. Programming currently including emergency communication, sharing of conference rooms, mechanical systems, record storage, etc. will be within the Fire space of 12,493 sq. ft. (including 8,000 sq. ft. for apparatus and equipment) and Police space of 9,180 sq. ft. (including 3,400 sq. ft. for the Sally port and detention areas). The architect is working on three public safety facilities right now and each has its own programming needs, such as the recently completed Salisbury police facility which needed more cellblocks because of its proximity to Salisbury Beach.

Her second visual representation identified the proposed (conceptual) building, already different from the beginning because of the elevation of the site. She respects the Conservation Committee's concerns about wetlands on the far lot of Pine Swamp Road. The new facility will be using less than half of the 11.99 acres available for purchase by the Town. The Fire building will have a structured slab on one level with a low profile.

QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Bob opened up the meeting for questions.

Q. Are you going to enhance Pine Swamp Road because currently cars park on both sides of the road at times? Are you going to consider the handicapped parking? How about when the fire truck would be coming in?

Janet explained the programmed parking spaces within the facility's area. A traffic count will determine whether there will be a flashing light or a full stop sign. Bob said that we

are not at the stage for signage yet. Rob suggested allowing for apparatus to roll into an area where they could actually back up their trucks to enter their allotted spaces within the building. Janet mentioned a 60' apron which could be increased so that it would not interrupt traffic.

Q. Is this proposed facility bigger than the surrounding towns' new facilities?

Nikas said that Ipswich has more than double the size of the public safety people in Essex who have 5 firefighters and 13 police. Rowley has two buildings. Ipswich has 25 firefighters/lieutenants. Police has 25 personnel in their department. Bob added that the Ipswich facility will contain animal control, shellfish, harbors/waterways, and emergency management as well.

Q. What about the garden areas which will be displaced and will you put them somewhere else?

Chief Nikas has contacted the Open Space Committee and sites that already have water access are being evaluated. The current Police Station on Elm Street would be green area once the new facility is complete. Alternatives are being considered.

Another citizen commented that the gardens are not a huge concern anymore and that the fact that Pine Swamp area loses power so frequently makes her feel good about this new project.

Q. How far does the proposed facility go down Pine Swamp Road?

Janet projected that it stops about at the end of the church property.

Q. Because the fire house on Central Street is a part of Ipswich history, will it still be left there?

Rob replied that what happens is beyond the scope of PSFC and needs its own study committee. We do a disservice to guess what is going to happen to that building.

Q. How about the railroad tracks?

Chief Theriault stated that, in a 22-year period, he has seen delays only very rarely, and it won't really matter what side of the track they are on. There has never been an incident. In November, 2019, he asked the firefighters to study the question, and there have been two occasions when a train delayed apparatus travel; the pause took seconds to a minute at most. There are 12,000 trains through Ipswich per year. Chief Nikas said the tracks have no bearing on the Police Department.

Q. A resident of 11 Pine Swamp Road expressed concern about lighting and noise regarding his children being disturbed.

Chief Theriault confirmed that no sirens are used at night. Harvey mentioned that the Salisbury police facility has arranged the lighting so as to not bother the neighbors and we will do the same.

Q. Will there be renewable energy considerations?

Bob affirmed that, as a Committee, we would work for that. One of the decisions at the outset in hiring a firm to do the feasibility study, was that HKT is very good about energy

efficiency, the use of landscape, etc. Tammy stated that Ipswich is a green community and, as such, we are committed to energy efficiency. Harvey commented that with 90 new parking spaces, there could be charging spaces for the Town.

Q. Some areas now are within 30 seconds of police and fire response. Will the new place seem to be further away?

Chief Nikas answered, with his breakdown of the Town being represented as either north or south of the center of town, it has been 50/50 over the last three years in responses by the Police. Fire response times from the new site won't change. Less people will be affected downtown with the new facility.

Q. How is the town organized around a holistic view? What about Lord's Square?

Chief Theriault commented that it gives us better access with the new site. We are approximately ½ mile from the route out to the Neck. It is an insignificant change in response time. Currently, any route out from the current Fire Station necessitates another 20-30 seconds getting out onto Central Street.

Q. What is the approximate cost per square foot?

Janet stated that the current cost is \$500 - \$600 per sq. ft. The Town Manager explained that the land acquisition, design, and building including the hiring of an Owner's Product Manager (OPM), will be all done at once with the acceptance at Town Meeting and the ballot box.

Q. Are you required by State law on some building specs?

Janet stated that there are no spatial requirements by the State except for 911 and cellblocks. Rob commented that the process has been an eye-opener for him in learning all the different services that will be offered: social services, interview rooms, security of evidence procedures. Seeing the scope of work that gets done with both departments is amazing and proof that the current facilities are absolutely inadequate.

Q. At what stage do you start to consider how liquid runoff will be handled at this site? With 90 parking spaces, caution must be used with storm water management.

Bob answered that the professionals have been involved right from the beginning.

Q. Were there other sites explored?

Chief Nikas, referring to three committees which studied this need over several years, named several sites (numbering 14 originally). They were too small, too wet, too far away from the center of town, too cumbersome for exiting fire apparatus, too complicated to acquire, citizen opposition, etc.

Q. How is everything communicated to the public about this new facility?

Both Chiefs cited information on the website (ipswichpublicfacility.net) and tours of current facilities which are now available. Sergeant Copithorne urged emailing as the way for townspeople to gain information.

Q. Do you have a problem recruiting both Police and Firefighters?

Chief Theriault answered that recruiting firefighters is a problem because it is mandated that a new Call Firefighter go through a lot of training to a certain level. Also, there are no facilities for a woman firefighter. Chief Nikas has four women police officers with no private areas provided--25 police officers and no separation. Lockers are in the basement with 6' ceilings.

Q. What about a communications tower?

Chief Nikas gave explanation and indications that this is being studied.

Q. What is the footprint?

Janet replied that the current plan calls for fire apparatus to be housed in a one-story structured slab fronted on Linebrook Road with room underneath for additional storage of fire equipment. Fire Department areas and public/community rooms will be connected from the one-story apparatus building to a two-story building on Pine Swamp Road. The Police Department will have a large area dedicated to security on the lower level of the Pine Swamp Road building.

Q. Will Kimball Avenue be used?

Chief Theriault replied that it won't be used most of the time because speed bumps deter engines.

Q. Will ambulance service be included?

Chief Theriault replied that it will probably happen in the near future.

As a man who has been on the Fire Department for 33 years and a past part-time Police Officer, Deputy Fire Chief Jeff French spoke about the Public Safety Facility Committee's great work to secure a new facility over the last three years.

Bob thanked everyone for attending.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.