

## IPSWICH PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE

MARCH 26, 2019

TOWN HALL ROOM B2

### OPEN SESSION

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Robert Weatherall called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. with the following members present: L. Alexson, Fire Chief A. Theriault, P. Polonsky, H. Schwartz, P. Dziadose, K. Carlson, R. McShera, C. Surpitski, T. Jones (who left to attend her Fin Com mtg @7:30), and J. Emerson. Absent were Police Chief P. Nikas, and R. Donahue.

### OLD BUSINESS

Members discussed the manner in which private property would be considered as a possible site for a new public safety building if the issue were to come up. An Executive Session would have to be posted for discussion.

Linda reported that she mentioned to the Selectboard that PSFC is looking at the Bialek site and wishes to have the Selectboard's thoughts re the park as a potential site for a combined public safety facility. She felt that they would be favorable to talk about it as an agenda item. Charlie spoke of the "park" concept envisioned with a landscape architect, which never came to fruition. A committee still exists however. The legal impediment is a 2/3 majority vote by the Town to approve the park for an alternative use. Charlie felt that we should have a sense of legality and hear from people who are opposed.

Bob spoke of Chief Nikas' letter cautioning the PSFC about focusing on town-owned land because getting bogged down on land acquisition would be bad energy that would lose momentum.

### DISCUSSION OF SITES

Using maps of Ipswich by CAI technologies projected on the wall of Room B2, Peter began discussion of possible sites owned by the Town with the field on Green Street beside Town Hall, the current police station site on Elm Street, and Bialek. There is, he said, no violation or weight restriction for fire trucks crossing the County Street bridge, but a full report from the Town will come eventually.

1. The land on Green Street adjacent to Town Hall has ten acres, some of which is considered to be off limits for building because it is an old landfill. County/Green Street corner is too tight for fire vehicles.

2. Bialek has 14 acres and parking could be to the benefit of the park as well as the combined police/fire facility. It would, however, take approval at Town Meeting and an act of the legislature to approve, and a place elsewhere to replicate the park land that would be lost. In addition to the extent of wetlands there, a high groundwater problem might be a problem. Charlie suggested proposing that the police presence on these recreation places would be an asset.

3. The current site of the police station on Elm Street was suggested by Jean but was deemed too small at 2.2 acres to hold a combined facility and adequate parking. The site could provide much needed downtown parking.

Several other possibilities were mentioned; i.e, behind the Masons facility on Topsfield Road, the sledding hill (2 acres) at the junction of Essex Road and County Road, 11 acres on School Street which are wetlands and have difficult access, the current DPW site with wetland problems and the need to replicate the facility elsewhere. Discussion continued with questions: Where would parking be available? When do we finalize three sites for HKT (the architectural firm just hired)? Is HKT working with us in choosing sites?

Response time is the primary need for choosing a site. Chief Theriault said that train crossings have not been impactful to the Fire Department. Keith spoke of having had discussions with several firefighters who would prefer to stay where they are and add to the building, bearing in mind the major factor of response time.

Discussion resumed on specific sites:

4. Pineswamp Road has 12 acres currently used as garden plots and owned by the Catholic diocese. It is sizeable enough to accommodate a combined facility. After discussion, consensus was reached with the group to approach Father Keyes (Peter, Chief Andy, and Charlie will confer) re the garden and open acreage on the east side of Pineswamp Road as a possible site. Known wetlands and low-land topography could be a challenge.

Charlie, reaffirming the charge that an attempt should be made for a combined facility of police and fire, suggested that #1 be the church site, and #2 the Bialek site as possible combined facility sites. A value judgment for the committee and the political atmosphere of the Town are all at play here. Also, the community is not aware enough of the value of the police force, of the fire/medical responses by the fire personnel, the care of the harbor, the dispatchers, etc. Bob added the ambulance service to come in the future and the economics of it were the site to be at Pineswamp Road or at Bialek Park.

A poll was taken of the eleven members present re Bialek: Nine members preferred Bialek while admitting that it was a difficult road ahead. Two would prefer Pineswamp Road if it could be accomplished. The decision was made to invite Bialek Committee members to a meeting on April 16, specifically to talk about Bialek and show them the complexity of the situation that PSFC is in.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Harvey moved, seconded by Linda, to approve Minutes of March 19, 2019.  
UNANIMOUS.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Harvey moved, seconded by Bob, to adjourn at 9:37 p.m. UNANIMOUS.